

Fellowship is the participation in Christ's sufferings (Matt. 20:22-23; Col. 1:24), a necessary condition for the experience of the power of His resurrection (2 Tim. 2:11) by being conformed to His death. Paul was pursuing to know and experience not only the excellency of Christ Himself but also the life power of His resurrection and the participation in His sufferings. With Christ, the sufferings and death came first, followed by the resurrection; with us, the power of His resurrection comes first, followed by the participation in His sufferings and conformity to His death. We first receive the power of His resurrection; then by this power we are enabled to participate in His sufferings and live a crucified life in conformity to His death. Such sufferings are mainly for producing and building up the Body of Christ (Col. 1:24).

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