

WCCC 2022
Brother Godwin Sun
Knowing Christ as the Goal (2)

Brothers and sisters, let us read the word of God together.

Philippians 3:10,13-14,18-19

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

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.

18-19 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Philippians 2:5-9, 14-16

5-9 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

14-16 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Philippians 3:3-6 For we are the true circumcision, who worship (serve) in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is

Romans 1:9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you.

The burden which I have been entrusted for the conference to share with brothers and sisters is Knowing Christ as the Goal. In the Book of Philippians, Paul used his own experience to be the testimony, telling us how God had changed the goal of his life. He now knows his goal is Christ. It is only when Christians live out the life of Christ, there will be meaning in our lives. And then we shall truly gain what is ahead.

Yesterday we have already briefly mentioned that for Paul to obtain such a goal, he had four important pursuits towards his goal. He pursued to know Christ, to gain Christ, to enjoy Christ, and to manifest Christ. If we examine the entire life of Paul, actually in the last half of his life, he was heading toward this goal. When we read all the thirteen epistles of Paul, in each epistle, in each issue and each matter he addressed, he gave answers in Christ. Brothers and sisters, he was someone who had a goal before him. He also pressed on toward this goal. Therefore, this goal transformed his entire life.

This afternoon we will look at how this goal has transformed his service. When Paul started serving toward this goal, the way of his service was completely different than before. Paul simply said that now he was serving with his spirit. Brothers and sisters, to serve God in the spirit is the accurate way of service.

When our Lord Jesus was on earth, as a servant of God, he was the model servant and an example. God used the Word became flesh to show us how a servant ought to serve. We see the service of our Lord is one of the spirit. In explaining how to serve in the spirit, He told us we could not do it in the flesh.

Our Lord came out to minister when he was 30 years old. The first thing he did was to be baptized. Our Lord was sinless and He did not need to be baptized. But He was baptized to bury His self. It was to show that when He served, He did not rely upon Himself. He served in the spirit. When He spoke, it was of the spirit. When He ministered, it was according to the spirit.

This perfect example of our Lord's service influenced Paul. From the life of Christ, Paul learned what was the correct service. In the Bible God only gave us one example. Therefore, Paul never considered any other as an example. Throughout church history, when we served, we like to look to others as our examples. Especially for younger brothers and sisters, when we have great respect for the elderly brothers and sisters, they often become our models. Of course, some are very good examples and there is nothing wrong with imitating them somewhat. Even during Paul's lifetime there were others who imitated Paul. But Paul told them to imitate him as he imitated Christ. He always directed men to Christ.

When I was young, some young brothers and sisters greatly admired the elderly brothers and sisters. Some brothers would preach in a way mimicking the elder brothers in their tone of voice. Some sisters would dress like the elderly sisters. These were to show the great respect they had in their hearts for the elderly saints. And they used them as models.

When Paul was saved by grace, he was a young man. Stephen had a great impact upon him, yet he did not use Stephen as an example. The twelve apostles were there. Peter and John were there. Likewise, he did not look to them as examples. In Galatians he even said that men of renown did not add anything to him. We know he was not speaking with pride. Because after the Lord met him on the way to Damascus, he knew clearly in his heart, God only gave us one example, and this example is Christ.

Today we should be clear that our inner goal is Christ Himself. There was a great transformation in Paul. Our Lord Jesus served in the spirit. Therefore, Paul also served in the spirit.

We know the story of the fall of men. Satan tricked men to eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan knew well that God's intent upon men. He knew that God created man in spirit, soul and body, and this spirit is to serve God. He used the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to cause death to the spirit, which caused man's spirit to dry up and loose its function.

When the fruit was eaten, God could not use men. God desired for men to serve, but man's spirit is dead.

