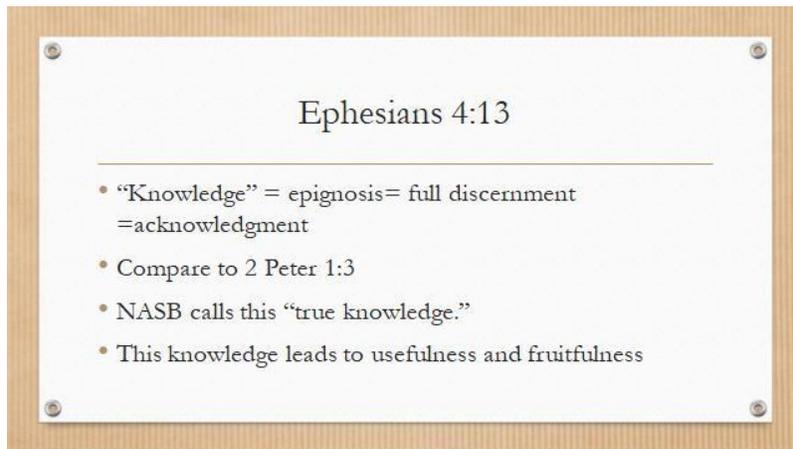


The Mind of Christ Week 2

January 23, 2019



And {Now} He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the [d]saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the [e] **knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature [f]which belongs to the fullness of Christ.** ¹⁴ [g]As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness [h]in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but [i]speaking the truth in love, [j]we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together [k]by what every joint supplies, according to the [l]proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. The phrase “now” is in 4:13. knowledge is something we are to attain to. From the knowledge of the Son of God, we become a mature man to the measure or the stature that belongs to Christ. “attainment” we realize is something that we work all of our lives to reach. That is why I call this study “Challenger Deep”. The deepest part of any ocean is 36,000 feet which is why I call this “Challenger Deep”... for that metaphor. The word “knowledge” in verse 13 is “epignosis” (ἐπιγνώσεως) meaning “full discernment” (not just a head knowledge), “acknowledgment”, or “intimate knowledge”. 2 Peter 1:3 uses the same word saying, “**seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true** (intimate) **knowledge** of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”

If we are going to attain to that divine nature, it is going to take an intimate knowledge of God. It is not about memorizing the Bible. We could memorize the entire Bible and still not have that intimate knowledge of Christ or God. So

discerning the mind of Christ is not about memorizing the things that Jesus said or did. 'that' were my goal, I would just memorize Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is more about understanding why Jesus did what he did and why he said what he said, and how this helps us to know an invisible God. Jesus is the visible expression of the invisible God.

According to 2 Peter 1:2, grace and peace are multiplied to you 'in' the (intimate) knowledge of God and of Jesus, our Lord. So if we want to have the multiplication of grace and peace in our life, (a common greeting of that day), it is going to come from that intimate knowledge of God. I really believe that we have so much chaos and confusion in the world today because people just don't know God. They don't have that kind of relationship with Him. They live in chaos. The NASB calls this intimate knowledge "true knowledge" but they don't have a true knowledge of who He is to receive that grace and peace. We need to capture the true knowledge of who He is. In 2 Peter 1:8 says, "**For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

After listing the qualities of character that we talked about last week, it is this character that is imprinted upon us, not with pen or ink but is written on our hearts (Romans 2:15). God, through the Spirit, writes His character on our hearts – it is inscribed into our hearts. It becomes a part of who we are. And that transference that takes place is very intimate. It comes from God's mind into our mind. God renews our mind almost by wiping the slate clean and rewriting events on our hearts when we turn to Him.

Now, after listing the qualities and characters, Peter tells us that these are increasing so that our knowledge of Jesus will be neither useless nor unfruitful. People in Christ want to become very useful and fruitful people, but these are not just products of honing our skills but they come from having a relationship with Him. And through that relationship, God can equip us for the good works we are to do. Now people may be good at what they do, but if it is not from having a relationship with God, it isn't the quality of God ... it's human work.

