

THE 2024 THANKSGIVING BLENDING CONFERENCE

GENERAL SUBJECT:

LIVING A CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHURCH LIFE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD FOR THE ECONOMY OF GOD

Message Four Becoming a Reproduction of Christ and Experiencing Christ as the Shepherd of Our Souls

TW Hymns: 750, 1170

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 2:21-23, 25; Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 1:27; 2:2

- 1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
- 1 Pet 2:22 Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth;
- 1 Pet 2:23 Who being reviled did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously;
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
- Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
- Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
- Phil 1:27 Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I may hear of the things concerning you, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together along with the faith of the gospel,
- Phil 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

I. As believers in Christ, we may become a reproduction of Christ as our model—1 Pet. 2:21:

- 1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
- A. The living of the Lord Jesus under the government of God is a model so that we may follow in His steps by becoming His reproduction—vv. 21-23; Eph. 4:20-21.
- 1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
- 1 Pet 2:22 Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth;
- 1 Pet 2:23 Who being reviled did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously;
- Eph 4:20 But you did not so learn Christ,
- Eph 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,
- B. The Greek word for *model* in 1 Peter 2:21 denotes a master copy used in the teaching of writing—a writing copy, an underwriting, for students to use in tracing letters as they learn to draw them:
- 1 Pet 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;
1. The Lord Jesus has set His life before us as an underwriting for us to copy by tracing and following His steps—Matt. 11:28-30.

- Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
 Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
 Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
2. It is not God's intention that we try to imitate Christ by our own effort; what we need is not imitation but reproduction—Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
- C. We need to become Christ's reproduction, copies of Christ, by a process that involves the riches of the divine life; when this process is completed, we will become a reproduction of Christ—John 3:15; Eph. 3:8.
 John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.
 Eph 3:8 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
- D. The making of xerox copies may be used to illustrate what Peter means by Christ being a model for us.
- E. In order to become a reproduction of Christ as our model, we need to experience Christ as the One living in us, being formed in us, and making His home in our hearts—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17a:
 Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
 Gal 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,
 Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
 Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
1. The New Testament reveals that Christ is deeply related to our inner being—Gal. 1:16; Col. 3:10-11.
 Gal 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,
 Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
2. The pneumatic Christ—Christ as the life-giving Spirit—is living in us—1 Cor. 15:45b; Gal. 2:20:
 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
 Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- a. God's economy is that the "I" be crucified in Christ's death and that Christ live in us in His resurrection—John 14:19.
 John 14:19 Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you also shall live.
- b. We are one spirit with the Lord, we have one life with Him, and we should now be one person with Him—1 Cor. 6:17; Col. 3:4; Phil. 1:21a.
 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
 Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
 Phil 1:21a For to me, to live is Christ
- c. Since Christ dwells in us as the Spirit, we need to let Him live in us—John 14:16-19; Gal. 2:20.

- John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,
- John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.
- John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.
- John 14:19 Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you also shall live.
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
3. To have Christ formed in us is to have Christ fully grown in us—4:19:
- Gal 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,
- a. Christ was born into us at the time we repented and believed in Him, then He lives in us in our Christian life, and finally, He will be formed in us at our maturity—John 1:12-13; 3:15; Gal. 2:20; 4:19.
- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- Gal 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,
- b. To have Christ formed in us is to allow the all-inclusive Spirit to occupy every part of our inner being, to have Christ fully grown in us—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- c. To have Christ formed in us implies that we are being constituted with Christ organically—Col. 3:10-11.
- Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- d. *Formed* in Galatians 4:19 corresponds to *image* in 2 Corinthians 3:18; Christ will be formed in us so that we may express Him in His image.
- Gal 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
4. The Christ who lives in us and who is being formed in us is making His home in our hearts—Eph. 3:16-17a.
- Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

5. As Christ lives in us, is formed in us, and makes His home in our hearts, we become a reproduction of Christ for the corporate expression of God—Rom. 8:29; 12:4-5; Rev. 21:2.

Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

II. As we become a reproduction of Christ, we can experience and enjoy Christ as the Shepherd of our souls—1 Pet. 2:25; Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 1:27; 2:2:

1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
Phil 1:27 Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I may hear of the things concerning you, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together along with the faith of the gospel,
Phil 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

- A. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being:

1. Christ's organic shepherding primarily takes care of our soul—Psa. 23:3.
Psa 23:3 He restores my soul; He guides me on the paths of righteousness / For His name's sake.
2. Christ shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being—cf. Heb. 13:17.
Heb 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.
3. This kind of shepherding is an inward, intrinsic, organic comforting.

- B. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and our problems, needs, and wounds—John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17:

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,
John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1. As our pneumatic Shepherd, Christ takes care of us from within our spirit.
2. His shepherding begins from our spirit and spreads to every part of our soul.
3. From our spirit Christ reaches all the parts of our soul and takes care of us in a tender, organic, all-inclusive way.

- C. As the Shepherd of our souls, Christ restores our soul—Psa. 23:3a:

Psa 23:3a He restores my soul; He guides me on the paths of righteousness ...

1. For our soul to be restored means that we are revived.
2. Restoring our soul also includes renewing and transforming—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18.

Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

- D. As the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord gives rest to our soul—Matt. 11:28-30:
- Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
- Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
- Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
1. The Lord calls those who are striving to keep the law or struggling to be successful in any work to come to Him for rest—v. 28.
Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
 2. This rest refers not only to being set free from the toil and burden under the law or religion or under any work or responsibility but also to perfect peace and full satisfaction.
 3. To take the Lord's yoke is to take the will of the Father—12:50.
Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
 4. The Lord lived such a life, constrained by and caring for the will of His Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38); He was fully satisfied with the Father's will and had rest in His heart.
John 4:34 Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.
John 5:30 I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.
John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.
 5. The rest that we find by taking the Lord's yoke and learning from Him is an inward rest, a rest for our souls—Matt. 11:29-30.
Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
- E. As the Lord shepherds our soul and restores our soul, we not only experience Christ but also enjoy Him—Phil. 2:2; 3:1a:
- Phil 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,
- Phil 3:1a Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. ...
1. The experience of Christ is a matter primarily in our spirit, but the enjoyment of Christ is in our soul—1:27; 2:2.
Phil 1:27 Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I may hear of the things concerning you, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together along with the faith of the gospel,
Phil 2:2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,
 2. If there is a problem with our soul, we may have the experience of Christ without the enjoyment of Christ.
 3. Regarding Christ, our taste is mainly with our soul; this is the reason that in order to have the enjoyment of Christ, we need the Lord to shepherd every part of our soul, especially our mind.