

Knowing Christ – His Death 2

Will you please turn again to Philippians 3:10. Philippians 3:10. “To know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”

Let's pray. *Dear Heavenly Father, as we gather together in the name of Thy beloved Son, we do look to Thee to reveal Thy son afresh in us today. We do praise and thank Thee because it is Thy good pleasure to reveal Thy Son. How much Thou dost desire to show us Thy son. So Lord, we pray that Thou will grant to us this morning the spirit of wisdom and revelation that we may know Him. We pray that Thou will again create within us a longing, a passion, a desire for Thy Son. We pray that Thou will even enlarge our capacity for Him, that we may be filled with Him. We do commit this time again into Thy hand. What man cannot do, we believe that Thou can. We pray that Thy will, Thy desire for this hour may be accomplished. We give Thee all the glory. In the name of Thy beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.*

Thank God for gathering us together again this morning. Every time God's people come together, it's an opportunity. It is an opportunity for us to receive from God more of His Son. So may our hearts really be opened to Him that we may be filled once more with Himself. In the morning we will share together on the death of our Lord Jesus. We mentioned yesterday morning that the death of our Lord is a great mystery. He, who is equal with God, and yet He emptied Himself. He took upon Himself the form of a born slave and being in the fashion of a man, He was obedient to His Father even unto death. The death of the cross—what love is behind this? We see the love of God the Father. He loves us so much, He's willing to spare His only begotten Son. We see the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who condescends Himself to such a degree that He is willing to give Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

His death is unique. His death is different from all other deaths. Under the Romans, many people were crucified. But they died for their own sins. We remember even one of the robbers that was crucified with Christ, he confessed that we deserve this for our sins. But this man who is sinless, brothers and sisters, throughout the Christian centuries, especially in the early centuries, many believers were crucified for believing in the Lord Jesus. They died a martyr's

death. But brothers and sisters, our Lord's death is not a martyr's death. His death is different. His death is unique. There is only one death that is of this nature. His death is the atoning death. He died that we may live.

Usually, we will remember the date of our birth. We celebrate birthdays. But our Lord Jesus, He does not ask us to remember His birth. He only asks us to remember His death. Why? His life on earth is so perfect. In a sense, His life is our condemnation. As we look at Him, we are ashamed of ourselves. He is the only One who is worthy to see His Father's face. We are not worthy. So if He only comes to live to demonstrate a perfect life that God requires, we will not be saved but rather be condemned. But thank God He came to die. So remember on the last day, when He had that Passover feast with the disciples. Towards the end of the feast, He took up the bread and blessed it and gave to His disciples and said, "This is My body, broken for you: do this in remembrance of Me." Afterwards, He took the cup, blessed the cup and said, "Drink ye all of it. This is the blood of the new covenant. Do this in remembrance of me." It is the command of our Lord Jesus that we remember His death. Why is His death so memorable? Because His death is unique. His death is different from all other deaths.

Now yesterday morning, we deal with the fact of His death. This morning, we will like to go a step further to see the meaning of His death.

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians said, "I'm determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The Corinthians were famous for their intellect and yet apostle Paul, when he entered into that city, he made a decision. He would know nothing among these Corinthians except Jesus Christ and Him crucified because he knew that this is what the Corinthians need most. Only this can solve their problems. Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Why has the cross become a sign of victory and glory? Not because of the wood. It is because of the One who is crucified on that cross. It is the person that makes the difference. We do not worship the cross. We worship the One who died on the cross. It is He that gives meaning to the cross. Thank God that the meaning of His death is manifold. In His death, He has accomplished so much. His death is all inclusive and we just look to the Lord that He would give us

understanding, that He will give us revelation, that we may see the depths of the meaning of His death.

