

Having The Mind of Christ

Philippians 2:1-11

Life's Question: *What attitude does Christ want me to have?*

Biblical Truth: *The humble spirit of a servant that characterized Christ is the supreme example of the attitude believers should hold toward one another.*

One of the greatest changes needed on the part of every saved person is a change of attitude! It has been said that we can change most anything if we would have a change of attitude. **In definition, an attitude is a state of mind.. a state of thinking.** To have the *mind of Christ* is to think as He thinks and to manifest the attitude that we see in His life.

The first church Paul established in Europe was at Philippi. It was a church that loved Paul greatly, had a wonderful testimony, and ministered to Paul's needs. Paul wrote this letter from prison to express his love and his appreciation for the gift they had sent to him. This church seemed to have but a few problems. The most glaring one was their need for unity.

I. OUR GOAL AS CHRISTIANS -- Phil. 2:1-2

A. Because of what we have through Christ's death!

"If there be" means more literally... "since you have.. for the word if means because." vs. 1 These were very certain blessings in Christ.

1. There is *consolation* in Christ. Jesus Christ is the source of all comfort, consolation and tender mercies.
It is when we love a parent, a wife, a child, a sister, a neighbor, that we have the highest earthly enjoyment. It is in the love of God, of Christ, of Christians, of the souls of men, that the redeemed find their highest happiness.
2. They knew *comfort of love* and the *fellowship of the Spirit*. The comfort they had in salvation brought great encouragement. The fellowship (koinonia) should have brought a great togetherness and unity.
We participate in the influences of the Holy Spirit, we share in some degree the feelings, views, and joys of the sacred Spirit Himself. Thus we are exhorted to unity, love and zeal -- so that we know the working of the Spirit in us and through us.
3. And there was *bowels... and tender mercies* or deep feelings of compassion and unconditional love. These were seen in Christ and manifested by Paul as well. These things should move us to have the mind of Christ.

B. Therefore, DO these things -- vs. 2 (four things were greatly needed)

1. *"fulfill ye my joy,"* If they desired to bring joy to Paul they needed to put away their differences, any strife, and work at oneness. The **key word** of the book of Philippians is **"joy, rejoice..."** (Phil. 4:4) We will have great joy by our ministry to others. Joy comes through serving.
2. *"be likeminded"* Like mindedness can only come about because of a similar focus, having the same goals, purposes, priorities. The focus must be on Christ. If we love Him supremely, obey His Word, and walk in His will -- then we will walk in like mindedness.

It is what we set our mind upon that makes the difference. (Rom. 8:5-7)
Mind here means -- *to set one's mind to, to think upon, to be minded in a certain way.* Consider Romans 8:5-8.

3. *“Having the same love,”* for if we love the same things -- having an intensity of love for Christ, the Church, and the Word of God -- it will bring unity. He is speaking of **“agape”** love... God’s love, a love that is sacrificial, self-sacrificing for another. Paul wanted them to see the basic problem was **selfishness** and **pride**. With these sinful thoughts and actions love cannot reign.
4. *“Being of one accord,”* for here again Paul is writing about the pressing need of unity among the believers. Thinking alike, acting alike... in harmonious accord like a great orchestra. Unity comes about when God’s people have *submissive minds and hearts* -- submissive first to God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit and to the Scriptures. **The Word must be our authority.**

We are to be possessed by His love, by His Person through the Holy Spirit’s power. Then unity is a natural outcome and joy, bringing true spiritual unity. A submissive mind is seen in Jesus Christ’s life in Phil. 2:5-11 ----- in Paul’s life in Phil. 2:12-18 ----- in Timothy’s life in Phil. 2:19-24; and ----- in Epaphroditus’s life in Phil. 2:25-30.

II. OUR GUIDELINES AS CHRISTIANS: Phil. 2:3-4

The problems they had are seen today in homes, marriages, the work force and of course among the lost in many relationships of life. It is sad when a church has those who gossip, bring about discord, and strife.

A. An inner response: vs. 3

1. *Don’t act through strife or vain glory:* vs. 3 It is easy for things to be done in a spirit of contention. Never should we endeavor to gain our desires through strife or by schemes but instead do everything for God’s glory and honor. *Vain glory means empty pride, doing things for show...having a vain (empty) opinion of one’s self.* When we seek to have our way... and want to *secure our rights* we will conflict with God’s way and will, and we will encourage others to be self-seeking, inconsiderate, and stubborn.

Consider how sin entered into the world... because Lucifer (becoming Satan) sought after his will, (He said, **“I will...”**) then he sought to cause Adam and Eve to seek their own way. Self-will is the very core of what sin is!

