

WCCC 2022

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Knowing Christ as the Goal (1)

Greetings to brothers and sisters. Thank the Lord for giving us this special gathering during these extraordinary times. The theme of this conference is “That I may know Christ”. The brothers have entrusted me with the sharing on “Knowing Christ as the Goal”. I would like to begin by reading some scriptures with brothers and sisters.

Philippians 3:10 That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...

Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you...

Philippians 3:7-8 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...

Philippians 1:20-21 According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Philippians 4:10-13 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I

also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Paul speaks of a goal in the Book of Philippians. It is also a purpose. In the world, anyone who is a serious person has a goal. Because a person will work with enthusiasm when they have a goal. They will then feel there is a meaning in what they do. I believe Paul is such a person. We know Paul had his goal in life before he met the Lord. After he encountered the Lord, God changed the goal in his life.

We are all very familiar with the experience of the Apostle Paul. He encountered the Lord on the way to Damascus. And God changed the goal of Paul's life at that place. We know this is a very important experience. Therefore, Paul has mentioned it three times. Brothers and sisters, this also illustrates one thing: We should not shy away from repeating ourselves when it comes to important experiences or truths. Often, we may not have a deep impression of something when we hear it only once. Therefore, Paul's experience is recorded three times in the Book of Acts. Paul told us before he entered into the city of Damascus, God struck him with a great light. This great light has changed all of Paul's life goals. This is an extremely important experience. From that time on, Paul regarded Christ as his goal. Throughout the entire Book of Philippians, Paul exhorted us to be like him. We ought to have a clear goal as Christians. Only with such a goal will your life be enthusiastic, and you will find meaning in life.

In the Book of Philippians, we see that this goal has an impact on Paul's life in three aspects. Firstly, this goal has an impact on Paul's living. Secondly, this goal impacted Paul's service. Thirdly, he was running towards this goal to receive a prize in the future. I have a burden to share three messages in this conference and I will share with brothers and sisters according to these three aspects.

When Paul mentions about this goal, this goal is of course referring to Christ. What does it mean? It tells us this goal is an entity. This goal is the ever-living Christ. Why would we say that? It is because this goal is not a wish, nor is it an ideal, nor is it an imagination. It is an entity. In English, He is called "the living One". He is "the living One". Brothers and sisters, we are pursuing a living Lord today.

Before Paul met the Lord, he had a great goal in his life. It was of course religion-based. He wanted to be a great Jew. He wanted to be a true pharisee. We can see in the Book of Philippians that he was striving toward this direction. Perhaps he wished to study the Pentateuch thoroughly and become a famous Jewish theologian so that he could promote and expand Judaism and restore the kingdom of Israel. But after he had met the Lord, he was completely turned around. Now he knew his goal was the living One.

Brothers and sisters, after we are saved, we see many regards a Christian career as their goal among the churches on earth. They want to do great works, they want to be a great Bible scholar, or they want to build a certain career. But Paul tells us it is not about these things. But it is the Lord Himself. It is the living One.

I think for us to have someone as our pursuit will only happen in the context of marriage. Only in marriage will we have a person as our object. Thank the Lord, the Bible gives us such revelation: The Lord Jesus is the bridegroom, and we are the bride. The Lord Jesus pursues after us and we pursue after Him. We must see Christ Himself as our object of pursuit. This is extremely important. We can put it this way: What Paul pursues after is not anything outside of Christ or related to Christ.

We Christians must understand pursuing after things related to Christ is entirely different from pursuing Christ. Many of God's children have a heart to love the Lord, but we are much more interested in matters related to Christ than in Christ Himself. For example, gifts. Many of God's children pursue after great gifts. When we preach the gospel, how we want to have gifts like Peter had. We treasure gifts and many pursue after gifts. Some feel that they need power and so they pray to the Lord for power. And some pursue after knowledge so we read many books. Some pursue after work and wish to develop their works. Some value eloquence. Others value so-called talents. So we see among God's children, many are interested in things pertaining to Christ rather than in Christ Himself. These things are good. We know these are given by God for His Son. But Paul told us these cannot become the goal. These things are not the goal. Brothers and sisters, Paul's living had a drastic change after he met the Lord. Now he knew he was pursuing the living One. Therefore, in his epistles, he said that whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. This tells us those things that he considered gain before, now he knew they were not only not gain but they were actually loss. It is because

if you substitute Christ with anything, your goal will be wrong. Substitution is not the true blessing. Not only did Paul say they were a loss to him, but he also went one step further and said all things were a loss. He counted them as rubbish. Dear brothers and sisters, you can see there was such a tremendous change in Paul.