Of course, we have to begin from the very beginning. We remember in Galatians 1:4, He died for our sins. He died for our sins. Brothers and sisters, we will not appreciate His death until one day we are convicted of our sins because all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God, and the wages of sin is death. The soul that sins must die. This was our condition. But unfortunately, most of us in the beginning did not realize where we were. We thought so much better of ourselves than we really were. Of course very few people would say that he is sinless. Most people confess that they have sinned. But most people consider their sins are very minor and will compare themselves with other people, thinking that they are so much better than most of other people.

I remember when I was young. I was brought up in a Christian family. I was educated in mission schools. At that time on Sunday, we had to march. The whole student body had to march to the church building to attend the meeting. And even though I knew the gospel—I believed mentally that Jesus is the Savior of the world—I never had the thought that I needed to be saved. I was not perfect but I was better than most people. What can a student do compared with society? We are so much purer and better. So I always had the idea that others needed to be saved, but not me. I knew all the truth about the gospel, and mentally I accepted Jesus as the Savior. But I was too good for Him. I didn't need Him. Brothers and sisters, this shows how much we are in darkness until by the grace of God when the Holy Spirit begins to work upon our conscience. He began to touch my conscience. And then I suddenly realized I was the chief of sinners. I find that in me there is nothing good. From the top of my head to the bottom of my sole is full of sin. I was at that time a teenager. But sometimes when I was alone, I would weep for my sins. I thought there was no hope and it was only during that period that I began to seek the Lord. I knew He was the Savior. I realized I needed Him.

And brothers and sisters, isn't that our story? Thank God that He sought us. It is not we who sought after Him. It is He who came to seek and to save the lost. The Bible tells us that God has put all our sins upon Him. He bore in His body our sins. He is the Lamb of God who takes

away the sin of the world. So brothers and sisters, the first meaning of His death is by His death, He atones our sins. Though our sins may be as scarlet, they shall be washed as white as snow. When we trust the Lord Jesus—believing that He shed His blood for the remission of our sins—when we believe, we receive. We receive the forgiveness of our sins. God can justly forgive us because He has already received His son as our substitute. I think this is something that we all understand. And how thankful we should be. But unfortunately, we forget. We forget what God has done for us in the death of Christ. At the beginning, whenever we think of the cross, whenever we think of the death of our Lord Jesus for us, whenever we think of His shed blood, our hearts melted. But how about today? Every time when we come to the Lord's table to remember His death, how do we come? Do we come with a cold heart just recalling something of the past? It is no longer a pleasant experience. Our first love has grown cold. O how we need the Lord to restore our first love, that whenever His name is mentioned, whenever His death is remembered, that it will once again melt our heart, that we will prostrate before His love and thank Him for that. That is the first meaning of His death. He died to save us from our sins.

But His death is much more than that. His death not only atones for our sins. His death deliver us from the world. The apostle Paul says, "I boast of nothing else but the cross of Jesus Christ. By the cross, the world is dead to me and I am dead to the world." That is Galatians 6:14.

You remember the story of the children of Israel. All the people in Egypt were sentenced to death. On that night when the angel of destruction passed through the land, he entered into every house and slew the first-born. But thank God He made provision for the children of Israel. If any family of the Israelites did not believe in God's provision and did not take the lamb and slay it and put the blood of the door, then their first born would also be slain. But thank God He provide the passover lamb. Not only the lamb must be slain, but the blood has to be put on the doors and when the angel of destruction pass by when He saw the blood He will pass over. The story was told during that night in one family of the Israelites. The first born was trembling and he asked his father. "Has the lamb been slain? Has the blood been put on the door?" If it hadn't, he would be slain that night. So that night the children of Israel believing in God's provision not only had the lamb slain, but the blood was on the door, and that night, there was joy in the family. But in every family of the Egyptians, at midnight, there was bitter crying, for the first born were