Eph.4:13

- This knowledge is essence for completeness (teleios)
- The Measure of completeness is the stature of the fullness of Christ
- Fullness = Pleroma
- Colossians 2:9. All fullness of Deity
- Col.1:28-Paul's mission-How? Admonishing & Teaching

The knowledge of God is essential for completeness. The Greek word for completeness is Teleios {τελειον}. Full growth is complete manhood in the Bible. The measure of this completeness is the stature of the fullness of Christ. So if we want to realize what the goal is for us, it is to measure up to Christ. Now that is a daunting ideal—to measure up to the full stature of Christ. It's like a young child trying to stretch up to be as tall as his dad. We're stretching. We are stretching and stretching somehow trying to fill to the stature of the fullness of Christ. If I have to realize, "What is the mind of Christ" ... if I am going to pursue the mind of Christ, I need to know what it is that I am pursuing. I need to know what I want to accomplish having the mind of Christ ... the fullness of Christ.

The Pleroma of Christ is the word fullness and that is what we are trying to accomplish. In Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. So we are coming at this from two different angles. One angle is that God is pouring all of His wholeness into the form of Jesus. And then I am trying to come at it from the other side of this equation. I am trying to reach out and take from Him all the fullness of Jesus (meaning, really, that I am trying to take all the fullness of God.) Of course, God's side of the equation is much more doable than my side of the equation. Nevertheless, we are supposed to meet in the middle. (? first son of man is Jesus. That is where we meet God) and when we meet God at the point of Jesus, what does that fullness imply? Our life will be full. And I think we can take that in a very practical way. I mentioned last week we want to live our lives in fullness. I want to be filled up with all the fullness of God. That is a decision that we have to make every day. (This is the day that the Lord has made and I will rejoice and be glad in it.) I want to get out of life today every bit that I can squeeze out of it—each day). We cannot do this every day. Some days are fuller than others, but when you do that, you're usually tired at the end of the day. Good tired.

The fullness we seek to attain lies in Christ and his followers before Him as he sojourned the earth. To know and understand His life on Earth is to know and see the fullness that was visible. The context is that we can see the path of the fullness in His life.

Col.1:28

- Admonish=Noutheteo=to put into mind. See Rom.15:14
- Teaching=Didasko=instruct=Holy Spirit in the process-Profound!

In Colossians 1:28, “He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ To this end, I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.” This could be Paul’s mission statement. (This is likely how Paul went into all the world and preached the gospel.) Remember how he said that he was “resolved to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified”. 1 Cor. 2:2.

Paul’s mission was to proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man, with all wisdom that he might present every man complete in Christ. How would he present them perfectly? He “admonished” – to put into their mind as he instructed his followers. “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.” (Rom. 15:14)

Admonition and teaching were the methods that Paul used with those he met. Noutheteo means to use the Word of God as a counseling tool. To give counsel to, to admonish. It is used in Christian counseling by applying the Word of God to people’s circumstances. It has therapeutic value to the individual. It may be a bit harsh sometimes to admonish someone but it comes from love. It means to put into one’s mind; to caution or reprove. It is made up of two words: ‘mind’ and ‘to place’. And that brings us right back to wanting to have the mind of Christ. What is it that we are trying to place into ‘our’ minds? We’re trying to place ‘His’ mind into ‘our’ mind. That’s like trying to put ten pounds of potatoes into a five-pound sack. We are going to have to have some type of expansion in order to fill our minds up with the mind of Christ.

The mind of Christ is going to stretch us. It’s the idea of wineskins. If you pour new wine into old wineskins, what happens? They burst. You can only pour new wine into new wineskins that haven’t already stretched. That is why we are made “new” in our minds. We have newness of mind so that our minds can expand with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We take in more and more and more of Christ until we reach completeness. But if you take an old mind, the mind of a person

who is set in their ways, someone who has never changed one idea in the past fifty years, I can show you somebody who never knew Jesus. One cannot get to know Jesus without being stretched. It will challenge you all the time. People who are set in their ways have hardened their minds against change.

This doesn't mean to open yourself up to the world; open yourself up to Jesus. That is when and where spiritual growth takes place.