2. *But in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.* vs. 3 This is produced by true humility. (See Rom. 12:10.) A godly person will be a humble person. (See James 4:6-10.) The secret of joy is a yielded will. **Consider:** Do we seek our will or demand our will to be done? Do we value others above ourselves?

B. An outward reaction: vs. 4

1. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”* Do not allow your care and attention be wholly absorbed by your own concerns, interests, or desires. We desperately need to be unselfish and look out for the welfare of others.
2. This means literally to be burdened for what burdens others. For we are to help carry the load that others face. It should not be...*“What’s in it for me?”* but *“How can I meet other’s needs?”*
3. Does strife exist between you and others? Does self-interest condition what you do in life... your relationships and interests?

III. CHRIST... OUR MODEL AS CHRISTIANS: Phil. 2:5-8

The mind of Christ means the attitude that Christ exhibited. *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Him."*

1. Outlook determines outcome, for our attitudes determine our reactions.
2. If the outlook (or attitude) is selfish, then the actions will be divisive and destructive. We need to think like Jesus thinks. (vs. 5) How did He think?

A. Christ, as God, did not grasp after His position. vs. 6

1. He was in the **form of God**. This means "*the outward expression of the inward man.*" In eternity past, He was and is God. (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1-4)
2. He did not consider that position *something to be selfishly held on to...* but instead was willing to come upon this sin cursed earth to die for us.
3. In eternity past, He was in the form of God -- in "*outward appearance, shape, and external manifestation. He always existed, but became flesh.*" (Jh. 1:14-18)
4. Jesus did not think of self, but of others. We who have experienced the love of God ought to be different that the lost person.

B. Christ... made **Himself of no reputation**: vs. 7a

1. Literally "*He emptied himself*" of all His rights. He put away the outward appearance of deity, set aside his rights for our benefit.
2. The purpose of such self-emptying was to fulfill the Father's plan of redemption for sinners. (Jh. 5:30; 6:38)

C. Christ... **took upon Himself the form of a servant,..**"

He permanently became human, in a sinless physical body. He used that body... to be a servant. (Matt 20:28) He took that body to the cross... and willingly died. He is a vivid example of servanthood for every saved person. He actually was a servant for He did not pretend a role; He was not play acting.

D. He was "**made in the likeness of men.**"

1. Jesus Christ was like other men for He had the attributes of humanity -- therefore He was hungry, thirsty, knew pain and suffering. (Isa. 53)
2. He was fully God and yet fully man. He was fully man with a body, soul, and spirit. He was one of the human race. What an example of limiting Himself for the sake of others... for you and me... for mankind. (Heb. 2:9-18)

E. "**... He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**" vs. 8

1. As He took upon Himself the fashion of a man... that is lived and acted as a human (but without sin). He lived in total obedience to the Father.
2. The key is **His obedience**. (See John 5:30; 6:38; 8:29) He had no will of His own but came to do the Father's will and to please the Father.

3. He is the model for us... in all things... *love*, (Eph. 5:1); *surrender*, (Jh. 4:34); *servanthood*, (Matt. 20:28), etc.
4. Then He accepted *being made sin for us... who knew no sin*. (II Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53)

How little our sacrifices, our acts of unselfishness, our death to self, our submission of rights, our surrender of will.

IV. GOD, THE FATHER'S, PURPOSE... Phil. 2:9-11

A. That we might surrender to an exalted Savior: (Rom. 12:1-2; 6:13) vs. 9

1. God has exalted Him and given Him a Name above every name.
2. This is the Name in whom we are saved, baptized, serve, suffer, etc.

B. That we might willingly bow our knee (and heart) to Him. vs. 10

1. Christ is elevated above all others.
2. He, who was a servant, has been restored to His place in glory. (John 17)
3. He is "*at the right of the Father, exalted.*" (Acts 2:33)
4. Everything in earth, heaven, and even under the earth will some day bow before Him.

C. That every tongue will confess that He (Jesus Christ) is LORD to the glory of God the Father. vs. 11

1. He will triumph and all creatures will have to admit in words that He is Lord.
2. By His death He would reconcile the world to Himself... but man has the right of choice to reject or accept.
3. If we die without Him as our Savior then as a lost person we will have to bow before Him and admit He is Lord even though He never was our Lord.

Application:

1. What is the purpose of our life?
2. What should be our goal in life? (to exalt, honor, and glorify Jesus Christ.)
3. He is not our example that by living Biblically we will be exalted, honored, or magnified... but that HE MIGHT BE MAGNIFIED. (Phil. 1:21)