slain. Brothers and sisters, this is our story. Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. But having the lamb slain is not enough. You have to go put the blood on the door. We have to receive the blood of the Lord Jesus into our hearts. Only then will the angel of destruction pass by. But that is not the end. The children of Israel, after they slew the lamb, had to eat the lamb to give them strength. And they had to be prepared for the journey because on that night, God led them out, out of Egypt. And the Bible tells us, God did not lead them in the ordinary way of traveling from Egypt to Canaan. God did not lead them the way of the Philistines, the land route. He led them all around through the Red Sea, that after they crossed the Red Sea, they had no way to return to Egypt. God delivered them out of Egypt. You remember when God sent Moses to Pharaoh, God said, "Let My people go that they may serve Me." Oh Pharaoh at first said, "I do not know God." And later on when the plagues began to come upon them, He said, "Okay you can serve God but don't leave here." And Moses said "No. We have to go three days journey, totally separated from Egypt, and then we will serve God. The man, the woman, the children, the cattle, everything." Why? Because there can be no serving God in Egypt. There can be no worshipping God in Egypt.

So the death of our Lord Jesus is so complete. We often think that His death only delivers us from the wages of sin, which is death. We ignore that His death separates us from the world. You remember on the day of Pentecost, after Peter delivered that message of salvation, that they crucified the Lord but God raised Him up and anointed Him as Lord and Christ. And many were pricked in their heart. Now what should we do? And Peter said, "Repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus that you may receive the promise of the Father." And then with many words, he exhorted them, "Be saved from this evil generation." And those that believed were baptized. Three thousand were baptized. Now brothers and sisters, why is it we who believe in the Lord must be baptized? Is not believing enough? Believe and you shall be saved. Believe in the Lord Jesus the Son of God and you shall have eternal life. Then why is it that after you have believed, you must be baptized? What is the meaning of baptism? Baptism is to be saved through water from the world. The blood saves us from our sins. No amount of water can cleanse our sins. Then why should we be baptized? Because by baptism, we act out what Christ has done for us. We believe that in His death, we die. We have died to the world. We are buried so far as the world is concerned. And then we come out of the water in newness of life.

By baptism, we declare we no longer belong to the world. You know in many heathen countries, you may believe in the Lord Jesus. But if you are not baptized, you will not be persecuted. But once you are baptized, you become an outcast. Why is it so? Because they know that if you're baptized, you're separated from the world. You no longer belong to the world. You belong to Christ. Brothers and sisters, it is the death of our Lord Jesus that separates us from the world. The world is a system, a system that was organized by Satan, the adversary of God. He organized the whole world into a system. He rules over that system. He is called the god of this world. He is called the prince of this world, and he uses this world to control people, to oppose God, to oppose the purpose of God. That's what the world is. So the world wants you to belong. If you do not belong, it will hate you and it will kill you. That is what happened to our Lord Jesus. The Lord came into this world, but He did not belong to this world. He's under heaven's rule. He is altogether different. Whether you're different, bad or good, even if you are different because you are good, the world will persecute you. They crucify the Lord, but when our Lord was crucified, the ruler of this world was cast out. The world crucified the Lord, but on the cross, the world is crucified. Brothers and sisters, God has delivered us out of this world. In Colossians it is said that He has delivered us out of the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. So we have been transferred. We do not belong to this world anymore. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. We are heavenly people living on a fallen land. We are strangers and sojourners. We are passing through. We are going to that city with foundations, that city that God is the builder. That's where we are. That's what we are. That's what the death of our Lord Jesus has accomplished for us. Do we realize that we do not belong to this world? Do we realize that if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us? Do we realize that to befriend the world is enmity to God? Is there that separation in our Christian life? Our Lord has already accomplished this deliverance. We are a separated people. Brothers and sisters, do we appreciate that? Are we conformed to His death? So you find that the Lord's death has done so much more than just having our sins forgiven. We are a delivered people in the world, but not of the world. The Lord allows us to live in this world to be a testimony to His name and that is what we are. The world is a system. Whether it is religious, political, economic, educational, or social, you'll find that it is all one giant system. And it's all under the rule of the god of this world. Thank God for delivering us.

