

Christian Students Bible Study – Fall 2013
Philippians - Week 7

Read: Philippians 3:7-11; Eph. 1:19-20; Rom. 8:11

KNOWING THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

Verse 10 says, “To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” When Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, he had the experiential knowledge of Christ and was experiencing the power of His resurrection. While in the Roman prison, he may have been bound in stocks under the threat of execution by being beheaded or thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheater. In that situation he needed to know the power of the resurrection of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection is His resurrection life which raised Him from among the dead (Eph. 1:19-20). It is the resurrected and resurrecting Christ, and the reality of resurrection is the Spirit (Rom. 1:4; 8:11).

Today the Spirit is in our human spirit. The way to experientially know the power of resurrection is to turn to our spirit and remain in our spirit. It may not be necessary to pray to remain in our spirit. We may simply praise, sing hallelujahs, and shout triumphantly. This is the way to experience the power of Christ's resurrection.

When, Paul was in the Roman prison, he experienced this power of resurrection during his suffering time. Hence, he said, “I can do all things in Him who empowers me” (Phil. 4:13). The One who empowers Paul is the power of resurrection. Praise the Lord that within us there is the power of resurrection. By Him, we can live a life that expresses and magnifies Christ (Phil. 1:20).

BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH

Paul uses the expression “being conformed to His death”. This indicates that Paul considered the death of Christ to be a model, a form, or a mold. For example, when people make cakes or cookies, they put the dough into a mold. By being pressed into the mold, the dough eventually is conformed to the shape of the mold. This is precisely Paul's meaning here.

In our daily living we should be “dough” conformed to the mold of Christ's death. If we allow our circumstances to press us into this mold, our daily life will be molded into the pattern of Christ's death. This was Paul's concept when he spoke of being conformed to the death of Christ.

Do not think that a believer is conformed to the death of Christ only at the time of martyrdom. No, being conformed to Christ's death should be our experience day by day. Each one of us has a certain amount of problems and sufferings. We may have sufferings related to our health, our finances, our work or school...etc. Who has no suffering? However, these sufferings should be a mold. After we have been saved, God's sovereignty puts us into this mold, the death of Christ. As we speak with our husband or wife, with our parents, with our children, or with those around us at work or school, we must put our natural life to death and not live according to it. If we put to death our natural life, we shall have the consciousness that we have another life, the divine life, within us. Once our outward natural life is put to death, the inner divine life will be released. Then in our experience, we shall be conformed to Christ's death.

* * *

We need to emphasize that in order for someone to be conformed to the mold of the Lord's death, he must know Christ's resurrection. No one can be conformed to the mold of the Lord's death without having sufficient knowledge of the Lord's resurrection. The meaning of *being conformed to His death* is that one has put to death all that he is, including his mind, emotion, will, preference, and opinion, thus allowing God to have a way in him. This is the mold of the Lord's death. Being conformed to the Lord's death means that in our daily living, we pass through death. Those who are conformed to the Lord's death are those who know resurrection, and those who know resurrection are those who know Christ.

The more we have experienced, the more we would realize that the suffering we have is not a real suffering to us, but an enjoyment. This is the reason that A. B. Simpson could say in one of his hymns, 'Tis not hard to die with Christ when His risen life we know." Because we have resurrection life within us, it is not difficult to die. In another of his hymns A. B. Simpson says, "Oh! it is so sweet to die with Christ" Because Christ is in us, it is sweet to die with Him. The resurrected One in us is the One who has experienced the crucifixion. Thus, it is not hard for us to die. On the contrary, it is sweet to die with Him because by dying with Him we enjoy Him.

The Christian life is both a living life and a dying life. We live, but we live in the mold of the death of Christ. When the Lord Jesus lived on the earth, He was being crucified every day. Every day He lived a crucified life (Luke 12:50). We also can live such a life because we have the power of His resurrection. As we have seen, this power is the person of Christ, and Christ today is the Spirit of Jesus Christ who is in our spirit today.

Questions:

1. What is the power of Christ's resurrection, and how can we know and experience it? Give examples.
2. Briefly explain the meaning of "being conformed to His death". How can we be conformed to Christ's death in our daily living?