

DO YOU HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST?

Philippians 2:5

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-20

Intro: For those of you who are with us today, but who have not heard my two previous messages on this special passage, Philippians 2:5-11, let me explain what I have done.

I chose this passage in order to bring a brief series of messages having to do with this Christmas season when we remember the coming of the Son of God, Who was born of the virgin Mary, Who was named JESUS because He came “to save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). This is what the angel of the Lord told Joseph when he discovered that Mary was expecting a child before they were married.

Verses 6, 7, and 8 of Philippians 2 deal not only with the advent of the Son of God into the world, but actually they span the whole course of His life on earth leading up to His sacrificial, but very terrible, death on the Cross where He offered Himself as the atonement for the sins of “His people,” as the angel of the Lord had told Joseph.

So in my first message, I spoke on verses 6 through 8.

Then in the second message I went on last Sunday to speak on verses 9, 10, and 11 of the exaltation with which God glorified His Son in His resurrection, in His present place in heaven, and in anticipation of the day when at the name of JESUS every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father,” as we read in Philippians 2:11.

I pointed out in my first message on verses 6, 7, and 8 that in those verses we read of what the Lord Jesus did to Himself. Notice that you have the word “Himself” in verse 7, and again in verse 8.

But when we come to verses 9, 10, and 11 we read about what God the Father did for our Lord when He had finished His work of salvation on earth. I really doubt if anyone could pack so much truth into those six verses, 6-8, and 9-11, except someone like Paul who wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Now this morning I want to go back to verse 5 to see what Paul said in

that verse which caused Him to go on to those six wonderful verses which followed verse 5. Today we are going to look at those words in verse 5 where we read, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

Now to get the full impact of any part of Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi, or any other book of the Bible, we need to read, in this case, the whole epistle. I hope that many of you have done this. We run the risk of getting into trouble in our interpretation when we lift verses out of a book of the Bible and try to explain them by themselves. And usually the verses immediately before a passage are especially important in helping us to understand the verses that we may be particularly interested in.

This letter to the church at Philippi is what we might call a very happy epistle. And that is most amazing because when Paul wrote it he was a prisoner in Rome! You would think from his epistle, with the exception of a few parts, that Paul’s circumstances were just fine. He didn’t try to get the church to do what they could to get him released. He wasn’t writing for money. The truth is that the church had sent a gift to him, and this epistle is really a “thank you note” written by Paul to thank them for what they had sent to him. But in this letter to them Paul actually had more to say about them than he did about himself. Paul was a pastor at heart, and he was always concerned about how people were doing, and how their churches were doing, in their fellowship with the Lord. Now to bring that out I want to read for you the first four verses of this second chapter of his letter to see what Paul was concerned about. (Read Phil. 2:1-4.)

What would make Paul’s joy complete he mentioned in verse 2. And when we read a verse like this, we need to ask ourselves, *Is that which would make Paul’s joy complete the same thing that makes our joy complete?* Or do we care that much for each other? I believe that we do. The Lord has given us a wonderful fellowship with each other, and we want it to stay that way. But it is not going to remain unless we work at it. What should we do?

Well, verse 3 gives us one answer. The first part of this verse is negative; that second part is positive. By that I mean the first part tell us what not to do, and the second part tells us what we need to do. (Explain.)

And verse 4 gives us a second answer. And Paul did in this verse what he had done in verse 3 - he started by telling them what not to do, and then

went on to tell them what they needed to do. (Explain.)

Now remember these two verses because we are going to need them in a few moments.

But the next thing that Paul did was to give us an example. And that example is none other than this JESUS Whom Paul hated at one time in his life, but at this point in Paul's life he loved the Lord Jesus Christ more than he loved anyone else. That is what it means to love the Lord your God with *all* your heart. Look over at chapter 3 in this epistle. Look at what Paul boasted about before he became a Christian, before he was saved, and then read on to see what or who mattered the most to him as he wrote to the Philippian church as a prisoner of Rome. (Read Phil. 3:4-11.)

Paul pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ as his Example, and our Example. I remember a time when true Christians really could not think of Christ as our Example. And this was because liberal Christians, or modernists as they were called then, just spoke of Christ as our Example. To them salvation did not come through the Cross of Christ, but by doing what Jesus would do. It is not right to call them liberal Christians because a person who believes what they believed is not a Christian at all.

But is Christ our Example. Yes, He is, but not as the liberals think about Him. We are not saved by doing what He did; we are saved by trusting in what He did at Calvary. But nevertheless He is our Example. There are several verses in the New Testament which speak of Christ as our Example. I will just mention one, and it comes to us from the Lord through the Apostle Peter. Listen to what Peter said about our Lord as our Example. You will find this in 1 Peter 2:21-24:

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

We are not saved by trying to live like Jesus lived, but when we are saved, He is the Example of the way we should live. We can't live per-

fectly like He did, but we are to be moving in that direction.