The light on the road to Damascus was so bright. It was so bright to a point that God would not allow Paul to see value in anything other things outside of Christ. It was only Christ. All other things were not only loss but were rubbish. Many brothers and sisters are encouraged when they read these words. So often we will hear brothers and sisters pray, "Lord, I am willing to look at all things as rubbish for your sake." But as soon as they open their eyes, they start to grasp rubbish. This is only our wish. It is not the entity Whom Paul encountered.

Thank the Lord, after Paul's encounter with the Lord, a very clear goal appeared in his life and Paul wrote this burden in his heart to the church in Philippi. We know Paul loved the church in Philippi dearly and so he told them the very best in his heart. Many say that the Book of Philippians is unlike other epistles written by Paul. It is because the Book of Philippians is like a conversation between Paul and the brothers and sisters in Philippi. Out of all of Paul's epistles, this one is most like the ones written by John. It is because John delivered his messages like he was having a conversation with God's people. Because Paul had a very intimate relationship with the church in Philippi, he exhorted them to have a clear goal in their living.

Brothers and sisters, we know that Paul used his own experience to speak of these things in the Book of Philippians. Every Christian should have this goal. Thank the Lord, we see Paul's life pursuit had a drastic change since he had this goal.

If we read the Book of Philippians carefully, we can see there are four important matters in his life. This is the effect brought about by this goal. When I read the Book of Philippians more than ten years ago, the Lord let me see these four points. Today, when I read the Book of Philippians again, I feel that nothing has changed. Paul was still pursuing based on these four points.

Let me first tell brothers and sisters about these four points. First, it is to know Christ. Second, to gain Christ. Third, to enjoy Christ. Fourth, to express

Christ. After Paul's life was changed, he regarded Christ as his goal and the pursuit it brought about.

The Book of Philippians clearly tells us these four important points in Paul's living. Firstly, it is the pursuit to know Christ. This is the theme of our conference: That I may know Christ. Brothers and sisters, our brother told us last night that the word "know" should have been translated as "knowledge". Paul deemed the knowledge of Christ as excellency. Where does this knowledge come from? Of course, it is brought about by knowing Christ. It is not brought about by things outside of Christ. How do we gain such knowledge? First, of course, is by God's revelation. God revealed his Son in Paul and therefore Paul gained the knowledge of Christ. Second, it is as our brother shared, it is gained through life experiences. True spiritual knowledge comes about by revelation and by life experiences. The Holy Spirit opened us up to know Christ and then He leads us into life experiences. As a result, we will have the rich knowledge of Christ. Just as Paul had said, as translated in Chinese, to know Christ as the excellency. Indeed, the more we know Him, the more precious He becomes. The more we know Him, the more all things of the world will grow dim. The more we know Him, the more we see nothing on earth can compare with him. Brothers and sisters, is this a reality in our daily living and in our lives? Do we truly deem Jesus Christ more excellent than all things? You need to have this knowledge.

The more we know Him, the more we love Him and the more we treasure Him. Paul also saw this: the knowledge of Christ is inexhaustible. No wonder after so many years of service, when Paul wrote this letter in prison in Rome, even though the conditions were dreadful, Paul's heart to pursue the Lord was not affected. He was chained with a Roman soldier but in his heart, he proclaimed, "Let me know Christ!" He often knelt to pray. It was as if the soldier did not exist. He was still full of yearning under such circumstances.

Brothers and sisters, the more we know Christ, the more we will treasure Him and the more we cannot leave Him. Because our brother will focus his sharing on this point, I will just sharing on this briefly.

Not only do we need to know Christ, but Paul also said that we ought to gain Christ. In chapter three, Paul said that he wanted to gain Christ. Not only did he deem all things as rubbish, but he would also forsake all these things. Brothers and sisters, not only do we need to know Christ, but we also need to truly gain Christ. What does it mean by gaining Christ? When we have gained Christ, we will have power. When we have gained Christ, we will have provision. But the

condition for gaining is to let go. There is a price to pay. Today we say that you will only forsake the second best when you see the best. A spiritual principle is that you will not gain if you do not forsake. Many of God's children like to know Christ, but we are perplexed when we come across this situation. We have too many things in our hands that we cannot let go of. If you cannot let go, you cannot gain. Paul said, "all things", meaning there is no exception. Today, not only does God tell us to know Christ, but we must also gain Christ. Thank the Lord, we can see countless brothers and sisters with this experience. In order to gain Christ, they forsook all things.

