Synopsis of Audio Excerpts from the
Labor Day Weekend Conference • Troy, Michigan
September 4-6, 2010

"Christ, Christ, Christ!"

Messages given by Brother Titus Chu

Excerpts are available online at
MinistryMessages.org

Excerpts from Message One

Message 1, Excerpt 1
Why Cover the Book of Philippians?

6 minutes 45 seconds • 2.0 megabytes

Philippians is a book for both mature and young believers, and it is also one of the central books of the New Testament. Ephesians speaks of the church life and its preciousness, Philippians shows us that in the church life we must pursue and gain Christ, and Colossians shows us that if we pursue Christ, He will have the preeminence in all things and be the Head over our daily life and our person. Such writings are hard to understand, because they are altogether outside of the human concept. Do we see the church? Do we do our best to gain Christ in all things? Is He the Head over us in our daily life? This is what God cares for.

After living in the church life for a time, we may become discouraged. So we need to see the secret, which Philippians shows us, that in the church life everything must be related to Christ. Our spiritual growth, our gospel, our church life, and our condition, are all related to Christ, and He is related to us.

Message 1, Excerpt 2
The Topic of This Conference: Christ, Christ, Christ!

4 minutes 24 seconds • 1.3 megabytes

But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ. But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
— Philippians 3:7-8

To be in the Lord for many years and to have some spiritual maturity is valuable, but even so, whether or not we are spiritual, proper, and healthy at any given moment depends on our present experience of Christ. No matter how mature we are, we still need time to gain, pursue, possess, and enjoy His living presence. This is the kernel of the entire book of Philippians.

In Philippians we see the apostle Paul, a mature believer in Christ, stressing that despite all he had experienced, he would still forget all that was behind in order to gain Christ. If we live such a life, focusing only on Christ Himself, nothing will disappoint us. So, the topic of this conference is very simple: Christ! Christ! Christ!

In the church life, there is nothing for us but Christ Himself. If we aim at anything else — a name, leadership, success, a large following — we will be disappointed. We must be clear that the Lord has raised us up to focus on Christ and Christ alone.

Message 1, Excerpt 3
The First Treasure: To Be with Christ

2 minutes 57 seconds • 0.9 megabytes

The outline of this conference begins with this statement:

> *Philippians is a book denoting the most precious experiences a Christian can have after he has seen the church and is living in the church life.*

To see the church, as we do in Ephesians, is one thing, but to live properly in the church life, with a proper goal, is another. So Philippians shows us the experiences, the treasures, we should have as we are in the church life.

The first of these treasures is to be with Christ by enjoying the presence and the person of Christ. We need to be with Him, to have His presence, to have a Christ who is so fresh, so new, so enjoyable to us at the present moment.

Message 1, Excerpt 4
The Way to Enjoy and Apply the Lord's Presence

8 minutes 44 seconds • 2.6 megabytes

For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus.
— Philippians 1:8

The book of Philippians shows us some basic conditions for us to enjoy the Lord.

First, we must realize that to follow the Lord is not a cheap thing; it is not simply a matter of declaring something in the meetings. Rather, it needs to be very practical. Are we really the Lord's slaves? Or do we still live as we like? When the Lord comes to touch what we love, we will realize that to follow Him and enjoy Him, we must be His slaves. At this point, we will enjoy His presence much more than before.

We also need to love the saints, as Paul did, and join ourselves to the church of Christ. When we love, care for, and labor for the saints, we will surely be brought into the Lord's presence.

We also need to appreciate the church life. Even though the church may be in a negative condition, we need to have the Lord's view and not become critical, which will cause us to lose the Lord's presence. Practically, this means we need to treasure and appreciate the saints, as Paul does in Philippians.

As believers, we may be in many different things, but the most precious experience any Christian can have is to be in the inward parts of Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:8), experiencing His tender feeling and care for the saints, no matter their condition. What a relationship we have with Him!

Excerpts from Message Two

Message 2, Excerpt 1
A Life of Following Christ Is So Rich!

