

# Having the mind of Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn back to Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2. And I want to consider some thoughts from what Paul writes here in verse 5 downwards.

Having this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing.

Taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself. And by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

Paul had a lot of affection and love for this church in Philippi. It was the first church that he planted in Europe.

And they were highly esteemed by Paul. And he highly commends them. Not just because of their faithfulness to him, but more than that, their faithfulness to Christ.

[ 1 : 26 ] He had a father-son relationship with them. They were his spiritual children. And he had a great concern for their spiritual welfare.

But there was something creeping into their midst that was in danger of marrying the witness that they had established there.

And he didn't want that that would happen. He was aware of some who had crept in professing to be Christians, who had a legalistic spirit.

They were known as the Judaizers. Those who continued to insist on the ceremonial law, even after they had professed that they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So they were carrying this baggage with them. And they were imposing it on those and insisting that those that were in the church were to fulfill these laws.

[ 2 : 34 ] And he deals with them. And he deals with that more fully in chapter 3, where he calls them dogs, evildoers.

Who are mutilating the flesh, referring there to their insistence on circumcision. And he goes on to say, we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit.

And there's always the danger, after we've been liberated by the redemption that we have in Christ, that we will allow the law to creep back into our thinking.

Because that's what comes naturally to us. The natural man, if he believes in God, believes that he has to earn God's favor.

Even when he comes under the conviction of sin, he believes that what he needs to do is to address his life, address these sins, and to seek to walk in obedience to God's law, rather than confessing them to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to believe that all his sins have been cleansed in the blood of Christ.

[ 3 : 55 ] He's reverting again back to his own works. And it's easy for those who preach a gospel of works to influence those that are in their hearing, especially if these people are very assertive, and very competent in their own ability.

And that's what was happening in the church here at Philippi. Some were thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to.

And they were wanting to lord it over those that were not as competent as they were. So, we want to consider how Paul deals with this problem.

Well, first of all, he sets it in the light of the incarnation. And shows them that, rather than think that they are too lorded over others, they should actually be willing to serve others.

Because the most spiritual man is the greatest servant of the Lord in our midst. The more we grow in grace, the more we are humbled.

[ 5 : 22 ] And the more, not only do we wish to serve God, but the more we wish to serve our fellow human beings. Not insisting on our own rights.

Now, the problem is with our mindset. And that's the problem that Paul deals with. Our attitude towards God.

And God's rights over us. Our attitude towards ourselves and our own conduct. And what we think are our rights.

And our attitude towards others. And what their rights are. And that's the sense in which Paul speaks here, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

This is the mind that we ought to have if we are in Christ Jesus. So we ask ourselves, well, what was the mind of Christ?

[ 6 : 31 ] What was important to Christ? What principles did Christ cherish? What were his objectives? How did he make his choices?

And what Paul is bringing before us is an insight into the mind that Christ had. He tells us who he was.

And as such, being God, he did not insist on his own rights. The one who ought to be served, that was the purpose for which he created mankind, didn't insist on being served.

But he became willing to serve those that were created for that purpose. Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

He was already the highest. He was rich beyond our comprehension. He possessed the majesty of God.

[ 7 : 51 ] He was the sovereign God who ruled over all things. He was the God who created all things for his own glory.

He was the God who could insist on everything that he created to serve him. He performed all the functions of God.

He was the God because he was God. He was adored by the Father. He was worshipped by angels. He wasn't open to experience frustration or embarrassment.

He couldn't suffer pain or death. He existed in unclouded serenity.

His supremacy was total. His satisfaction was complete in himself. He didn't need his creation.

[ 8 : 56 ] His creation couldn't add anything to what he was. He was perfectly blessed.

And he didn't achieve that by any effort. It was what he always was.

It was just the way things were. And there was no reason why there should be any change. Why should there be any change?

But there was a change. Because he willed to change. Why did he will to change?

Because his mind was not focused on himself. His mind was focused on his creature.

[ 10 : 08 ] The creature that he created in his own image. His heart went out to the creature that had brought destruction upon themselves.

He had a mind not to hold on to all that he possessed. Because he did not insist on his own rights.

Why was Christ willing to give up his own rights? Well, quite simply, it was in the interests of others.

Not in his own. He didn't gain anything by it. But we gained. We gained everything.

From God not insisting on his own rights. Had he insisted on his own rights, not one of us would ever be saved.

[ 11 : 15 ] The psalmist points that out to us in Psalm 130. If you were to mark our iniquity against us, not one of us would be able to stand.

He could have insisted on his own rights. He could have marked our iniquity against us. But he chose not to.

He chose in the interests of others. Paul tells us he made himself nothing.

He made himself of no reputation. He emptied himself.

The Greek word is hard to translate into an accurate English meaning. But he was willing to give up his own reputation.

[ 12 : 40 ] He was willing to empty himself. He was willing to become nothing. And that's what we see on the cross of Calvary. Somebody to be discarded.

Somebody to be mocked. Somebody that had no reputation. Somebody that had become nothing. How did he become nothing?

The God who is everything. The one who says of himself, I am. Because outside of him, there is nothing.

He is everything. He is the highest. The one who has the highest reputation. There is nothing in the whole of the universe that can be looked up to beyond what he is.

He is the highest. He is the highest. How could the one who was the highest of everything that God is, how could he become nothing?

[13:58] Well, he didn't become nothing by taking away anything of what he was.

It wasn't by subtraction that he became nothing. It was by addition. He became something that he had previously not been.

He became man. He became man. He became nothing by adding to himself our nature.

And he became man not to be served as man. He became man so that he would become a servant. That's what Paul tells us here. Made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

[15:01] God became something that he had never been. When he took our nature, and he was prepared to do that in the interests of mankind.