Brothers and sisters, we know clearly how important it is to serve God in the spirit. It is because with the spirit we can have fellowship with God, and our spiritual eyes are opened to see. In a generation, if there is no one who can fellowship with God in the spirit, and their spiritual eyes cannot see the eternal will of God, then it is a generation of darkness. Many saints before us were able to bring many of God's blessings upon the earth and shared many precious messages with us throughout their lives. That was because their spirit lived before God. Today, God is still seeking those who have a sound spirit. When God is able to find one whom He can have fellowship with, it is not only a blessing for the individual, but it also brings light to the entire generation. If none can have fellowship with God in the spirit, then our spiritual eyes cannot see. It is not enough to only depend upon the light of the saints before us. The Lord wants the same for us today.

We really need to be inspired by what Paul said and know we must serve God in the spirit. Paul gave his own testimony in the Book of Philippians. Before he met the Lord, he said his service was of the flesh and of religion, it was by his natural life. We read earlier in Chapter 3, he was boasting in the flesh just like others. We know that the flesh is the soul life, the natural life. It is our natural wisdom and ability. Today in the realm of Christians, there are many who exalt men which includes men's wisdom, men's knowledge, and men's ways.

My dear brothers and sisters, this is how Paul served in the past. He said if anyone had confidence and boasted in the flesh, so did he. Paul said he was of the orthodox religion. He was circumcised on the eighth day, not one day less or one day more, he was circumcised exactly on the eighth day. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews and of the tribe of Benjamin. You can see how prideful Paul was when he mentioned these things. Even when he was young, he was determined to be a Pharisee, and was taught under the utmost strictness of the orthodox Pharisees.

Brothers and sisters, we know how the Pharisees kept the law. Each time I read the Old Testament, I thank the Lord I was not born during those times. If we were born in the Old Testament time, as we can see in Leviticus, it is too much. If we were to serve God under that situation, it would have been too rigorous. It is even confusing just reading the letters of the word. It is so confusing and how can we remember all those things? All the requirements of

sacrifice and daily living were very complex. Paul was a very strict Pharisee. Not only did he know about all these things, but he was also ambitious and determined to practice them. He said as far as the law was concerned, he was blameless. This young man was exceptional. He was very serious. As for zeal, he persecuted the church.

Paul told us that when he served in the past, it was according to the flesh. It was through his natural life. He was serving God in a religious format and felt there was nothing wrong with it. Paul persecuted and killed the Christians with pride. By the Lord's mercy, he met Christ. We see a drastic change in the direction of his service. Now he knew, in order to serve God, it was to be according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh.

Paul knew well how Christ was crucified. There was a very important point in the crucifixion. Through the cross God will mortify the flesh which is the natural life. This is an amazing fact as I mentioned often. It was a very cruel punishment and our Lord paid a heavy price when he was crucified and died on the cross. At Paul's time, when he lifted his eyes to behold the cross, he saw a different meaning of the cross. In the New Testament, it was Paul who explained the cross very clearly. The Lord's crucifixion was a great mystery to Paul. He saw the great working power of the cross that was beyond man's imagination. He knew the death of our Lord on the cross was to solve all the problems in the soul life. So he told us to mortify the flesh by the Holy Spirit through the working of the cross. Only after the soul life is put to death, our spirit can be completely set free.

After our Lord Jesus has saved us, our spirit has been quickened. But because we are a fallen race, the power of the soul is still very strong. Our spirit is covered and surrounded by the fallen soul. We are quickened and know there is a God in the universe. We know well the blood of our Lord Jesus can cleanse us of our sins. By this we have a new life from the Lord. However, the function of that spirit is still very weak and tender. Therefore, in the church today, so much of the service of God's children is without power. We believe in the Lord, but we cannot serve well. Because our spirit is enveloped by the soul. When our Lord was crucified on the cross, not only did he deliver and save our spirit, the more important work of the cross on earth was to save our soul.

Brothers and sisters, we all have a soul. Do we understand our soul? Today, all the difficulties and challenges of men are because of the fallen soul. The difficulties within the Christian families are because of the soul. The challenges

in the church are because of the soul. In our daily lives and service, the soul plays a very critical role. If the flesh, the soul life, is not mortified, there is no liberty for the spirit.