Back to Romans 15:14, **“And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.”** Paul said that he was confident that those he taught would be able to instruct one another. So to the degree that you have the mind of Christ; to that degree, you can instruct one another. You are competent. If you are in Christ, you probably know considerably more than most people of this world. To get into Christ you have to know enough to obey the gospel which is more than most people know. You are competent to instruct other people about what you know. And in doing this, in sharing this, you are reminding yourself again so you will not likely forget it yourself.

We also teach “didasko” διδάσκει – to instruct. We do this with all wisdom which is available to us in His Word. So we have our goal (the fullness), the resources of wisdom and the method of admonition and teaching which sounds pretty simple. But this is absolutely profound! The Holy Spirit is in this process. This process that we are beginning to learn about is profound because the Holy Spirit enters into this process.

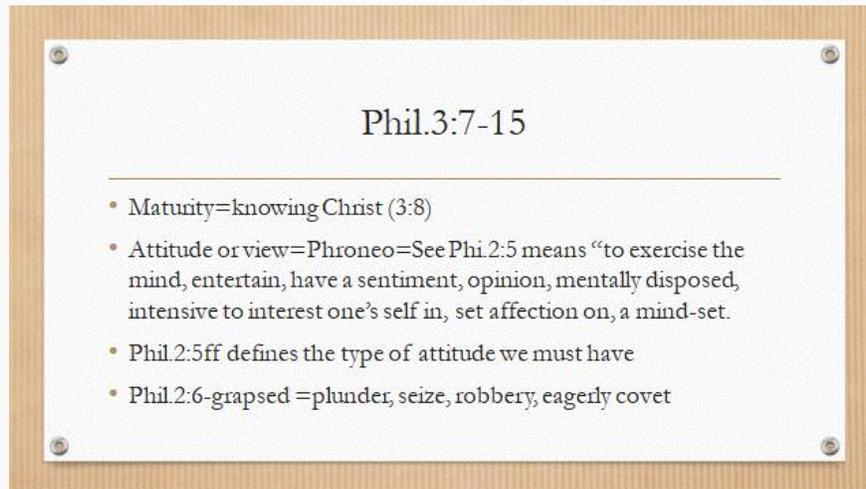
When we decide to sit down and open up God's word together with the Holy Spirit, He goes to work. He on the same page as us, but He's doing the inside job while I'm doing the outside job. And there is a process here that can lead us to have the mind of Christ. We are participating with the Holy Spirit of God. This process leads to maturity. We have taken this so for granted thinking that it is a man-made process. It's NOT a man-made process. It is a divine process that we need to reverence ... to hold in high esteem.

Otherwise, we come to think of this as “just another study” or “just another Bible class.”

The Holy Spirit is truly at work in this process.

In Philippians 3:5-15 Paul says, **“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ 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, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ**

Jesus. ¹³ 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, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ 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; ¹⁶ however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.”



Paul is talking about this pursuit for perfection or maturity. This perfection or maturity is found in Christ. He talks about the attitude that we must have. This attitude is the word Phroneo (φρονεωεν). It is the exercise of the mind, to entertain in the mind or opinion. It is a concern for obedience or to set our affections on. This is the attitude we must pursue with intensity. It is used in Philippians 2:5-11, “Have this attitude in yourselves (have the same intensity in you) 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, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Rod likens this to the Progressive Insurance commercial -

(<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wccR/progressive-cycling-is-my-passion>)

She is not striving, she is kidding. Exercise that doesn’t challenge you is not really exercise. This pursuit of maturity is extremely challenging. It is a mindset, takes focus.

Phil.25ff

- Letting go of what is grasp is “emptying”=Kenoo=to make vain
- This the opposite of fullness
- Letting go of “my” hupostasis”
- Phil.3:7-11, letting go is addressed=credentials and performance
- From gain to loss=from grasp to empty
- Confidence=what we rely on for well-being

People talk today about getting into shape and say that it can't be just a diet or exercise routine. It has to be a change in their mindset. We have to think differently about how we eat and what eating is about. If you are simply going through routines without understanding how it works, the diet will not work very well. It is when we really buy into how it works, then that is where we get into the pursuit of it.

