



DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

To Be Like Christ: ... By Gareth

READ: PHILIPPIANS 3: 10-16

- ***To be like Christ requires knowing the fellowship of His sufferings.***
- Our Saviour came to suffer for our sins on the cross. His entire ministry was marked by misunderstanding, opposition, betrayal, and death. While we can never enter into His sufferings in the same way that He suffered on the cross, there is a sense in which we can never be like Him if we do not go through suffering, because it is then and only then that we become more acquainted with him and that we learn to entrust our souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (*1 Pet. 4:19; see also 1 Pet. 2:21-23; 4:13; Rom. 8:17-25; 2 Cor. 1:5*).
- *Hebrews 5:8* makes the startling statement that “Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered.” It does not mean that Jesus was disobedient and had to learn to be obedient through suffering. It means that He had never experienced the test of obedience until He suffered. His suffering for our sins on the cross was the ultimate test of His submission to the will of the Father. If we are to be like Him, we must also learn to obey God through suffering.
- Unlike Jesus, we have the powerful force of indwelling sin to contend with. God uses suffering to burn off the dross and purify us. But, we have to cooperate with Him by humbling ourselves under His mighty hand when we go through trials, trusting His sovereignty over our suffering, and casting all our cares upon Him (*1 Pet. 5:6-11*).
 - *Fellowship with Jesus points to closeness or intimacy.*
- Paul knew this fellowship this intimacy. When Paul was preaching in corrupt Corinth, he was afraid. The Lord appeared to him in a vision and said, “*Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city*” (*Acts 18:9-10*).
- ***To be like Christ requires being conformed to His death.***
- This phrase is related to “*the fellowship of His sufferings*” and grows out of it. But it also has another dimension, which Paul describes in many other places, that of dying to sin and self through the cross of Christ.

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Week 43

- When we trust in Christ, we are placed “in Christ,” which means that we are identified with Him in His death and resurrection. But, we have to live this out, it has to be our experience so that it's not just experientially true of us but positionally true.
- In *Galatians 2:20* Paul states, “*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.*”
- This is what Jesus meant when He said that whoever follows Him must deny self and take up his cross daily (*Luke 9:23*). Jesus always lived by denying temptations to live in His own power or for His own ends. He lived only to do the Father's will. We must learn to die to self and sin by being conformed to His death, as we do so we grow to be like Him.
- ***To be like Christ will be realized in the resurrection from the dead.***
- *Philippians 3:11* “*if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*” Paul is expressing his hope that he will fully realize what it means to experience the resurrection life of Christ being lived out fully through him. Paul then goes on to say that he has not yet attained it, but presses on v12.
- The process of sanctification will be completed. We will be like Him, totally apart from sin, sharing in His glory throughout eternity (*Rom. 8:17-21, 30; 9:23*)! John applies this wonderful truth, “*Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure*” (*1 John 3:2, 3*).
- ***Conclusion***
- So that's our goal, to know Jesus Christ and to become more and more like Him. You will have temptations where you need to rely on the power of His resurrection. You will face trials where you come to know the fellowship of His sufferings. You will encounter irritations where you must learn to be more conformed to His death.
- View it all as an opportunity to know Christ and to remind each of us that it is preparing us for that great day when He comes and each one who is in Christ will be raised up in glory with Him for all eternity.