1 minute 20 seconds • 3.92 megabytes

If we have the Lord's presence and follow Him, we will be amazed at how rich our life is. He never gives us anything for our own sake; rather, He desires to work with us so that we can have the riches of Christ and be mature in Him for the church.

Message 2, Excerpt 2
Knowing Why We Live

5 minutes 55 seconds • 1.8 megabytes

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live in the flesh, if this to me is fruit for my work, then I do not know what I will choose. But I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for this is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.— Philippians 1:21-24

The apostle Paul knew exactly why he lived. He loved Christ to such an extent that he could declare that for him to die would be a gain—because he would be with Christ in the fullest degree—but to remain in the flesh was more necessary for the sake of the saints. He did not want to live simply because he was afraid of death but because the saints needed him, so he made such a bold declaration. Can we say the same thing?

Message 2, Excerpt 3
In the Divine and Mystical Realm

2 minutes 28 seconds • 7.3 megabytes

As believers in Christ, we have been transferred into the divine and mystical realm. Even though we all make so many mistakes, we are still in this realm. A Chinese person who moves to America yet continues to live the Chinese culture is still in America. In the same way, even if we don't live as though we are in the divine and mystical realm, we are still in this realm. In this realm, the Lord loves us and gives us all that we need to make us His duplication for the building up of the church. What a blessing!

In this realm we experience three things: encouragement in the inward parts of Christ, consolation of love, and the fellowship of life in spirit.

Message 2, Excerpt 4
Not Seeking Anything from the World

8 minutes 25 seconds • 2.5 megabytes

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.
— Philippians 2:5-11

As a man living on the earth, the Lord Jesus never sought anything from the world. He lived a perfect life and eventually died on our behalf. In His resurrection and ascension, He brought us into Himself as the divine and mystical realm. Even though we continue to have problems in many ways, still we are in this realm.

When He was on the earth, the Lord Jesus did not boast about who He was as God but rather emptied Himself and lived as a man. He did not crave the things of the world, and it did not attract Him. At the end of His life He could testify that the world had nothing in Him.

Moreover, He did not seek for success in His work; rather, it seems that in His preaching He often drove people away. In the same way, in our serving today we must realize that the Lord is not after success or large numbers. What He wants is a golden shining testimony of believers who pursue Christ and are one with Him.

As such a man, His earthly ministry was ended by the cross of shame. Afterwards, however, the Father highly exalted Him, thus inaugurating His heavenly ministry, which is the center of the divine and mystical realm.

Message 2, Excerpt 5
A Healthy Fear of God

5 minutes 5 seconds • 1.5 megabytes

So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.
— Philippians 2:12-13

As believers in Christ who live in the divine and mystical realm, we should have a proper fear and trembling before the Lord, being afraid of offending this realm. This will give the Lord the ground to work in us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

Message 2, Excerpt 6
The Good Pleasure of God: Christ and the Church

6 minutes 31 seconds • 2.0 megabytes

For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.
Do all things without murmurings and reasonings that you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life, so that I may have a boast in the day of Christ that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.
But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all. And in like manner you also rejoice, and you rejoice together with me.
— Philippians 2:13-18

What is God's good pleasure? It is Christ and the church. To realize that God is after only Christ and the church, and nothing else, is a real blessing. Thus, we should never bring anything into the church life other than Christ.

The result of living in such a realm is a mutual rejoicing between the believers and the apostles. This is the reality of the divine and mystical realm.

Excerpts from Message Three

Message 3, Excerpt 1
The Highest Value

4 minutes 10 seconds • 1.3 megabytes

But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
— Philippians 3:8

Whatever knowledge we may have, such as the things we gain in our career, can never compare to the knowledge of Christ. The knowledge of Christ has the greatest value, and to possess this knowledge requires us to pay the highest price.

If we are really seeking Christ, then the knowledge of Christ that we possess will increase all the time. When our knowledge of Him stops increasing, the church becomes stale and routine to us. That is not normal; as the hymn says,

> *What limit is there to this love?*
> *Thy flight, where wilt thou stay?*
> *On, on! Our Lord is sweeter far*
> *Today than yesterday.*

Message 3, Excerpt 2
The Unique Accomplisher and Executor of God's Economy

4 minutes 42 seconds • 1.4 megabytes

But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
— Philippians 3:8

The knowledge of Christ has a value that is exceedingly great, and which is always increasing. The more we love Him, the more beautiful He is; His beauty never ends.