My journaling was during a 7-year period. I really truly believed that something was going to happen to me. There was going to be a change. I would be in spiritual shape, being transformed in some way. This mental exercise was a new mindset that became a very holy addiction. If I had to miss it for a day or two, I had withdrawals. I couldn't handle it. I had to get back into this.

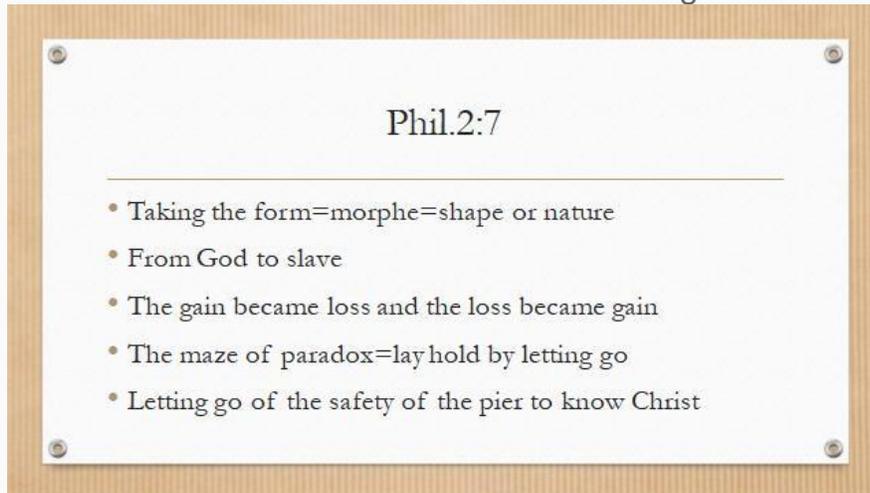
Here, Paul says that the pursuit of maturing in knowing Christ came from having a certain attitude. In verse 8 Paul talked about Jesus humility and obedience. So if you are going to have the mind of Christ, you are going to have to have the same mindset that Christ had when he came to this earth. It is interesting that Paul says in verse 15 that if you have a different attitude, God will reveal it to you. He says that He will. He will give you that mindset. We need God's help to have this mindset. **We may need to pray often for this attitude and mindset.** We don't have the same attitude as Christ. We don't have His focus or His intent to carry out the will of God. Pray for God to reveal this to you. Ask Him for it. Pray that He will give you focus in this process.

We need help. **The Mind of Christ must become the mind in me.** There has to be this transference. This attitude of Philippians 2:5-7 in Christ explains how He existed in the form of God but did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. {He} emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men! This would result in his death on the cross!

The idea of grasping something or holding on to something for us is so hard. Think of what Jesus had to do to come down here. He had to let go what he had a hold of. idea of grasping something means to plunder or seize. It goes with the word robbery. A robber grabs hold of something and holds on to it with force. He

covets it. He knows its value. (can be positive or negative: covet the mind of Christ or covet the things of this world.) We must covet a relationship with God. Look at the words 'jealous' and 'zealous'. I can be jealous of a bad thing, or be zealous, intensely committed to something good.

In Jesus' case, he was holding on to His deity. He held on to His place in heaven, His nature, His goodness. The question is, "What do I hold on to?" What do I seize? What do I covet? What do I desire that I must let go of?



Remember Achan in the O. T. He sees the plunder and what does he do? He holds on to it. And what happens to him? What happens to his family? He was holding onto something that he had no business holding on to.

Imagine a child grabbing a toy away from another child and holding onto it. "It's mine", they say. It may not be, but to them, "It's mine." At that moment, in their mind, that toy belongs to them and they have a death grip on it. They are holding on to it. The reason it's mine is because 'I have it'. Possession is 9/10^{ths} of the law. I got it first so that makes it mine. Just because I hold something very tightly doesn't make it mine. It may be yours ... or somebody else's!