Paul told us in 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." It may seem like Paul was not so confident in what he said. This has to do with whether we have died correctly on the experience of the death of the cross. There is much hypocrisy in spiritual matters. Many times, we replaced the cross with man's morale, education, culture, and refinement. Jesse Penn Lewis said, "If you die, you must die correctly." Only when you die the right way, then there will be the flow of life.

Brothers and sisters, through the trials Paul encountered, he learned to conform to the death of Christ. He wanted to be conformed to the death of Christ so he might obtain the power of this resurrected life. Indeed, Christ had completed it all, and the exceeding power of God is there. Can it be released and manifested in us? If the soul life is very strong and mighty in us, then this life cannot flow out from us. Therefore, in our Christian service today, the soul is the biggest enemy. God has given us a way. Christ has already finished the salvation work on the cross. We must learn to pick up our cross to follow him and let our soul life be put to death.

Brothers and sisters, this soul life can have a very significant impact. It is like a fog over us in our life. In a scenery, when the fog comes, it blocks all our views. There is an eye in our spirit. If the soul is like a big fog over us, we cannot see anything. A few years ago, Brother Timothy Kwok and I visited Huang Shan together. It is a magnificent and beautiful mountain. I have seen many mountain ranges. I was amazed how beautiful a mountain can be. The local people told us that we came in the right season. Out of 365 days in a year, over 300 days are cloudy there. We went at the perfect time. There was nothing covering the mountain. It was truly a scenery to behold, when more than 300 days in a year it is covered by the fog.

I often wondered if our Christian living is just the same. Out of 365 days in a year, how many days are we clear-minded? How many days can we see Christ in our spiritual eyes? Indeed, Our Lord Jesus's image is very beautiful. But He is covered. The fog of our soul has covered Him and we cannot see Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, our soul must be dealt with. If the soul is not dealt with, we cannot serve God in the spirit. We can only boast in the flesh. Especially in

these last days, I deeply feel there is an extreme development of the soul in this generation. The enemy has provoked the soul. It has become a very thick fog. Not only the people of the world cannot see clearly, but even Christians also cannot see clearly either.

There is much deception in the world today. If we cannot see Christ, we can only be deceived. From politics, religion, to warfare, there is so much deception. In addition, there is modern technology, and there is so much information impacting so many people. Especially among the younger generations, people say that there is a universal posture, which is to look at their phones in their hands. It is the same everywhere. It is so powerful, and our eyes are captivated by such things. Brothers and sisters, we must be reminded. It is the same in the church; the children of God are being influenced by many things. We are in a dangerous time. The danger lies in the fact that we cannot see Christ. We see things outside of Christ.

All these things affect our spirit and cause our spirit not to be free. Paul also was once blinded by these things. He thought those things were a pride to him. Paul plainly told the Philippians that all he could boast of in the past was his flesh, but now he served in the spirit. Today we must experience the cross of the Lord, so that our spirit may be set free. The Book of Hebrews mentioned about dividing the spirit and the soul. This is a unique Bible verse. We know the division of the spirit and the soul is the work of the cross.

I will share a bit of my own experience. In January last year, there was a group of brothers and sisters in China wanted me to be with them at a special conference. I did not go in person and we gathered online. The main control of the online system was in Seattle. There were many brothers and sisters who attended. After I finished the first sermon, I continued to share in the second meeting. When there was about 15 to 20 minutes remaining, my mind suddenly went blank. In all those years of service, I never encountered such an experience. I had my notes right before me. I turned to the previous page and did not know if I shared it. My mind was blank. However, even though my mind was blank, my mouth kept speaking. It was what happened for the last 15 to 20 minutes. After the sermon, I felt horrible. I said, "Lord, I never encountered this before. What did I share in the last 15 to 20 minutes? I can't even remember." I felt I have shortchanged the Lord. And so I wrote an email to the saints in China. I apologized and said that probably because I was not feeling well, I did not know what I was sharing at the last 15 minutes of my second sermon. That day my wife and children were there, they all felt horrible for me. My son kept saying, "I'm so sorry for what had happened. How went wrong?" But thank the Lord, I

got a reply from the saints in China. They said that the responsible brothers were discussing my messages, and they did not find anything wrong with it. I said, "Is that so? Were the words spoken at the last 15 to 20 minutes clear?" They said they were very clear. I did not know what to say.