He is the unique accomplisher and executor of God's economy, so without Him there can never be the reality of God's economy. Thus, we must always be careful that Christ is in whatever we do for God. Even if we achieve some success in our work, we must be careful that Christ does not disappear from it.

Message 3, Excerpt 3
Christ Must Have the First Place, and Even Be Everything in the Church Life

4 minutes 56 seconds • 1.5 megabytes

And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
— Ephesians 1:22-23

To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel.
— Ephesians 3:8

And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things.
— Colossians 1:18

All the positive things in the universe are related to Christ. Without Christ there is nothing positive in the universe, so any existence apart from Him is either evil and sinful, or empty and void, without any real value.

His riches are unsearchable, meaning we could never exhaust who He is. And He is the preeminent One. If He is not preeminent in our lives, we ourselves will be out of order. Why do we have problems? It is because we do not give Christ the first place in our lives.

Not only does He have the first place, He is also the center and the universality. The present Christ should be the content, reality, operation, and realm of our Christian life and church life.

Message 3, Excerpt 4
Beware of Doing Something for God Apart from Christ

10 minutes 29 seconds • 3.1 megabytes

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision.
— Philippians 3:2

In human life, dogs belong to a family, but are never really a part of it, because they have a different nature. In the same way, we may have some "dogs" in the church life, i.e., those who participate in the activities of the church life without the reality of the Spirit. We need to be careful that we ourselves are not such ones!

The evil workers damage the church, even though they never believe that what they are doing is evil. We ourselves may often do things for Christ without the reality of Christ; Paul classifies this as an "evil work." We may even be quite successful, but such a success is not what God wants; rather, He desires that Christ would be the center and universality of everything in the church life, because apart from Christ, nothing has real value before God.

Message 3, Excerpt 5
We Need to Let Christ Stand Next to What We Value

7 minutes 31 seconds • 2.3 megabytes

But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith.
— Philippians 3:8-9

Christ is both subjective and objective to us. "Subjective" refers to our enjoyment of Him, while "objective" refers to what He is in Himself: so wise, prudent, powerful, and so much more.

To gain Christ, we need to let Christ stand by all of the things that we exalt. When He appears, everything else loses its value, and we will count them to be loss. If we are this kind of person, then we shall be found in Christ. We should tell Him, "Lord, I want to gain You!"

Excerpts from Message Four

Message 4, Excerpt 1
The Unique Accomplisher and Executor of God's Economy

5 minutes 42 seconds • 1.7 megabytes

I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward. — Philippians 3:14

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is. — First John 3:2

The Lord Jesus Himself, and the apostles Peter, Paul, and John all realized that the purpose of life is to gain the prize, and they lived their lives accordingly. For the Lord, it was "the joy set before Him" (Heb. 12:2). Peter spoke of the "unfading crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:1, 4). Paul said "I pursue toward the goal for the prize" (Phil. 3:14). Finally the apostle John said, very simply, that if we see Him we will be the same as He is (1 John 3:2).

Our Christian life is a growing life, a life of pursuing the Lord until He appears. It is not that we are seeking to go to heaven, but that, when we see Him, we will be just like Him. This will be our prize.

Message 4, Excerpt 2
Seeking to Attain to the Out-Resurrection

8 minutes 29 seconds • 2.5 megabytes

To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead. — Philippians 3:10-11

We all will be like Christ, but some believers will attain to the out-resurrection from the dead while others will not. There will be different degrees of glory (1 Cor. 15:41–42). If we are proper, the power of resurrection will bring us into the reality of resurrection to attain to the out-resurrection. We should follow the Lord, seeking to live a life blessed by God and so meaningful before Him, so that there will be the prize of the out-resurrection waiting for us. How glorious is such a life!