Jesus said that if you hold on to your life, you could lose it! But to lose it for the sake of Jesus is to hold on to it. It's a paradox. The child who learns to share receives. That's why we teach kids to share. The child who shares will enjoy life a whole lot better than a child who won't let go. So the hoarder eventually loses. What am I holding on to that I need to let go of ... so I can step off the pier and go challenger deep?

Now I have to reveal what has a hold of me. That was the question that I grappled with in my study of the Mind of Christ. If I am eventually to get down to the bottom of Challenger Deep, the 36,000 feet ... I have to step off the pier. I have to let go of something. I will never get down to the bottom of that pit if I don't strip myself of everything that could keep me from getting down to the bottom of the pit. If I'm holding on to a rope or a life preserver, or hanging on to the edge of the pier, I will never have the mind of Christ. Seriously, this is a risky business. This is a journey that once you are on it, and you are floating down to the bottom

of it, there is no return. This is not a simple question. This is a serious question. This you have to ponder. "What do I need to let go of?" Only then can the emptying begin. Letting go of the raft is the first step. Then you have to loosen yourself.

Personal story:

Now the only time I was seriously in trouble drowning was with Brenda. It was in Solavix State park on the other coast. I won't bore you with all the details. Brenda could tell you. She probably knows it better than I do. But I went down for the third time! And I **do** remember that when I went down for the third time, there was a point in time when I felt that emptying feeling place. I quit struggling. I resigned myself to the possibility that I was going to die.

But Brenda said, "But I was not resigned to that! I would not let go.

But I really remember thinking that I could really die today. In some ways, it was a peaceful feeling! It was strange. Even thinking back on it, it was strange. I stopped struggling. I was worn out. I was tired. I didn't think I had anything left in me. I just resigned myself to dying that day. And I just felt peaceful. And there was a point in time in this study of the Mind of Christ where I came to some peace about going down to the trench. This is real deep.

I remember in College when I was first asked this question, (Bobby Chisolm)

"What would happen, how would you react, or Church if suddenly tomorrow there were no Church of Christ buildings; no Christian or Church of Christ Colleges, and no publishing companies for the Churches of Christ? There was no remnant outwardly of anything had learned about the Churches of Christ. What would happen to your faith?" thought of all the great teachers that I had looked up to growing up. That was such an integral part of my identity growing up that couldn't

even imagine not having that in my life. can't even imagine what that would be like. (The Question really sent cold shivers down my back.) And had to seriously consider, what that really more important to my spiritual life and maturity than Jesus Himself! Not to turn my back on those things or say that those things weren't important. They **do** have a place in my life, but they are a **part** of my life. know I'll never be saved because I went to the Dasher Church of Christ from the time I was a baby. 'm not going to be saved because I went to a Church school from first grade to twelfth grade. am not going to be saved because of my schooling from Harding University and Harding Graduate School. 'm not saved because I preach for the church of Christ on Sunday. For a few minutes there, felt that I wouldn't know who I am. But his point was '*if we're not getting our assurance from Christ and Christ alone, there is something wrong*'. And that's what Paul was saying in Philippians 3

Only when you strip yourself of everything, can the emptying begin. Paul knew that whatever he held on to was in vain. Paul had credentials and performance. In Phil. 3:1-11 Paul wrote:

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. ² Beware of the dogs, beware of the

evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; ³ for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, ⁴ although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh.

Phil.2:8

- Emptying, letting go and HUMBLING SELF
- Humbling=tapinoo-to depress, humiliate, abase, bring low
- See Matt.18:4 preceded by "conversion" (18:3)=strepho which may be the same as emptying
- 1 Peter 5:5-6
- Humility leads to shameful obedience (the cross)

Remember when King Solomon saw the emptiness of everything. All the things he was holding on to were vain and meaningless. Whatever I hold on to must be made vain. Consider it empty. That is when you can draw the right conclusions. We have been redeemed from the empty way of life handed down by our forefathers. Are you willing to let go of the weight of life, and to make it vain in my heart and mind?

The opposite of full, as in the fullness of Christ, is the emptying. If I'm trying to attain to the fullness of Christ, I won't have room for the fullness inside of me until I empty myself. I have to strip myself of everything else if I'm to have the fullness of Christ inside of me.