You remember the apostle Paul. He lived in a religious world. Very few young people are like Paul because young people usually are interested in material things, the things of this world. But not Saul, that young man, did not seek for things of this world. He sought for things religious. He made great advancement in Judaism so that he was more advanced than his contemporaries. He had quite an accomplishment in Judaism. Maybe his ambition was to be like his master Gamaliel; Gamaliel, the great teacher in Judaism. That was something he boasted of. But how mistaken he was. What's wrong with religion? Having a religion is better than religiousless. But look at this young man. He was the most religious person at that time, but he accepted the traditions of the fathers. He considered Jesus an imposter, that Jesus should be persecuted and wiped out. This was serving God. O how blind, how dark he was. Until one day on the road to Damascus, the Lord led him there. The glory of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ put an end to his ambition in the religious world. He was completely delivered. He looked upon his past as a lost that he sought the Lord alone. Brothers and sisters, he was delivered from the religious world.

Think of another person. You remember the story of Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector. And during that time, a tax collector was considered as a traitor because they collected taxes for the Romans and they oppressed their own people. So the Jewish people looked down upon the tax collector. They considered the collectors prostitutes. And yet this one who was so rich—he was in that economic world and also in the political world—his heart was not satisfied. He wanted to see Jesus, but he was very short. When Jesus traveled, lots of people crowded around Him. But he wanted to see Jesus so much. Think of a grown up man, well-known man, even with ill faith, and he was known by everybody. How he climbed into a tree in order to see Jesus. Now will you do that? When our Lord came under that tree, the Lord looked up to Zacchaeus, “Come down. I want to live with you tonight.” Brothers and sisters, that moved the heart of Zacchaeus. He tumbled down from the tree. He stood before the Lord. He sensed the atmosphere. People around were murmuring. Didn't Jesus know who this man was? How come He wanted to go to his house? We won't do that. How can this saintly man do that? Will He not be defiled? Zacchaeus sensed the tense around him. He told the Lord, “I will give away half of my properties. If I have defrauded anyone, I will pay back four fold.” In other words, he bankrupted himself. Why? He was delivered from the economic world. The love of Christ took

away the love of money. Separated. This is what the death of our Lord Jesus has done for us. When you think of the death of our Lord, Jesus, how can you live in this world's system and not be separated?

More than that, the death of our Lord Jesus also delivers us from the law. In Romans 7:1-6, the apostle Paul tells us our relationship with the law. Now even though the Gentiles were not given the ten commandments, the spirit of the ten commandments was inscribed upon our heart. So whether you are Jew or Gentile, we are all under the law of God. And according to the law, no one can be justified. We are all under the tyranny of the law. So the apostle Paul used an illustration. He said the law is like a husband and we are married to that husband. Now as long as the husband lives, you are under the law of your husband. You are bound by him. Now if you go and join with another man, you become an adulterous. Now this husband is a hard husband. Oh he is so legalistic, he is so demanding. He is an absolute tyrant. And living under his law is unbearable. Where is the deliverance? The apostle Paul said, now, when your husband dies, you're free from the law. You can be married to another person and you are okay. But unfortunately, our former husband's law never dies. We hope he will die but he seems to live forever. There is no hope. What can you do? Isn't that true? The law is his cry upon our conscience. Whenever we say something wrong, even a little bit wrong, he will not let us go. He will bother us so we cannot sleep, cannot eat. His thoughts are so demanding. He is a perfectionist. The law is holy. The law is spiritual. But we are in the flesh. Brothers and sisters, where is our hope? We find today, people are under condemnation. Even with many believers, they live under condemnation. They have, to live with a guilty conscience. And you know if you live with a guilty conscience, it is not living. Who can deliver us? God is so wonderful. The law never dies but God can make you die. But you say if I die, then I'm finished. Ah, somebody will die for you. And when He died, you died with Him. That is the reason why the Bible said when our Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, it is not only that He bore our sins that we have committed upon His body, but at the same time, you'll find He died as us. He not only died for our sins, He died for us. Oh the Bible said He died for us. So in Romans 6:6, "we know that our old man was crucified with Him."

