

THE MIND OF CHRIST JESUS IN US
Phil. 2:5-11

Intro: This is without doubt one of the great ^{-est} passages on the Person and Work of Christ in all of the NT. If you were studying Christology in a seminary, without any question you would eventually get to this passage.

You may have heard of the Kenosis Theory. This term comes from the expression in v. 7, "And made Himself of no reputation." Or, as in the NASB, "But emptied Himself." The Theory as such usually goes far beyond what we have in the Word of God. We would speak more properly of simply the kenosis of our Lord, and learn from the Word of God what it means that He emptied Himself.

But we are not here to discuss all of those details tonight, as interesting as they might be--although we cannot avoid the problem altogether.

The primary emphasis in this passage is a practical one: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

This leads us to another emphasis that sometimes raises our suspicions because we certainly have our Lord presented here as our Example.

We have been speaking in our morning services about the way some theologians and pastors have misused our Lord's Name, Jesus. There is nothing wrong with that Name. It is the most wonderful Name of all. The trouble is that they have misused it. As a result, we, in order to correct their error, have been afraid to use it at all. Our over-correction has created just as great a mistake. His Name was Jesus, and it still is!

The same thing has happened with Jesus as our Example.

To be sure, He is more than our Example; He is our Savior. But He is also our Example. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:21,
"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."

This is a word which describes how those who were just beginning to write would be given a copy of the alphabet with instructions to copy them.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Example in many ways, and we have lost a great deal of truth because we have been frightened away from the Gospels by men who have taught that Jesus is only our Example.

NOW . . . what has Paul be trying to teach?

Primarily, likemindedness, or oneness, unity.

And he has taught us in the early part of this chapter that the only way you can have unity is through humility.

This is where the Example of our Lord comes in because we have no greater example of humility, or condescension, than we do in the earthly life of our Lord.

First we have . . .

I. THE EXHORTATION (Phil. 2:5).

This is a command, not just a suggestion. To disobey this is to be sinning against the Lord and against His Word.

Therefore, we need to obey it.

But before we can obey it we need to understand it.

"The mind of Christ" is the attitude of Christ. It is to think and feel about things the way he did.

And note: It is to be "in" us. This always speaks of that which is genuine, is real.

II. THE MIND OF CHRIST DESCRIBED (Phil. 2:6-8).

It takes into consideration:

- 1) What He was before He became a man.
- 2) What was involved in His becoming a man.
- 3) Why He did all of this.

For the moment, disregard the thoughts that may come to you from this passage of Scripture regarding what our Lord did to save us. This line of truth is not what Paul is talking about. HE IS CONCERNED WITH OUR LORD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (not, the Father), AND HOW HE MANIFESTED HIS HUMILITY BEFORE GOD.

- A. What He was and always had been: "in the form of God."

This is a statement of His Deity. Inwardly He has always possessed all of the divine attributes--a testimony to His absolute equality with God.

None of us can start there.

- B. His attitude toward His position: "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Cf. v. 6b.

The idea is that He did not feel that He had to hold on to this regardless of what God's will and purpose might be.

Behind this, of course, is the problem of man's salvation. Would He maintain His position in the glory in spite of man's need of a Savior? NO!

- C. What He did (Phil. 2:7, 8).

Four things are mentioned:

1. He emptied Himself. What this means has to be decided on the basis of all that we find in the the Word of God. It is entirely foreign to Scripture to say that He gave up His Deity. Such a thing is impossible.

2. He "took upon him the form of a servant."

The same word for "form" is used here as in v. 6. Everything about the Lord indicated that He was inwardly and genuinely the servant of God. Note that I am not speaking of the Father.

3. He "was made in the likeness of men" (outwardly) -- a different expression from "form" 2x above.

This is where we run into all of the problems regarding the humanity of our Lord. Note the following passages:

- 1) Luke 2:52. And even His birth itself.
- 2) John 4:6, a seeming contradiction of Isa. 40:28.
- 3) Matt. 24:36.
- 4) John 14:10.

All of this speaks of absolute submission to and dependence upon God.

4. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Paul is not concerned here about what the cross means to us, but what it meant in our Lord's relationship to God. He offered God the utmost in obedience--to death!

From all of this we note that humiliation for Him

meant:

- 1) The surrender of His position.
- 2) The surrender of His rights.
- 3) Taking on the "form" of a servant (inwardly).
- 4) Being made in the "likeness" of man (outwardly).
- 5) Utter dependence upon God for everything.
- 6) Obedience to death--beyond which there can be no greater obedience.

III. THE OUTCOME (Phil. 2:9-11).

- A. Exalted to the highest rank and power, raised to supreme majesty (so, Thayer, p. 641)--the only time this expression is used in the Word.

Note that it was "God" who did this.

- B. His Name.

It is Jesus combined with Lord. See vv. 9, 10 and 11.

- C. Adoration (vv. 10, 11).

This would be blasphemy if He were not God and worthy of the worship of men and angels. And keep in mind that this is something that God has done and will do!

This will not all necessarily take place at once. He is not setting down prophetic events, but pointing to ultimate results.

Concl: Now where does this all leave us?

We must remember that Paul's emphasis is not doctrinal, but practical. His goal for the Philippians, and for us, is oneness. Christ is our Example in His oneness with God. Therefore, we must follow His example by His grace. It involves:

- 1) An evaluation of ourselves and our position before God.
- 2) It means a surrender of any rights we might have when comparing these with the will of God for us.
- 3) It means we must be servants--utterly committed to God and utterly dependent upon Him.
- 4) Nothing can ever replace the necessity of our obedience to His will.

Cf. Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 5:5-11.