

Message Four

**Knowing the Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings,
Being Conformed to His Death,
and Attaining the Out-resurrection**

Scripture Reading: Phil. 3:10-11; Col. 1:24

I. Paul aspired to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings—Phil. 3:10:

- A. With Christ, the sufferings and death came first, followed by the resurrection; with us, the power of His resurrection comes first, followed by the participation in His sufferings and conformity to His death—v. 10.
- B. Christ's sufferings are of two categories: those for accomplishing redemption, which were completed by Christ Himself, and those for producing and building the church, which need to be filled up by the apostles and the believers—Col. 1:24:
 - 1. We cannot participate in Christ's sufferings for redemption, but we must take part in the sufferings of Christ for the producing and building up of the Body—cf. Rev. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; 2 Cor. 1:5-6; 4:12; 6:8-11.
 - 2. Christ as the Lamb of God suffered for redemption (John 1:29); Christ as the grain of wheat suffered for reproducing and building (12:24):
 - a. The Lord, as a grain of wheat that fell into the ground, lost His soul-life through death that He might release His eternal life in resurrection to the many grains—10:10-11.
 - b. The one grain did not complete all the sufferings that are needed for the building up of the Body; as the many grains, we must suffer in the same way the one grain suffered—12:24-26.

II. In Philippians 3:10 Paul spoke of "being conformed to His death"; this expression indicates that Paul desired to take Christ's death as the mold of his life:

- A. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ, counting all things as loss, gaining Christ, being found in Him, knowing Him, knowing the power of His resurrection, and knowing the fellowship of His sufferings all issue in one thing—being conformed to Christ's death—vv. 7-10.
- B. Being conformed to Christ's death is the base of the experience of Christ—1:20-21a; 3:9-10.
- C. The mold of Christ's death refers to the continual putting to death of His natural, human life that He might live by the life of God—John 6:57a.
- D. Christ's death is a mold to which we are conformed in much the same way that dough is put into a cake mold and conformed to it:
 - 1. God has put us into the mold of Christ's death, and day by day God is molding us to conform us to this death—Rom. 6:3-4.
 - 2. Our life should be conformed to such a mold—dying to our human life in order to live the divine life—Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:10-11.
 - 3. If we put to death our natural life, we shall have the consciousness that we have another life, the divine life, within us; this life will be released, and

then in our experience we shall be conformed to Christ's death—John 10:10b; 1 John 5:11-12.

4. If we allow our circumstances to press us into this mold, our daily life will be molded into the form of Christ's death—Rom. 8:28-29.
 5. We are conformed to the mold of Christ's death by the power of Christ's resurrection—Phil. 3:10; John 11:25; Eph. 1:19-20; S. S. 2:8-13.
- E. As we are conformed to Christ's death, we experience His all-accomplishing death:
1. By being conformed to His death, we experience Christ in His death for the release, impartation, and multiplication of life—John 12:24-26; 2 Cor. 4:12.
 2. If we are willing to be conformed to Christ's death, we shall overcome the world and defeat Satan—v. 31; Heb. 2:14.

III. The result of being conformed to Christ's death is that we may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead—Phil. 3:11:

- A. The out-resurrection is the outstanding resurrection, the extra-resurrection, which will be a prize to the overcoming saints—Rev. 20:4, 6:
1. The Lord's overcomers will enjoy an extra, outstanding portion of that resurrection, a resurrection in which they will receive the reward of the kingdom; this is what the apostle Paul sought after—Heb. 11:35, 26.
 2. The out-resurrection should be the goal and destination of our Christian life—Phil. 3:11-15a.
- B. To arrive at the out-resurrection indicates that our entire being is gradually and continually resurrected—1 Thes. 5:23:
1. This is a process in life through which we must pass and a race that we must run until we arrive at the out-resurrection as the prize—Phil. 3:11-14
 2. If we are conformed to Christ's death, every part of our being will be gradually resurrected; thus, the Christian life is a process of resurrection.
- C. We need to be conformed to Christ's death so that by any means we may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead; this is the only way for the Lord to go on in His recovery, the only way for the Lord to build up His church, the only way to prepare the bride, and the only way to bring the Lord back—Phil. 3:10-11; Matt. 16:18; Rev. 19:7-9a; 22:14, 20.