

Message Three

Building Up Christ in Our Experience to Work Out Our Own Salvation

Scripture Reading: Phil. 2:12-16

- I. The ark that Noah built is a type of the practical and present Christ as God's salvation, and to build the ark is to build up the practical and present Christ as God's salvation in our experience for the building up of the Body of Christ as the corporate Christ; according to Philippians, this is to work out our own salvation—2:12-13:**
- A. To build the ark is to work out our own salvation, which is to build up Christ in our experience for the building up of the Body of Christ, the corporate Christ.
 - B. What Noah worked on and entered into was God's salvation, the ark; we should have a practical and present Christ into whom we can enter as God's salvation.
 - C. The ark is a type of Christ, not only the individual Christ but also the corporate Christ, the church, which is the Body of Christ and the new man—Gen. 6:14; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 3:10-11:
 - 1. The building of the ark typifies the building of the corporate Christ, with the element of Christ's riches as the building material, by those who work together with God; this is to work out our own salvation—1 Cor. 3:9-12a; 2 Cor. 6:1; Eph. 3:8-10; 4:12.
 - 2. By building the ark and entering into it, Noah was not only saved from God's judgment on the evil generation through the flood, but was also separated from that generation and ushered into a new age—Gen. 8:13-19; 1 Pet. 3:20.
 - 3. Likewise, by building the church and entering into the church life through building up the practical and present Christ as God's salvation in our experience, we will be saved from God's judgment on today's evil generation through the great tribulation (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27; 1 Thes. 5:3) and will be separated from that generation (Luke 21:36; Rev. 3:10) and ushered into a new age, the age of the millennium.
 - D. The salvation in Philippians 2:12 is not eternal salvation from condemnation and from the lake of fire but the daily and constant salvation that is Christ as a living Person; although we have eternal salvation, we need further salvation from the crooked and perverted generation—v. 15.
 - E. Today we are in the passage of God's salvation; we have entered into this passage, and our going through this passage is our working out our own salvation:
 - 1. The more Noah built the ark, the more he passed through God's salvation, and eventually, he entered into what he worked out—Gen. 7:7.
 - 2. The very Christ whom we are building up in our experience today will become our future salvation; one day under God's sovereignty, we will enter into the very Christ whom we have built up.
 - 3. Even today, if we build up Christ in our experience, we will be able to abide in Christ, to dwell in Christ—John 15:5:
 - a. To build up Christ in our experience is to love the Lord, to talk to Him by calling on His name, and to fellowship with Him, living by Him and walking together with Him day after day and hour after hour to be a "co-walker" with God, so that we can be a co-worker with God—Gen. 5:22-24; 6:9.
 - b. Then we build up Christ in our experience so that we can enter into Him as our salvation.

- F. All four chapters of Philippians refer to the all-inclusive, living person of Christ as our salvation:
 - 1. In Philippians 1 salvation is to live Christ and magnify Christ in any circumstance.
 - 2. In Philippians 2 salvation is to reflect Christ by holding forth the word of life.
 - 3. In Philippians 3 salvation is the righteousness of God, who is God Himself embodied in Christ.
 - 4. In Philippians 4 salvation is Christ Himself as the life that is true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, well spoken of, and full of virtue and praise.

II. Each chapter of Philippians presents particular aspects of Christ as our daily salvation, revealing to us how we can build up Christ in our experience to work out our own salvation—3:12-13; cf. Hab. 1:1:

- A. We can experience the inward parts of Christ Jesus—Phil. 1:8; Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; 1 John 3:16.
- B. We can take Christ as our living for His magnification, His expression—Phil. 1:19-21a; John 6:57; Gal. 6:17-18.
- C. We can experience the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ as the supply of the Body of Christ; imprisonment did not isolate Paul from the Body of Christ or cut him off from the supply of the Body—Phil. 1:19; John 16:13.
- D. We can take Christ's mind as our mind—Phil. 2:3, 5; cf. Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:3.
- E. We can experience Christ as the inner operating God, as our subjective salvation, to hold Him forth as the word of life—Phil. 2:12-16.
- F. We can experience Christ to become a drink offering—v. 17:
 - 1. The drink offering typifies Christ as the One poured out as the real wine before God for His satisfaction—Exo. 29:40-41:
 - a. Christ is the wine-producer, sacrificing Himself to produce wine to cheer God and others—Judg. 9:12-13.
 - b. If we contact this Christ and experience His sacrificing life, He will energize us to live a life of sacrifice, producing wine to make others and the Lord happy—2 Cor. 1:24b; cf. 5:13-15.
 - 2. The drink offering typifies not only Christ Himself but also the Christ who saturates us with Himself as the heavenly wine until He and we become one to be poured out for God's enjoyment and satisfaction and for God's building—Matt. 9:17; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6:
 - a. The drink offering is a type of Christ as the heavenly wine who is enjoyed by the offerer, filling him and causing him to become wine to God.
 - b. The drink offering is our subjective experience of being made one with the Lord to such an extent that He becomes us.
 - c. The more we experience Christ as the offerings, the more of a drink offering we become—Num. 15:1-10.
- G. We can gain (win) Christ and be found in Him—Phil. 3:7-9a; Eph. 3:8; Gen. 15:1; 2 Cor. 12:2.
- H. We can take Christ as our lived-out righteousness—Phil. 3:9b; cf. Isa. 64:6; Matt. 5:20; Rev. 3:18; 19:8.
- I. We can know Christ subjectively in both revelation and experience—Phil. 3:8, 10; 2:2; 3:13.

- J. We can take Christ as our goal so that we may enjoy Him as our prize; since our goal is to gain Christ, we should forsake all other things and pursue nothing but Christ—vv. 12-14, 7-8.
- K. We can maintain our joy in Christ—Phil. 4:4; Heb. 13:15; Psa. 119:164:
1. Since Philippians is concerned with the experience and enjoyment of Christ, which issue in joy, it is a book filled with joy and rejoicing—1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4.
 2. “I maintain my joy, so please do not worry. I hope you will also take care of yourself and be filled with joy in your heart”—written from prison by Brother Watchman Nee to his sister-in-law in 1972 (*Watchman Nee—A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age*, p. 182).
- L. We can experience Christ as our forbearance and virtues—vv. 5, 8:
1. To be forbearing is to consider how others will be affected by what we do or say; forbearance is reasonableness, considerateness, and consideration in dealing with others, without being strict in claiming one’s legal rights.
 2. Our anxiety can be turned into forbearance by bringing every need, every request, to God and by conversing with Him; to converse implies that there is traffic between us and God, and it is by this traffic, the fellowship between us and God, that we enjoy the divine dispensing.
 3. In Philippians 4:8 Paul presents six virtues that express the life that lives Christ; these virtues are the expressions of God’s attributes lived out from within the pursuers of Christ, who is the embodiment of God.
- M. We can learn Christ as our secret—vv. 11-12, 6-7:
1. Paul had learned the secret of sufficiency, of satisfaction, of contentment, in any circumstance; this secret is actually Christ Himself.
 2. Paul learned the secret of experiencing Christ—to experience Him in everything and in every place—v. 12.
 3. After Paul was converted to Christ, he was initiated into Christ and into the Body of Christ—Acts 9:3-19, 25-28; 22:6-21; 13:1-4.
 4. He learned the secret of how to take Christ as life (Col. 3:4), how to live Christ (Phil. 1:21a), how to magnify Christ (v. 20), how to gain Christ (3:8, 12), and how to have the church life (1:9, 19; 2:1-4, 19-20; 4:1-3).
- N. We can take Christ as the empowering One—our Motivator, our inward motivating power—v. 13:
1. Paul’s word about Christ as the empowering One specifically applies to Christ’s empowering us to live Him as our human virtues and thereby to magnify Him in His unlimited greatness—vv. 8-13.
 2. By the empowering of Christ, we can live a contented life and be true, dignified, righteous, pure, lovely, and well spoken of—vv. 11-12, 8.
- O. We can take Christ as our expectation—3:20-21:
1. The life that Paul lived in the experience of Christ was one that awaited the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would transfigure his body of humiliation, conforming it to the body of His glory.
 2. The believers’ arriving at glorification is the climax of God’s salvation in life and the accomplishment of God’s economy for the satisfaction of His desire—2 Cor. 3:18; 4:17; Heb. 6:1a; Rom. 5:10b; Rev. 21:10-11.