In the eyes of God, there're only two men. Throughout the human history, God only see two men. The first man, Adam. The second man, Christ. All that comes out of Adam is in Adam. Adam sinned and we all become sinners. Adam in Adam all die. So brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus, He came into this world. He is the second man, but also, He is the last Adam. He came to conclude, to terminate the Adamic race so that He can begin with a new beginning of mankind. So brothers and sisters, being the last Adam, when He die, the Adamic race is finished. In the eyes of God, we all have died. And when He's raised from the dead, we are raised together with Him. We become a new race, a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a people for a possession that we may set forth the excellencies of God.

Now oftentimes, we use an illustration, especially among the Chinese. Now we Chinese consider our ancestor as the yellow emperor. Now one day the yellow emperor had a battle with Chee-Yu. And it was a foggy day just like this morning, even worse than that, like in London. Now how can you fight battle under such fog? But fortunately, yellow emperor invented the compass. And by using this instrument, he was able to kill Chee-Yu. And by that we are here. Now suppose during that fight, yellow emperor didn't invent the compass and he was killed by Chee-Yu. Now where are we today? No longer. That race was terminated. So brothers and sisters, in Christ, when He died, we all died. Our old man was crucified with Him. Do you believe that? You believe He bore your sins in His body? Why do you not believe that He took you away with Him, that we have been identified with Him in His death? And that we are identified with Him in His resurrection? Brothers and sisters, by the death of our Lord Jesus, we were dead to the law that we may be alive unto a new husband and that is our Lord Himself. We are no longer under law. But does it mean we can be lawless? No, the Bible says we are under grace. Remember, we are always under. Do not think that we can be free as a bird and fly everywhere we want to do. Either you are under the law or you're under the grace. Ah, under law is such a sad life. The yoke was so heavy. We could not bear it. But thank God, under grace, under a new husband, under Christ who loves us so much, He wants to give everything to us. And do you think His demand is less than the law demands? No. Love demands more than the law but love supplies all that it demands. This is our life. We are not under the law. We are under grace. We do not live here under bondage. We live here for love's sake. So brothers and sisters, what an emancipation you can live in spite of what the law requires. Because there is life,

there's grace being supplied. So the apostle Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ, I no longer live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Oh how He liberates us from the law.

And in connection with that, of course, He delivers us from our flesh. In Romans 7, you find a conflict in Paul's life. He said, "I have a new mind. I know what God wants. And so far as my inner man is concerned, I want it. But I discover that in the members of one body, there's another law. What I want to do, I cannot. What I don't want to do, I do it. This law of sin and of death still controls me. Oh wretched man that I am, who can deliver me from this body of death?" Thank God, through Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, when the Lord opens our eyes, on the one hand, He delivers us from the law. The law, as our husband, is outside us and oppressing because the power of sin is the law. He delivers us from the law and then He delivers us from our flesh. This old flesh of ours, this old man, this I, this self-life, is so defiled. It is under the law of sin and of death. But thank God. They who believe in the Lord Jesus have their flesh crucified. So here you'll find we are out of this law of sin and death. We are now under the law of the Spirit of life. Romans 8:1, "The law of the Spirit of life has deliver us out of the law of sin of death in Christ Jesus that we may live by the life of Christ. No longer live, I, it is Christ who lives in us." This is what our brother is talking about in the evening.