He wasn't insisting on his own interests. He wasn't looking to his own reputation. He was looking to the interests of those who had nothing, and who were nothing.

Because that's what we became. When we sinned against God, we became nothing. Nobodies. Of no interest.

But God was concerned for us. And he was prepared to take our place in order to restore us to a position that we would be somebody.

That we would become the children of God. that we would have something. Because prior to us coming to know him, as he reveals himself to us in Christ, we are spiritually bankrupt.

[16:37] We have nothing in our account. We have nothing that we can add to our account. We are going to continue losing the nothingness that we are if we continue without Christ.

As a result of the destruction that we brought upon ourselves by sinning against God. Now God was willing to become a servant.

And he became a servant just as surely as he is God. He became a servant just as truly as anything that is true of him in his divine nature.

And when Jesus, the second person of the Godhead, took to himself our nature, this brought him into our relationship with the Father which he had never had with the Father.

Because prior to this, he was not the Father's servant. But by taking our nature, he became the servant of the Father.

[18:03] He was willing to fulfill the law of his Father. And in fulfilling the law of his Father, not only was he required to love the Father with all of his mind, heart, and soul, but he was compelled to love us because that's the fulfillment of the law.

To love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and your neighbor as yourself. And by demonstrating that he was prepared to fulfill this law, he was prepared to lay down his life for us because of the love that he had for us.

He was prepared, before he came into this world, to become an atonement, to become a sacrifice.

We were singing there in Psalm 40, sacrifice and offerings you did not require. The ceremonial law, the legalistic spirit that is inherent in the natural man was never going to satisfy God, even or though he might perform all of these outward religious rituals.

He had no satisfaction in them. But a body you have prepared for me. This is where God was going to find full satisfaction for the penalty that our sins deserved.

[20:01] He wasn't going to continue insisting on his own rights. In fact, he gives them up to the point that he was going to fulfill his own law in order to save us.

This is the mind of Christ. This is what Paul is seeking the Philippians to try and get into, that this would be the kind of mind that would govern the way that we live in this world as his children.

Not to insist on our own rights. Not to think that we're more important than others and to lord it over them if we feel that we're in a higher position than others.

But to ask ourselves, what can we do for them? How can we please them? How can we show them that we love them?

Because this is where the love of God is demonstrated. this was the mind of Christ. Had he not have this mind, then nobody would ever have been saved.

[21:29] And that's what we've got to be aware of when we're seeking to live in obedience to Christ.

That we follow in the spirit in which Christ walked. that we look with compassion upon others.

And that we would be prepared to give up our own reputation. To give up the things that we think that are important. In order to win others and to show them the love that we have for them. Now Jesus didn't do this against his will. He had the power to lay down his life. And he had the power to take it up again. No one forced him to do this. This was what he did willingly.

[ 22 : 40 ] This was his mind. This is what gave him delight. This is why he came into this world. Here is the sacrifice that was made for sinners.

That was what was depicted in all the ceremonies of the ceremonial law. When they brought their animals as sacrifices, their sin being transferred from them onto the head of the animal as they brought the animal to the priest to be offered up.

This is what it was all pointing to. This is what was going to give God satisfaction. Nothing less than this would give him satisfaction.

Now Isaiah saw that the substitution represented in the ceremonial law was incomplete. That somebody greater than all of these animals would have to take the place.

And only a perfect man could take that place. And Isaiah saw that probably as clear as any of the Old Testament prophets when he saw the servant of God.

[ 24 : 11 ] From Isaiah 42 onwards, you've got that theme running right through Isaiah's prophecy, the theme of God's servant.

And in 53, clearly, the suffering servant. The one who would lay down his life as the substitute that would give perfect satisfaction to the righteousness of God.

Now Paul doesn't just say here that he was obedient unto death. He goes on to say that he was obedient even to the death on a cross.

Why does he point that out? Why doesn't he just leave it at giving himself over unto death? Well, I think there's a spiritual reason as we believe there is behind everything that Paul and the rest of the biblical writers bring to our attention.

We've got to look at the spiritual significance of what they're writing. There were many people who died on a cross. And it's quite possible that many people suffered more than Christ suffered physically as he was crucified and put to death on the cross.

[ 25 : 53 ] But there was more to it than his physical death. Paul doesn't just leave it at him becoming obedient to the point of death.

He points out that it was the death of the cross. writing to the Galatians he says Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us.

For it is written curse it is everyone who hangs on a tree. It wasn't the literal cross that Paul is bringing our attention to but to the fact that he was hanged on a tree that he was bearing the curse that our sin brought upon all of creation.

Here was the redemption for mankind. Here was the one that could enter into the penalty that our sins deserved in order to exhaust that curse.

Here was the one who could enter into the spiritual realms of darkness to bring them into subjection to himself entering into the lion's den giving himself over to the power of death and to the power of Satan who had the power of death because here is the one who had to exhaust that curse in order to redeem us.

[ 27 : 45 ] Here is the love of God demonstrated more fully than anywhere else in scripture. as he gives himself over because this was the mind of Christ he gave up everything and that meant that he would have to give up his life and he gave it up willingly.

No man took it from him. He laid down of himself because he and only he had the power to take it up again because he could exhaust that curse that our sin brought upon all of creation.

So why should we think that we have the right to lord it over anybody or why should we think that we're more important than anybody else?

When Christ didn't have that mind he gave himself up to death even the death of the cross.

may God grant that he would enable us to seek to have this mind that we would not insist on our own rights but that we would seek how we may serve others so that God may have the glory.

[ 29 : 34 ] Let us pray. pray.