To show that something is without true or ground essence (remember the word from last week: hupostasis). Jesus is the Hupostasis; the essence of all ... the ultimate reality. Our faith is in the substance. Jesus is the essence of all things and our faith is the essence of all things.

Hebrews 1:1 **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.** And verse ¹¹ **By faith even Sarah herself received the ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.**

What is your faith in? The first time I went overseas, I went to England. It was my first time out of the U. S. A. I wasn't worried. I thought I was on solid ground. My hupostasis was, "I'm an American. Don't mess with me." Nothing can happen to me. That gave me stability. I could stand on that. Being an American gave me a sense of okayness. If anything went wrong, the government would send the Marines out here and I'd be free. But I have learned from many times going overseas, they're not going to send Marines to get me out ... and if they did it could take a long time. It could take a very long time if ever, to do.

My security was in my identity as an American. My security was in my identity as a member of the Church of Christ. My security was in my identity as a member of the Myers family and my mom's side of the family. But what Jesus was telling me to do was to let go of my security ... my "stuff". It wasn't worth a thing. None of that is going to get you to heaven. None of that will get you to Christ. Just let go of it. It doesn't matter!

So in Philippians 3:7-11, Paul said, ⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ 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, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Paul had no struggle with the flesh like what we would call hard core immorality, stealing, lying, or fornication. His fleshly struggle was regarding his credentials. Some people struggle with the immoral sins of life (fornication, adultery, stealing) but his struggle was with his performance. And that was a little bit more of what I was struggling with. What was gain to needed to be turned into a loss.

Verses 4-6 "If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

I was persuaded that my position as an American gave me a status in the world, therefore put my confidence in that. When realized that that wasn't where my confidence was, (not my passport or my birth on American soil), but is my name written in the book of life. It is not that I perform a certain way or have a certain IQ or degree, and if I hold on to that, if I grasp that, I am going to miss Christ. What do we rely on for our well-being? Is it close friends who you can trust? How much do we really tell our personal confidante? We lean on them. But we can trust no one that much. We may tell some, but not all. So, no. We don't let go of our own personal security normally. Jesus didn't trust himself to man either. He said he knew what was in man. You need to discern who you can and cannot trust. Jesus is the one.

Remember the word "form" in **Philippians 2:5-6**

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, **although He existed in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself ...

The word is Morphe meaning nature or shape. There was a difference in shape or form when Jesus was on the road to Emmaus. The disciples were kept from recognizing Jesus. Luke 24

Mark 16:12-13

¹² After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country. ¹³ They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.

What we are is not outward. What we are is inward.

In Phil. 2 He **had** the **form** of God but he emptied Himself and he took on the **form** of a bondservant. In this context, Jesus goes from being God to being a slave. How reassuring is that? To go from being God to being a man to being a slave is amazing. And then he died on a cross.

But how does that affect me? What do I die from?

Romans 12:2 says, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

I need to get out of that conformed and be transformed into something new. So for me to realize the extreme nature of that – this emptying business is tough stuff! Jumping out of the form that I was in and turn my life completely over to God to be formed into something else would be like being molded like a piece of clay by a master. We may look at it and say that that is beautiful and wonderful, but if that piece of clay could talk, do you think it would say, “look at how perfect I am, how beautiful I am?”

Jesus says if you come to me, here’s what I will do for you. I will melt you down and re-form you. I will form you into My image. You think you’re beautiful now, you think you’re useful now, you think you have it all together now, wait! Wait till I melt you down.

Whoa... I'm pretty good right now. I'm not too bad. Can we just do a little makeover here? Put a little paint on me? Jesus says, “No. It’s not going to work that way. Give yourself to me and I am going to melt you down into a pliable place where I can shape you and mold you to take on the form that I want you to have.” That is pretty tough.

So the application seems to be that I must take His decisions where I go, and get rid of whatever will prevent me from carrying out God’s will even when I give up my ability to get the job done. That means that when I think I know how to get the job done, and He has another idea, I must give up my idea and let him do His will in me.

When we get to 5:11, the Challenger Deep begins in earnest.