I also asked the brothers who took care of the technologies in Seattle if my words in the last part of the second sermon were clear. They said they could not see anything wrong with it. I was very amazed that the Lord allowed me to have this small experience -- the Christian soul and the spirit can be divided. My soul was not functioning, but my mouth was still speaking. I was full of thanksgiving to my Lord. We are nothing, but sometimes the Lord allows us to have some small experience to prove that to serve the Lord we must be in the spirit.

Only the work of the cross can divide the spirit from the soul, to mortify the soul life. Thus, we can present to Him the right service--the service in the spirit. This is utterly important to the testimony of the church today. If the work of the cross cannot be seen in us, the testimony in our mouth is only a doctrine. If all the power comes from the flesh, how can we testify for the Lord?

We have preached the principle of the cross throughout the years. The Lord told us to pick up our cross to follow Him. This is truly very important. Paul not only understood the principle of the cross, he also diligently practiced the working of the cross in the first century. Today, it is not about understanding the principles of the cross, it is about whether we are serious in carrying out the work of the cross. In Philippians chapter 3, Paul said there were some people who had made themselves enemies of the cross. When Paul talked about this, he wept. It was painful in his heart. He knew that no one could serve God in flesh. But he saw those around him. There were so many who served the Lord rejected the cross. They did not want the cross.

In the church today, the principle of the cross is neglected by many. Many times, we used man's ways and wisdom. Here, Paul told us that these people had made themselves enemies of the cross. Their appetite was their god. They only wanted to seek their own satisfaction. They saw money and grabbed it. They saw fame and grabbed it. They saw advantages and grabbed them. This is to satisfy the flesh. If we seek self-satisfaction in church service, we offend the Lord.

We all live in the flesh. The power of the soul lies within each one of us. I will share about my own foolishness. When I was young, I started to serve the Lord. Whenever I preached, I could not help but hope in my heart that someone would praise me for my sermons. If no one praised me after my sharing, I would feel bad. What kind of attitude was that? After I gained some experience, I was determined to only share what the Lord had impressed upon me. Preaching is supposed to be the work of the prophets. At one gathering, I shared according to the guidance the Lord gave me. I felt very dry as I was sharing, and the brothers and sisters also seemed listless in the audience. I felt very bad after sharing the message. After I went home, I was lying in bed and did not want to eat my lunch. I was feeling terrible. Later, a sister from Canada called me. She said, "Brother Sun, your message today was a great help to me." I thought she was trying to comfort me. Shortly after, another sister called.... Brothers and sisters, we must be delivered from our soul. If we serve in the spirit, we only need to serve faithfully. The results do not belong to us, they belong to the Lord.

We know how great an influence the soul has on our service. We must not regard our appetite as our god. Even more frightening is that some consider shame as their glory. Paul said that these people set their minds on earthly things. They were heavenly citizens, but they were only mindful of earthly things. Paul said their end was destruction. This type of service regards the cross as the enemy. What will become of it at the end? It is destruction. It will not be effective at all.

In the Book of Philippians, Paul not only talked about knowing the cross and conforming to the death of the Lord, but he also told us how to learn the lesson of the cross. There are much doctrine and preaching on this everywhere. The Lord said to take up our cross and follow Him, which is to deny self, that is the overall principle. How do we put this into practice? Paul shared his own experience with us. The Book of Philippians is very precious because there are very few epistles of Paul's that talk about where the Christian walk should start. It starts with very elementary things. There is this word that appeared frequently in Philippians: it is our thoughts, which is the mind. Paul knew that when we begin to learn the lesson of the cross, it begins with our thoughts and mind. This is very important. I feel in Philippians, the principles of spiritual experiences Paul told us are the fundamental ones, which is the very path for us to walk on. As we learn the lessons of cross, it first starts with our thoughts, it starts with our mind.