But going back to our text, Paul's exhortation to us from the Lord is, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Now one of the first things that we need to notice about this exhortation is that it is not just a suggestion; it is a command for us to obey. This something that we need to do. And it is in the present tense, and most of you have heard dozens of times that the present tense means that we are to do it, and keep doing it. Only by God's grace can we do this, but by His grace we need to be getting better and better at doing it.

But doing what? Doing what Paul had been talking about in the first four verses of this chapter. It has to do with living in such a way that even by our lives, as well as by our speech, we are going to be an inspiration to other believers to, or to state it another way, an example of what it means to walk in fellowship with the Lord.

Now Paul did not use the word "mind" when he wrote what is in verse 5, but he used a verb which has to do with *thinking*. And so "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," is a good translation. Paul used this same verb in Philippians 3:19 where he was talking about people in the world who do not know the Lord, that a big part of their problem is that they "mind earthly things." He meant that they have trained themselves to think of what will make them happy, and satisfy the desires that they have for themselves.

Paul was indicating in using this word for thinking that we need to train ourselves to think of others, especially other believers, but actually all others, instead of always thinking of ourselves. It was this way of thinking that prompted the Father in eternity past to ordain salvation. It was this way of thinking that caused Him to choose us for salvation because He knew that we would never come to Him unless He would draw us to Himself. And it was this way of thinking that brought the Father to the decision before the foundation of the world that He would send His Son to die for our sins. You can see that this kind of thinking, motivated by love, God's love, that is the only reason we are here today, and with the hope that we have that the time will come when we will be forever with the Lord.

But you and I are sinners, sinners saved by grace, but still sinners. And

we need to train ourselves to think of others with the same concern that we have for ourselves. This is the second commandment in the Law, isn't it? "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

But how do we get there? What goes into our thought training that makes God's blessing on others, making us the instruments of many of those blessings, that which delights us and brings blessings to others? I think that verses 6 through 8 give us at least part of the answer. And we see this in the experience of our Lord as He came here to be our Savior. There are two main things that we need to give attention to in our lives just as the Lord diligently followed the two points that I am about to mention.

The first is humility. Think of how the Lord had to humble Himself in order to purchase our redemption. No man has ever gone from such heights as our Lord did, in coming to earth as a Man, to die that we might be saved. No one has ever been higher, and no one has ever gone lower, and now God has highly exalted Him and has given Him a Name which is above every name.

We were born in sin, but with very proud, arrogant hearts. Why is it that it is so hard to get people to listen to the Gospel? Why is it that the world hates the word, sin? The answer to all of those questions is, pride!

We are about to end this year of 2009, and I hope that all of you who know the Lord are getting ready to read the Bible through in 2010. When you do, notice all that the Bible has to say about human pride, and what it does to us. That is one reason that people do not like to read the Bible because it is a mirror that shows us exactly what we are like, and why we need a Savior. Our text says that our Lord humbled Himself. And as we humble ourselves before the Lord, that is what makes us useable in His hands. To be humble is to be Christ-like. We are to look upon others as better than ourselves. It humbles us to remember our sins. It humbles us to remember our failures and sins even since we have been saved. Remember the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like other men, even as that despised tax collector. He was like other men, and a lot worse than many because he naturally thought of himself as so good that he didn't need a Savior.

I knew of a man years ago who didn't want to go to church because he felt that the people in church were all better than he was, and he didn't want

to feel that way. No true Christian is going to claim that he is better than others, and that is the reason he was saved. He was saved because he is a sinner, and needed the Lord Jesus to save him, *or her!* *When we humble ourselves we are admitting that what the Bible says about us is true – that “there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not”* (Ecc. 7:20). Look at Paul’s commendation of Timothy in Phil. 3:20-21.

The right combination was stated by Peter in 1 Peter 5:6 where he wrote,
6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

But there is another word I need to point out to you as to how we can become the people that God wants us to be. That is where it says in our text that the Lord was not only obedient, but “obedient unto death.” The more obedient we are, the more humble we will be, and the more humble we are, the more we will see the need to continue obeying the Lord.

Concl: So I ask you the question, and I ask myself, “Do we have the mind of Christ? Most of us would say, “I do, and I don’t.” That is, I am seeking by God’s grace to be a humble person, and I want to be obedient to God in every aspect of my life, but I still need help. That is where we all are. Let us pray for each other that this will be our purpose in living every day of our lives, recognizing that we will never measure up to the humility and the obedience of the Lord. Do we lack peace in these days? Psalm 119:165 says, “Great peace of they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” If we love the Lord and His word, we will want to obey it, and obedience always calls for humbling going God’s way rather than our own. This is to have the mind of Christ. May the Lord enable us to be faithful to example of humility and obedience that we see in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is where there will be great blessing.