There are many moving stories. I believe brothers and sisters still remember our elderly Brother Kaung told us a story of F.B. Meyers. In the hands of FB Meyers there were many keys. God said, "You have to give me all the keys." He gave up all the keys except for the smallest one. He was not willing to give it up. He could not let go. Brothers and sisters, he really could not bear to part with it. At the end, the Lord said to him, "If I am not the Lord of all, I am not Lord at all." Even the very last thing, we need to give it up. We were very moved when we heard this story.

Actually, Brother Kaung himself had some very moving stories. In 1964, our brother returned to Taiwan to serve. There was a youth summer conference in Taipei that year. At that conference, he mentioned how he left his father in order to follow and serve with Brother Watchman Nee. He told us his action hurt his father greatly. And the whole family could not understand him. Brother Kaung's father occupied a high position in the Methodist Church at that time. He was very well-known in the Christian circle. The fact that his son followed Watchman Nee caused him great difficulty. And our brother shared this story on the pulpit. He spoke of these words with a very heavy heart because he felt he had shortchanged his father. He said, "I have hurt my Father." But he continued to say, "But I know he loves me." When our brother was sharing these words, he could not help himself and cried. Unbeknownst to us, the Holy Spirit began to work. Once our brother started crying, the whole congregation cried. All the brothers and sisters were moved to tears. When our brother said, "I know my father loves me", it was very touching. Brothers and sisters, I was at that meeting. I did not expect that this conference would bring an important change in my life.

I was saved when I was 16 years old and I was 21 years old at that time. I was still very young. From the time I was saved until I was just over 20 years old, I had never wept when I prayed. And whenever I heard brothers and sisters crying while they were praying, I would feel very guilty. And I said to the Lord, "Lord, is my heart too hard? Why do I not cry when I pray?" No matter what, I could not

cry. But on that day at the conference, my eyes were like a broken fountain and my tears gushed out. I was not able to stop myself. I could not stop my tears.

Brothers and sisters, often time when we are moved when we attend a meeting, we will shed tears. But after the meeting is adjourned, all is over. This time was different. After the conference was over, for a very long time, every time I came before the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord, my tears would come down. I could not keep my tears from flowing. I also could not bear to hear others mentioned about the Lord Jesus. As soon as someone said, "Lord Jesus", my tears flowed down immediately, and it lasted for a long period of time. We know this is power. The power of love.

Even though our brother just mentioned these words briefly, we know there was an awesome price behind these words. Our brother had paid a great price. In order to follow Christ, in order to do God's will, for the sake of Christ's testimony, he had to forsake his father. No wonder the Lord had used our brother for so many years. We usually have a general impression of our brother being someone who was very knowledgeable, very eloquent, and he loved the Lord very much. Brothers and sisters, the true power was based on forsaking. Our brother paid a price to follow the Lord. Brothers and sisters, if we want the Lord's word to be powerful, you must forsake something for Christ's sake. It does not depend on whether your sermon is easy or difficult; it depends on whether you are willing to give something up for Christ in order to gain Christ. When you gain Christ, you gain power. When you gain Christ, you gain provision.

Brothers and sisters, we are not just trying to know Christ today. This knowledge is very precious. But, to Paul, he must gain Him. We see Paul was someone who had forsaken all things as rubbish. Therefore, the power and provision of the Lord continued to flow out from our brother.

Throughout 2000 years of history, countless brothers and sisters followed the Lord this way. Now our brother has gone to be with the Lord. A glorious generation has passed. It is our turn to continue today. Brothers and sisters, we are also to carry the Lord's testimony. Are we able to manifest such power? Are there anyone who is willing to forsake all for Christ today? In English, there is this saying: No cost, no glory. Therefore, we are not just speaking the word of the Lord and that will be it. There is a cost in spiritual matters.

Dear brothers and sisters, Paul told us to gain Christ. How important that is. We know there was this person with great evangelical power in China – Brother John Song. On his way returning to China from the U.S., he got rid of all the awards and diplomas. Someone mentioned in his biography he saved a Ph.D. diploma in order to comfort his father. The power of the gospel was so great in China after he returned. Brothers and sisters, these were the ones who have gained Christ. They gained the power of Christ and the resurrection power was in them. Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord needs us to have such pursuit. If the Lord has any requirement upon us today, are we able to tell the Lord we are willing? Let's look to the Lord's grace.