There are very precious verses in Philippians 2:5-8. They showed us the beauty of Christ's mindset. Paul said that let Christ's attitude be in you. This

is our example and our way of pursuit. Paul was convinced that in our soul, if our thoughts and mind were not dealt with, then the soul could not be mortified completely.

The soul includes the mind, the will, and the emotions. The mind is an important part of the soul. If there is a problem with the mind, it impacts not only our service but also the church. What are the greatest difficulties in the church today? The greatest challenges are in our mind. You see that in the Philippian church. Paul mentioned two sisters in chapter four, Euodia and Syntyche, who served with Paul. They loved the Lord, they were zealous, and they had influence in the church. There were difficulties between these two sisters. They were not of one mind. Even though they both loved the Lord, both were zealous, both loved brothers and sisters, and both loved the church, there were problems. When there are problems in our mind, there is difficulty with the church. Because of the problems between these two sisters, there were problems brought to the Philippian church. Some said Paul wrote the Book of Philippians because of these two sisters. Of course, this could be just one of the reasons. The church of Philippi was very precious to Paul. It was his joy. This wonderful assembly had a problem. Just because there were problems in the thoughts and mind of the two sisters, there was unrest in the entire church.

In prison, Paul wrote the book of Philippians. He said if our mind is not renewed, we cannot solve the hardship. But who are we like minded with? In Philippians chapter 2, it says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." I found this a unique aspect when I read Paul's epistles. Paul did not follow Christ in person, but how did he get to know the mind of Christ? This was a special revelation of the Holy Spirit. He knew Christ by the spirit. There are also some unique phases in Colossians, directly revealed by the Holy Spirit to Paul. It seemed that he was very intimate with the Lord, just like old friends who knew each other's temperament and mind. Thank the Lord that He revealed his mind to Paul. Paul told us that all Christians should pursue to have the attitude of Christ.

I have shared many times over the years on these passages because I felt these were very important passages. If all brothers and sisters can learn from the basics, then our church life will be much better. In many assemblies, including ours, the matter of the mind has been a major problem. Even with something very simple, we cannot fellowship if we have different mindsets. If we cannot fellowship together, how can we serve together? It is an important matter. So let us put down ourselves and pursue the mind of the Christ.

This mind of Christ is truly the mind of cross. Not only do we see the beauty of it, but also each point here is a lesson we can learn. When We learn the lesson of the cross and understand this passage, then we know how to carry our cross and follow the Lord. So, the lesson of the cross begins with the mind. This passage is very clear, and here Paul gave us the entry way to learn the lesson of the cross. These are the basic ABCs. It is very simple yet very important. It is very simple yet very profound.

I want to spend some more time to share more on these points with brothers and sisters. I pray that the spirit of truth will lead us into the truth. First, Paul told us that this is a matter of our mind. We need to think often. If our mind is transformed, then we can do it. We know that we act out what we think. Our actions are directed by our thoughts. When our thoughts are transformed, our behavior will also be transformed. We do not need to strive as if you are striving to follow a doctrine. Put it in your mind, think about it when we encounter things, and the Holy Spirit will empower you and enable you to do it.

Let us turn to Philippians 2:6, “Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.” This refers to Christ. The Lord Jesus is God. He has the form of God. He has the position and the authority to grasp yet he did not. He was qualified to grasp it, but He did not. So, the first point of the cross shown here is not to grasp. The original meaning in Greek means “not to hold on and not let go.”

Our difficulty today is that we hold on so tightly and do not let go. Let us not hold on so tightly. The extended meaning of this word is that when we serve, do not try to be competitive. When we serve the Lord, we should just do our duties. Do not compare yourselves with others. It is not necessary to compete. When we were young, we liked to compete. We strive to read the Bible and many spiritual books. Just like in the Christian circles, people often say to work very hard to equip themselves. What are we equipping ourselves for? It is to fight with others. Brothers and sisters, it should not be this way. Do not be competitive. Do not insist. When we are so insistent, nobody can change our mind. The Lord is equal with God. He is qualified yet he did not fight. We are not qualified yet we fight so fiercely.