The Lord desires that we, as His lovers and pursuers, would pour ourselves out for Him just as He poured Himself out for us. Rather than limiting our pursuit of the Lord, we should lay hold of that for which we were laid hold of by Christ Jesus, using our time and our daily life to pursue the Lord and serve Him for His testimony.

Message 4, Excerpt 3
Not Holding on to What We Have, and the Example of Watchman Nee

10 minutes 34 seconds • 3.1 megabytes

Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
— Philippians 3:13-14

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men.
— Philippians 2:5-7

As we pursue Christ, we need to forget so many things, including our success, our fruit, our spiritual maturity, and our ministry. In this respect, Watchman Nee was a very good pattern for us. Although he was so spiritually rich, he left that with the Lord, never insisting that the Lord would use his ministry. Instead, he allowed the Lord to confine and limit him, in particular during the last twenty years of his life when he was placed in a communist prison camp.

Just as the Lord Jesus did not insist on holding on to what He had, we also should be willing to lay aside everything we possess, even the spiritual things, because we only love and care for the Lord Himself.

Excerpts from Message Five

Message 5, Excerpt 1
Pursuing Christ; Not Aiming at Numbers but at Christ Himself

7 minutes 49 seconds • 2.3 megabytes

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. — Galatians 6:7

We need to learn to be ambitious in our pursuing of Christ, dealing forcefully with any obstacles we encounter. What the Lord gives us is not for us to appreciate ourselves but to help us pursue Him.

Even though we may desire to have a large number of believers meeting with us, we should not aim at that. We may help the churches, but we are not for success in our Christian work, nor can we use any human methods. "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Rather, we are filled with the fruit of righteousness to the glory and praise of God!

Message 5, Excerpt 2
A Corporate Joy in the Church Life

6 minutes 4 seconds • 1.8 megabytes

I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in my every petition on behalf of you all, making my petition with joy, for your fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now.— Philippians 1:3-5

There is a corporate joy in the church life between the triune God, the saints in the local churches, and the apostles who serve the churches. The apostles are over us; they are not our "bosses." Rather, they serve us, helping us to know Christ. Yet, while the local churches only answer to the Lord Himself, to grow in a healthy way they must still be properly related to the Lord's servants.

Our joy comes when there is a proper relationship between Christ, the church, and the Lord's servants. We see a good example of this in the church in Philippi, in which the Lord, His servants, and all the saints are very joyful.

Message 5, Excerpt 3
No Expectations, but a Joy No One Can Take from Us

11 minutes 19 seconds • 3.4 megabytes

Therefore you also now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you.
— John 16:22

And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.
— Acts 2:46

Those who follow the Lord often have expectations in doing so: that they will be manifested, blessed by the Lord, become an elder, etc. So it was with the first disciples; they could not accept that the Lord would be put to death, ending their earthy hopes. We should never think this way. Rather, if we can gain Christ Himself we should be more than satisfied with that. If we are expecting something other than Christ our joy will disappear, but if our only expectation is to gain Christ, no one will be able to take our joy away from us.

The church is not under any man. If we are truly one, the Lord will bless us, but if we are simply carrying out orders, we may miss the blessing. The church life is from house to house; it's not only in the gatherings. The gatherings should not be the focus—if that's the case, there's a problem—but rather, the exhibition of the reality of our church life. The church life must be in the homes, as we are together, loving the Lord and the saints.

Message 5, Excerpt 4
Growth, Joy, and a Care for One Another

8 minutes 44 seconds • 2.6 megabytes

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truthfulness, Christ is announced; and in this I rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice.
— Philippians 1:18

Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing.
— Philippians 2:2

The servants of the Lord desire to see those they serve grow. This makes both the Lord's servants and the saints themselves very happy. The church life is not about going to the meetings but about growing in Christ. This growth produces the real joy.

The oneness of the saints in seeking to gain Christ makes the apostle's joy full. When the saints are together in one accord, in a thorough fellowship, standing with one another for the Lord's interest, there will be the real joy. The mutual care between the apostle Paul and the church in Philippi produced a joy, particularly in the case of Epaphroditus. This was done without any complaining, judging, or blaming, but rather with toleration and covering of each other, so that both the apostle and the church were encouraged and the brother was properly cared for.