I have once encountered an elderly sister, and she also had great power. She shared in her testimony how the Lord called her when she was young. She was willing to give up everything for the Lord. When she was in her 70's, she shared about this on the pulpit and I was deeply moved. She said, "If the Lord still ask me for anything, I will not disappoint Him!" I was sitting down there and could not keep my tears back. Brothers and sisters, this is how others follow the Lord. Can the Lord gain such people today?

The time is coming to an end, we do not have many opportunities. Brothers and sisters, may the saints who are living on earth be the glory of the Lord. Many brothers and sisters who came before us gave glory to the Lord while they were living. It was because they were just like Paul. Not only did they pursue to know Christ, but they also gained Christ. I'd like to say it again, Paul said that we must forsake in order to gain Christ. If we do not give up, we cannot gain. And, if we do not gain, we have no power. No wonder we are very weak in our spiritual lives. We also have very little provision.

Brothers and sisters, especially during recent years, many say that the conference has been carrying on for more than 30 years. We have been gathering until some of our elderly brothers have returned to the heavenly home. We have accumulated so much precious knowledge! Almost every one of us can somewhat explain what God's eternal purpose is. The Lord has revealed so much of this precious knowledge. But how much have we gained? Have we truly gained any? This is truly a challenge for us. If the testimony is to continue, someone must pay a price to follow the Lord. If we remain in today's conditions, that will not be possible. We have all this knowledge in vain. We will likely shortchange the Lord. Many of us will be like what is described in the hymn: While others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas, we are carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. Is this possible? Brothers and sisters, we have come to a very dangerous generation today. The day I learned of Brother Kaung's

passing, my heart was very heavy. Not only was it because I felt very sad about him passing away. Our Brother's presence was a strength and an influence; now he is no longer around. Now it is our turn. Are we able to hold fast? Are we able to keep the testimony and continue forward?

Brothers and sisters, the Apostle Paul spoke of his own testimony based on his experience in the 1st century. We must have such a clear goal. We must strive to know Him. We know nothing can restrict our God. There is no generation, nor any servants of God that can reveal God's revelation fully. As long as the Lord has not returned, the work of God will go forward, and the light of revelation will continue to be released. The knowledge of Christ will continue to be released. Dear brothers and sisters, there is still much for us to pursue. We look to the Lord's mercy. Not only do we strive to know Him, but we also hope that more saints will be willing to pay the price to follow Him in order to gain Christ.

Since the day Paul met Christ, he did not consider the price in order to gain Christ. He was a wise man. Not only this, but Paul also told us to enjoy Christ. We have read Philippians 4:11-13 earlier, Paul told us that Christ was the greatest satisfaction within him. Because of this satisfaction, he was able to go through any circumstances. Even under extremely dangerous circumstances, Christ had become his inner satisfaction. And so, we use this term "enjoying Christ".

One time an elderly brother came to speak with me after a meeting and said, "Brother, I had great enjoyment in today's meeting! I have met the Lord!" Every time we encounter the Lord it is indeed a great enjoyment within us. Unfortunately, many God's children, who have believed in the Lord for many years, have never enjoyed Christ in their lives. Here we see Paul enjoying Christ. Paul said he had learned to be content in whatever circumstances. But when we look at our lives, we often have discontent about this or about that. We are not satisfied with ourselves, with our families and with our fellowships. But that is not the case with Paul. He was content in whatever circumstances. It was because Christ had become an extremely great provision within him. Therefore, even when he was locked up in a prison in Rome, he was able to say to the brothers and sisters in Phillip, "You ought to rejoice. You ought to rejoice. I am very joyful because of the Lord. I am joyful even with the chains on my hands. Why are you not joyful when you are free? You should rejoice!"

He said it was no trouble for him to write these things to them. The prison could not make him suffer. His heart was still full of joy because Christ was his satisfaction. Today, the joy in the spiritual living and pursuit of many God's children depend upon outside stimuli. We can call this condition a fallen condition. That is why many need to use different things to stimulate people in a gathering. We can see how poor and pitiful our Christian live is. Paul did not need any of these. He could do with or he could do without. He also mentioned in the epistles to the Corinthians, he used the world as though he did not make full use of it: I thank the Lord if I have; I thank the Lord if I have not. Brothers and sisters, what a free living! Such a life of peace and rest! He said, "I rejoice greatly in the Lord. "

We are indeed living in such a generation that the joy of God's children seems to have been taken away. Satan uses all kinds of ways to take away our joy. We know that being joyful is a testimony. If Satan uses all kinds of ways and still cannot cause you to lose your joy, this is an overcoming testimony.