In this competitive world, everyone is fighting over something. The whole world is in chaos. All the news in the world is about people fighting and competing. It is all about getting ahead of others. We see the same situation in churches everywhere. If we serve in the spirit, pick up the cross, and learn the

lesson of the cross, the first thing is to not to be competitive. We know that all belongs to the Lord. I often share with brothers and sisters that all sheep belong to the Lord. Not a single sheep is ours. Sometimes we say, "Oh, we lost some sheep." Do the sheep belong to us? They don't. We should just focus on service. Let us be loyal and do our part in service. Let us be true and honest in learning the lesson of the cross. So, the first step is not to be competitive and not to grab. We should rejoice when others can manifest the results in their service. This is to the glory of the Lord.

Verse 7, "But emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." There are many things in the self. We should empty it daily. Let me tell you a secret. If you want to sleep well at night, try to empty yourself before bedtime. I guarantee you will have a good night's rest. Just like in our homes, if there is a lot of garbage piled up, we would feel relieved when the garbage is taken out. Let us learn to empty ourselves. There is so much of the self. Darby said that the self in man is the factory for the enemy. Where is the field in which Satan works? It is in the self. There is so much production of the self in that factory. In John 14, the Lord said that the king of the world is to come, but he has nothing in Him. The Lord does not live in the self. When He was baptized, the self was buried. Therefore, the devil had no ground to work in the Lord. There was no production at all. If we do not empty ourselves, there will be problems sooner or later. If many things occupy us in the self, there is no space for the Lord. So let us remember when the self is at work, our service will go astray. Let us learn to empty ourselves. This is the second important point in this passage.

Thirdly, we see that He took upon the form of a servant. This is also very important. When we carefully read the tone in which these words are spoken, "took upon" is an active action. It was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who willingly took upon this form. When He came from glory into this world, God ask Him what form he wanted to take. To our surprise,

He took upon the form of a servant. Why did He take upon the form of a servant? It is because servants are to serve. The Lord is the Son of God, but He took upon the form of a servant. This servant is a bond servant of God, not a servant of the world. Only when we take upon the form as a servant of God, then we can serve God. Paul knew this clearly. Slavery existed in his times. The slaves had no positions in a household. They must obey the masters completely and do whatever they were told. This is the meaning of taking upon the form of a servant.

There are many young brothers and sisters today who are willing to serve the Lord. Once, I went to visit a brother in a seminary. When we were praying, he kept saying, "Lord I want to do great works! I want to do great works!" That really made me feel strange when we were praying. Some say that they are not after gifts or abilities, but at least they should take up the form of a spiritual person. No. Brothers and sisters, our Lord took upon the form of a servant. This is the mind of the cross, it is wholeheartedly for the Lord, and nothing for us.

On the way to Damascus when Paul saw the Lord, the Lord had already ascended at that time. He was already the King of kings and the Lord of lords. When the Lord asked "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?", he asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, the one you are persecuting." A Nazarene is a symbol of the form of a servant. The Lord did not reveal His majesty to Paul. From that moment on, Paul also took on the form of a servant. In Paul's life, he wrote that he was a bond servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw Christ.

Our Lord came to the earth in order to serve God. This is the mind of the cross. If we all take on the form of a servant in church, how good it would be. It is not what we need to do but we need to have this mindset. This is something very precious.

As we continue in verse 7, it says that not only did He take upon Him the form of a servant but was also made in the likeness of a man. The word "man" in the original Greek is in a plural form. This is very interesting. The Lord became the likeness of many men. My understanding is that the plural form "men" means this person is very common, and not extraordinary. Our Lord came to the world to become an ordinary man. He was born in the house of a carpenter. He lived with his siblings. Nothing extraordinary happened for thirty years. When He began to serve at age of 30, others commented he was the son of Joseph. He was so ordinary. He probably worked very hard in those thirty years, and so He looked like he was 50 years old when he was only 30 years old. He had no beauty that others esteemed. When He told others He was the Son of God, the Jews could not accept that. They questioned, "How can you be the Son of God?" This is our Lord, someone who was very ordinary.