Now the death of our Lord Jesus is even more than that. Why? Because by His death, He has put the one who has the power of death away. The Bible said, the Lord said, if I am lifted up, I will draw all man unto Me. The judgment of the world has come and the prince of this world is cast out. In Colossians, we are told that He has taken all the principalities and authorities, captive and exhibited them openly by the cross. So brother and sisters, on the cross of our Lord Jesus, He has defeated all the evil powers. The evil powers thought that they got rid of Him. On the contrary, by this very token, by His very death, He annulled the one who has the power of death. And by this very token of the cross, He has led all the principalities, authorities, powers of evil forces as His captives. He has overcome. Oh the cross is a sign of victory. So brothers and sisters, today, we have no fear of the power of darkness. In the mighty name of our Lord Jesus, we claim the victory. We overcome all the evil powers, not by ourselves, but by the mighty name of our Lord. This is what the death of our Lord Jesus has done for us.

Further than that, by His death, He opened a new and living way for us to approach the throne of grace. That is Hebrews 10:19. You know brothers and sisters, in the Old Testament, in the tabernacle and later on in the temple, there is a veil, a heavy veil that separates the holies of all from the holy place. In the holies of all, there is the ark, the mercy seat, the glory of God. But there's a veil that veils His presence. In the Old Testament times, once a year, the high priest entered the veil with blood and incense. The smoke is to cover the ark and the blood is to atone our sins. So the high priest went in hurriedly and hurriedly retreated because in those days, the way to the holies was not open. No one could live in the presence of God and live. But thank God. You remember when our Lord Jesus was crucified; at the time when He said "It is finished," He gave up His spirit to His Father. This was outside the gate of Jerusalem. But when He died, the veil in the temple in Jerusalem was rent from top to bottom into two. In other words, in His death, the veil was rent. You know the veil represents the flesh, the body of our Lord Jesus. He is the perfect man. He is the only One who is able to live in the presence of God. But when He was on this earth, He saw His Father's face all the time. But because He was that perfect man, He in a sense served as a veil separate us from God. If you live inside the veil, you are in the presence of God. In you live outside of the veil, even if you live so close as to be able to burn incense, the presence of God is still being veiled. That road, that way, was blocked. So you find our Lord on one side, He lived daily before the Father. On the other side, if He only lives and never dies, then no one can come into the presence of God. That veil cannot be rent by man. It is from top to bottom, and God alone can rent it. When the body of our Lord Jesus was broken on the cross, the veil in the temple was ripped from top to bottom. A new and living way is now open for us. We can enter into the veil and live in the presence of the holy God. And this is what His death has done for us.

Why do we linger in the outer court as if we know nothing but the forgiveness of our sins? We only know the brazen altar. We appreciate Christ as the sacrifice. But that is all. Why do we not serve in the holy place? Many believers are just believers but they are not functioning as priests. But why do we only serve and work thinking that this is all and yet we do not live daily in the presence of God? The way is open. We should live in the very presence of God and out of that living, we come out to serve. We come out to bring people to Him. And this is what the

death of our Lord Jesus has accomplished for us. Do we appreciate, do we see what the death has done for us?

And more, in Colossians 1, that by the blood of the cross, He reconciled all things unto His fullness. You know the death of our Lord Jesus has done so much for us human beings. But the death of our Lord Jesus has done much more than just within human beings. He reconciled the whole creation back into His fullness. He not only with His blood cleansed the earth, He also cleansed heaven. The whole creation today is groaning under the yoke of corruption and vanity, waiting for that day of restoration. And thank God that day is coming. He will reconcile all things back to the fullness of God. Everything will speak of the glory of God and it is all because of His death. What a mighty death is His death. May the Lord help us.

Dear Heavenly Father, we do ask that Thou will open the eyes of our heart that we may see the various accomplishments in the death of our Lord Jesus. Oh that we may know Him in His death, that we may have a firm foundation in our faith, that we may be able to go on with Thee in newness of life. We thank Thee for all that Thou has done for us. Teach us how to appreciate and to appropriate that these may not be just outside truths but become inward experiences. We ask in the name of Thy beloved Son, our Lord Jesus, Amen.