I believe many brothers and sisters have read the last words of Brother Watchmen Nee. I was captivated by the last sentence. I believe he wrote these words to his older sister. He wrote, "Don't worry. I know how to keep the joy in my heart."

Brothers and sisters, this is a testimony of overcoming. So many years of tribulation could not cause sorrow in our brother. He had kept the joy in his heart. Christ is our satisfaction. This is such an important matter. Paul told us, "I have learned this." We must also learn it. To follow the Lord, to be a disciple, these take training, meaning this is not something we are born with. It is something we learn. We know in the process of our spiritual experience, often we will fail. But it does not matter. When you fail, you get up and learn again. It was the same for Paul. This was how Paul learned continuously. In the end, he told the brothers and sisters in Philippi, "I have learned!"

Please remember when Paul said that he had learned, he did not say he had finished learning because the learning had no end. He said, "I have learned." It is good for him to have learned. How did he learn? He said he had a secret. We know this word "secret" is the same as "mystery" in the Book of Colossians. The mystery of God is Christ. And Paul said, "Christ is my secret." He has turned God's mystery into his secret. How precious is this! Often, I would say to brothers and sisters that we are perplexed when we come across this word "mystery". We feel this word is very abstract. It is so secretive that we cannot understand it

easily. No. The Bible tells us the mystery of God can be understood through revelation. In fact, every experience we have is a mystery since we are saved. Is that right? After we have believed in the Lord, we know that the blood of the Lord Jesus can cleanse our sins. If you say to an unbeliever that the blood of Jesus can cleanse your sins, they will not be able to understand it at all. But it is such a concrete matter to us. Brothers and sisters, there are so many mysteries in our Christian life.

And Paul had entered even deeper into the mystery of God. He was able to apply these into his daily living. Thank our Lord. He said, "I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity." I really like the words "get along". Do you know what our problem in our daily lives is? We cannot get along with God and we do not get along with others. If we can be like Paul, we can get along in any circumstance. We know this is a great difficulty in many Christians in the church today. We are not able to get along with our family, with our friends, and with brothers and sisters. Paul said that I knew how to get along, whether it was with humble means or it was living with prosperity; whether to be filled or to be hungry; and whether having abundance or to suffering need. He said in all things he had learned the secret. He was able to apply God's mystery in his living so Christ could become his satisfaction in his life. Therefore, when these things came to him, they became his satisfaction.

I remember the story of Joshua and Caleb well. They were once chosen to be spies to spy out the land of Canaan. They saw the people in Canaan were big and tall. They were all giants. And so, the other ten spies said, "When we look at ourselves, we are like grasshoppers. And they also see us as grasshoppers. There is no way we can go up into Canaan." In the end it was only Caleb and Joshua who said the people should go up and gain victory. The ten spies did not have the strength to fight the enemies, but they were strong when it came to dealing with Joshua and Caleb. They wanted to stone the two to death. Then, Caleb and Joshua said these very precious words, "The enemies are our food." What do these words mean, brothers and sisters? The greater the difficulty, the fiercer the enemy, the more well-fed we will be. Do we have such faith today? Brothers and sisters, everyone is afraid of difficulty. When difficulty comes, we think, "Oh, no! How can we avoid this problem? Who can help us? Maybe we will ask the Lord to remove this difficulty." But this was not the attitude of Caleb and Joshua.

They knew the greater the enemy, the more well-fed they would be. The enemy is our food. This was Paul's situation. Because he had gained Christ as his satisfaction, no circumstances could grief him. In chapter 1, he told us some preached the gospel out of sincerity and good intention, some preached Christ

out of selfish ambition to cause distress in his imprisonment. And Paul said, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice." Brothers and sisters, what capacity Paul had! Brothers and sisters, we have such a goal and such a pursuit. Therefore, the Book of Philippians is not about high doctrine; rather, it emphasizes application and experience. It is very important. Paul took God's mystery as his secret. This is such a precious experience. Therefore, he said, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." And there was not much that could trouble Paul in his life.

Indeed it is Christ in us Who can handle all things. But if we have not learned this, we do not know how to apply the power of Christ, and Christ has not become our satisfaction, then we are not able to solve our problems. Paul has placed his own experiences before us and they have indeed become a great encouragement to us. When Paul was in the prison, under the most terrible circumstance, he spoke of these true words. These words were not spoken in a situation when he enjoyed peace and security. These words were out of his own experiences. Brothers and sisters, they have become such a great help to us. They are great reminders.