I often say that there is nothing wrong with being an ordinary person. If we want to be extraordinary and famous, the more famous we are, the more likely we will be criticized. If you are a commoner, no one would criticize you. Our Lord was willing to be ordinary on earth. He is not ashamed to call us brothers. He

was willing to be the same as us, nothing extraordinary. The more spiritual a person is, the more ordinary they are. Some pursue spirituality to the extent that others would shy away from them. This is true because we can become so proud. This mind is not like our Lord's. Our Lord Jesus, even though He was an ordinary man, was fully like a man. And he was the most normal man in the history of mankind.

We are very troublesome people. When we are exalted, we become boastful. When we are humbled, we have low self-esteem. Let us place the Lord before us. Only Christ is our goal. Do not look at others. Forgive me for mentioning this. In the past, I had an opportunity to meet some famous Christian leaders. I felt inferior when I met them. They had great degrees, they had beautiful penmanship, and they were very eloquent. They looked so sharp. I felt ashamed when I met them. I felt very bad. But thank the Lord, when I went home and prayed, I saw the Lord and I became joyous. The Lord was so kind and approachable. No one is better than our Lord. Isn't it right? Thank the Lord.

All those who serve the Lord should be like the Lord. Let this mind be in us. Our Lord has become our wonderful example. This is the mind of the cross. Now think carefully, can our soul do all of these without the cross? It is impossible.

“Being found in the appearance as a man, He humbled himself.” He humbled Himself. Another meaning of this is that He made Himself little. This is done willingly. It is not out of coercion. If one can often feel small about himself, this person is actually most blessed. It is our protection. When our Lord was on earth, He made Himself small. The image He used was a lamb, a small lamb. Others wanted Him to be the lion. The Lord said, “No, I want to be a lamb.” In the Book of Revelation, the elders said, “Behold, the lion of Judah.” When John looked, there was no lion, only a lamb. The Lord made Himself small. The lamb in Revelation is different from the lamb in the Gospel of John because the smallness is further emphasized in the Book of Revelation. As the King of kings and the Lord of lords, He took the form of being small.

When the enemy comes out, he was the beast, with seven heads and ten horns. He looked frightful. The Book of Revelation told us that the lowly lamb has overcome the beast, Our Lord is wonderful, and His mind is different from ours.

David in the Old Testament represented the Lord best because he looked lightly upon himself. The kings after David were not like him. When God blessed him, he humbled himself before the Lord. He said, "What is my household that You would bless me like this?" It is easy for us to humble ourselves before God. But David even humbled himself before King Saul. Saul was persecuting him. What did he say to Saul? "You don't have to chase me, a dead dog, with such a large army." David lowered himself before king Saul. What was more difficult was that he lowered himself before his wife. When his wife belittled him, David said to Michal, "I can lower myself even more for the Lord." That was not easy. We can lower ourselves easily before the elders in church, and of course, before God. But when we go home to our wives, it is not easy to lower ourselves, right? Thank the Lord, David had such mindset, like Christ.

Our Lord is a perfect example for us. Because Paul saw Christ, Paul lowered himself also. In Acts 13, he changed his name from Saul to Paul. What does Paul mean? Paul means small. Many brothers like to use the name Paul, thinking it is a big name. But it is wrong. It is a small name. So if you use the name Paul, remember you have to lower yourself. Our Lord's mind is very beautiful, for it is the mind of the cross. If we want to serve the Lord, we must learn of Him. Paul said, "Let this mind be in you." We should be reminded of the passage in Philippians chapter 2. We should remember this every day. It will help us to carry our cross. The lesson of the cross starts here.

"Becoming obedient." Being obedient is a difficult lesson. The entire universe rebelled because of the rebellion of the enemy. Because of the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, this is turned around. Obedience brings most glory to God. In the Christian living, we know it is very difficult to obey because we have a rebellious nature. Let this mind be in you. Be determined to become obedient. Our Lord was the perfect example of obedience on earth. Our Lord's obedience has brought about the greatest impact throughout the universe. The obedient life is a tender life. A stubborn life cannot be flexible. We must admit that we are stubborn and hard-hearted. So let this mind be in you. When we meditate on this, the Holy Spirit will work in us and help us to obey. The Holy Spirit through the cross will mortify the flesh.

