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Scripture Reading: Col. 3:4; Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20

I. CHRIST OUR LIFE

Many Christians have a wrong concept about the Lord Jesus. They think that the Lord set up a good pattern for us while He was on earth and that we should imitate this pattern. It is true that the Bible charges us to imitate the Lord (Rom. 15:5; 1 Cor. 11:1; etc.). But the Bible does not tell us to do this by ourselves. There is something we must see before we can imitate Him. Many people want to imitate the Lord, but they repeatedly fail. They regard the Lord like they regard good Chinese calligraphy, something to be copied stroke by stroke. They do not realize how frail man is and that no fleshly energy could give man enough strength to imitate Him.

Some Christians think that they can ask the Lord to empower them simply because the Bible says, "I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me" (Phil. 4:13). They feel that there are many things that need to be done, many biblical precepts that need to be obeyed, and many examples of the Lord that need to be imitated. They also feel that none of this can be done unless they have more power. Therefore, they ask the Lord for power. They think that if the Lord would only give them the power, they would be able to do all things. Many people just wait and hope daily for the Lord to give them the power to conduct their activities.

It is true that we need to look to the Lord for power. But in addition to asking for power, we need to see something further. Without seeing this one thing, we will not always have the power, even though we may be looking to the Lord. We can pray to the Lord every day for power. But sometimes the Lord answers such prayer, and sometimes He does not. To some people this means that they can do all things when He empowers them and that they can do nothing when He does not empower them. This is precisely the reason so many Christians fail again and again. We have to ask the Lord to empower us. But if we take this as an isolated commandment or as the only way, we will fail.

The fundamental relationship between Christ and us is conveyed in the words Christ our life. We can imitate the Lord only because He has become our life. We can ask Him for strength only because He has become our life. There is no way to imitate Him or be empowered by Him unless we understand the meaning of Christ our life. Hence we must first understand, see, and grasp the secret of Christ our life before we can imitate Him or ask Him for strength.

Colossians 3:4 says, "Christ our life." Philippians 1:21 says, "For to me, to live is Christ." This shows us that the way to victory is for Christ to be our life. Victory is, "For to me, to live is Christ." If a Christian does not know what is meant by Christ our life, and what is meant by for to me, to live is Christ, he will not experience the Lord's life on earth; he will not be able to follow the Lord, to experience victory in Him, or to proceed on the course before him.