Paul had a very clear goal in his heart. In the lessons he learnt, he had gained Christ as his satisfaction. Regardless of the circumstance, the Lord had strengthened him and he could do all things. Brothers and sisters, when we pursue towards this goal today, we are not just setting a goal, but we must press on towards this goal.

The fourth matter: Paul said to live out Christ. Whether by life or by death, Christ would always be exalted in his body. In other words, whether his life was smooth sailing or not, he would always manifest Christ. This is the mindset of someone who is pursuing after his clear goal. Not only did he pursue, but he was also living out Christ. How precious this was. Many brothers and sisters have been saying these words in recent years -- Whenever the Lamb goes, we will follow. These words have the same meaning as Paul's words. No matter what circumstance you are in, you ought to manifest the lamb. You are not to manifest the lion; you are to manifest the lamb. This is the spiritual living we ought to have today.

Often, we find it easy to preach a sermon, but when we come into reality, we find it not easy to manifest the Lamb. In my life, I often encounter some situations where I have the doctrine in my head, but to manifest the lamb and

to magnify Christ is another matter. As soon as I open my mouth, it is not Christ at all. Brothers and sisters, often it is so frustrating. We truly need the grace of God. Paul said, "Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death." So the last point here is to magnify Christ in your daily living.

In our church life, in a situation where we fellowship with one another, it is of utmost important that we manifest Christ. Therefore, in the Book of Philippians, Paul exhorted all brothers and sisters and spoke to them using his own experiences. In chapter 1:21, he said, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." If we can live out Christ, then it is gain for us to die. When we talk about death, we know that we need to settle our accounts with the Lord when we come before Him. We will have to account for how much of Christ we have lived out. Today, we want to add to this and accumulate that. But we know very well in our hearts that these things are not truly ours. Paul understood very well he was to gain Christ. To live is Christ. We can understand these words in this way: Where can people encounter Christ on earth today? It is from you and me. If we can live out Christ, they would encounter Christ when others encounter us. In fact, there are many wonderful testimonies among Christians. Others testified saying they felt Christ in these people.

Brothers and sisters, we live in difficult times nowadays. Things are changing dramatically. How we need mercy from our Lord. We long to be the Lord's testimonies but we must know how Paul lived out Christ in his days. Therefore, in the Book of Philippians, Paul said that he pressed on toward the goal. Paul had a very clear goal, and he was pressing on toward the goal. We can see that his pursuit towards this goal has four aspects. I hope brothers and sisters will take this to heart. Firstly, it is to know Christ. Secondly, it is to gain Christ. Thirdly, it is to enjoy Christ. And lastly, it is to live out Christ. This is Paul's experience which he clearly showed us in the Book of Philippians. God has turned Paul's life goals completely around. Thank the Lord, we can say that he was changed from having no value and no meaning to having eternal value and meaning in life. All brothers and sisters should set up this goal. I know many brothers and sisters among us had their goal in their past. But we need to ask whether this goal is still clear today? Or has this goal gradually become dim after many years of service and many impurities mixed in? Or maybe some younger brothers and sisters have never set such a goal in their lives? May the Lord be our clear goal at these end times when we still have a little time left. Let Christ be our only goal. Let us press on in this last part of our journey despite what our conditions were before. Paul told us, "Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal." Nothing else matters. The most important thing is to reach the goal. Paul also said this in the Book of Philippians. If we cannot be like Paul, perhaps our entire life has

been running in vain. What Paul feared most was that he would run in vain. Brothers and sisters, the Lord is still giving us opportunities today. The opportunity is right in front of our eyes. May the Lord give us grace. May all the brothers and sisters be like Paul that we have a clear goal and we press on towards this goal. May we receive such grace from the Lord as Paul did. May the Lord bless His own words.

Let us bow our heads with a further word of prayer.

Lord, our hearts are full of thanksgiving towards You. Even though the times are coming toward the end, You have not forsaken us. You continue to speak to our hearts. Lord, may You use the Book of Philippians and the experience of Apostle Paul to not only enlighten us but also encourage us. Let us imitate Paul and press on toward the goal while we live our days on earth. Lord, how our hearts long to know You more, and we desire to gain You more. We also desire to enjoy You more in our daily living. We also wish to live out Yourself on earth no matter what circumstances we are in. Thank you, Lord. Bless Your people. May You listen to our prayers. In the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.