The Lord illustrated the meaning of obedience most clearly in the garden of Gethsemane. As our Lord prayed, he had sweat like drops of blood. He prayed to the Father, "Father, if it is possible, take this cup away from me. Yet not My will but Your will be done." Obedience is the surrendering of the will. We surrender our will under the will of God. Throughout all the days of our Lord Jesus on earth, He did not have His own will and obeyed the Father in all actions.

He spoke as the Father wanted Him to speak and He worked as the Father wanted Him to do. He lived the perfectly beautiful life of obedience. Even though I have served the Lord for decades, I must admit that the lesson of obedience is the most difficult. No matter how difficult it is, this mind must be in us. If we have the willingness, God will perfect us. If we say, "Lord, I am willing to surrender." He will help us to surrender because the work of the cross is finished.

Lastly, "even death on a cross". This mind is the mind of the cross. When it comes the cross, it is the most shameful death; yet it is the greatest manifestation of a mature life. If we experience the death of the cross, the spiritual life will manifest in us. The death of the cross is the greatest reaction of our spiritual life. When unpleasant things occur, if we manifest the death of the cross, that is a manifestation of a spiritual life. The death of the cross is completely selfless. Why did God require sacrifices from His people in the Old Testament? When the ox or sheep was sacrificed, not only the animal was slayed and the blood was shed, but it was placed on the altar and burnt to ashes at the end. Sacrifices were completely without the self.

When our Lord was on the cross, He died on the cross and was completely selfless. That is to God's glory. Our Lord is our perfect example. This example was the goal of Paul's pursuit. In his service, Paul knew to serve in the spirit. To serve in the spirit, there must be the working of the cross. There must be the working of the cross upon our soul. However much our soul is dealt with, however much liberty our spirit will have. The quality of the spirit depends on the amount of dealing in the soul. When we have all these in our mind, we meditate upon them daily until our life can manifest it. The more we think about it, the more the soul is dealt with, the higher the quality of the spirit is. What is the difference among God's children today? The difference lies in the quality of the spirit.

Today, the Lord is seeking those with a high-quality spirit. It is because God can only use such individuals. Only such individuals can bring God's blessings to the world. They have open fellowship with the Lord. They can bring God's vision upon this world. This is an urgent time. If God cannot gain such people, the whole generation will fall into darkness.

The value of our service before God depends on how much we serve in the spirit. Paul said, "I served in the flesh before, but now I serve in the spirit."

The matter of the mind is utterly important. In Philippians 4:8, Paul said that whatsoever is honorable and lovely, dwell on these things. If every brother and sister learn these lessons, and we have the mind of Christ in us, then the beautiful body life in Philippians 2:1-4 will be manifested. If we have the same heart and same mind, then we can exhort each other in love, have fellowship in the spirit, and show affection and compassion. Paul showed us a beautiful picture of church life. This body life depends on whether we have the mind of Christ.

Christ being Paul's goal has completely transformed his attitude towards service. May the Lord, in these end times, while we still have a little time, help us to be encouraged by our brother. We would also set up our goal, pursue after this goal, so our lives would be filled with the fullness of Christ. Through our service in the spirit, we will glorify God. We need the Lord's grace. Not only is there turmoil in the entire world, there is chaos in the church also. May each one of us have a clear goal before us. May the Lord bless us through these words.

Let us bow our heads and pray.

Lord, our hearts are filled with thanksgiving to You. How You love us. Even though generations change, but You have not forsaken us. You still love us. You continue to use Your word to enlighten us and guide us. Lord, may You become a clear goal for each one of us, as in the heart of Paul. Transform our lives. Transform our service so our condition can be good in these last days. Not only do we live before You, but we will also welcome your return. Lord, bless Your own words. Listen to our prayers. In the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.