

Let This Mind Be In You

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Turn for a little to the chapter we read in Philippians chapter 2. And I'm not going to read through the whole section again, but it's from the beginning through to verse 8.

So if there be any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy of being of the same mind, having the same love, and so on.

Then verse 5, following on from that, Paul says, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. Or it's similar to the mind that was in Christ, that is in Christ.

And then goes on to say what really what Christ did. And in verse 8, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

We're looking at chapter 3, the beginning of chapter 3 on Wednesday. And one of the things right at the very beginning we noticed on Thursday, I should say, one of the things we noticed that there was a, the church was under threat.

[1 : 18] The church was under threat both within and without. Without that there were the Judaizers, there were those who were causing problems. And Paul was quite ruthless.

We highlighted that in our PC days. Paul was, didn't, he didn't do PC. He said, look out for the dogs. That's how he likened these Judaizers who were howling and snapping at the church.

And they were a threat to the church. But the church wasn't only threatened from without by those who were seeking to undermine the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

It was always, also threatened from within. Because there were, that's why he says in chapter 4, I entreat to you, Dianne, I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

That there was, here there was always the potential of internal division caused by people with different, having different opinions or they weren't coming to an agreement.

[2 : 16] And so Paul, it's one of the things Paul so often highlights is the importance of unity. Unity is something that comes from within. Uniformity tends to be more something that is from out.

Maybe a pressure from without to be uniform, to be conformed in one way. Whereas unity tends to be from the heart. It comes from, more from within, working towards that togetherness.

And Paul spends an awful lot of time throughout the epistles in highlighting the importance of Christian unity. And of course, Paul doesn't mean that a person has to be, that everybody has to be in agreement with one another.

That's impossible. Because we don't always think the same way. And even, even the Christians will look at things differently. And they believe they will look at things differently, even from the word of God.

And so there is always room for our own differences as such. But that should never threaten unity. It shouldn't threaten the togetherness. Because when we look at issues, they must remain the issues and not allow them to be compassionate.

[3 : 26] But far too often in the history of the church, right down through the centuries, the divisions have become very personal and very marked.

And this is the thing that Paul is fighting against, or so often writing against, the importance. Even, because Paul himself didn't agree always with all his brethren.

And Paul, he was obviously a very forceful and a strong character, and he would say his bit. But he always sought to maintain unity. And that's something that the church has to learn.

And Paul goes on to deal with probably, or to highlight one of the great few verses telling us of who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ has done.

And he has done it in order to, for the good of the church, in order that they will have, and we will have this mind within ourselves.

[4 : 26] And so Paul is saying at the beginning of the chapter, if you have experienced any encouragement in Christ, and he says, I know you have. If you have experienced any comfort from love, from God's love in Christ in you, and he knew that they had.

If you have any participation in the Spirit, and of course we all have participation in the Spirit, then he says, complete my joy and be of one mind.

And he's saying to the church, this is what I want above all. Because I know you've experienced encouragement in Christ, and comfort from love, and participation in the Spirit.

I know you have all these things. And that fills me with joy. Well, make my joy complete by being of one mind. And that's really what the apostle is saying. And so Paul is really warning against being divided.

Because he says, having the same love, being in full accord, and of one, do nothing from rivalry or conceit. But in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

[5 : 32] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others. And that is so important. Again, it's important in life, but it's important within the church of Jesus Christ.

That we mustn't have a selfishness, and that it has to be our way and nobody else's way. Because again, that's part of the great problem so often within the church.

Now, we're not talking about where the church is facing things that are going contrary to the word of God. That doesn't mean that there won't be times within the church, and within the church's history, where the church has to make a stand within itself.

If things are going deliberately, where it's becoming very obvious that things are going against God's word, the church has to make a stand. And sometimes there will be, sadly, things.

And sometimes there will be parting of the way. But by and large, in the main, Paul is talking here about internal squabbles and about people just wanting their own way.

[6 : 41] And as we know in life, life is a matter of give and take. And it often has to be, sometimes we have to swallow our pride, and sometimes we have to say, well, for the greater good, I'm prepared to back down.

We're not backing down on principles. But we're backing down maybe on what, just trying to force our own way in an issue or in a matter. Where it isn't, it's not the be-all and the end-all of things.

So Paul is saying, look, we have to have an element of humility. We have to, because then he goes, this is what he's doing all the time. He's bringing us back to Christ, to focusing on Christ, to looking at Christ, and what his mind, what his attitude was.

And so he says, have this mind among yourselves. That's what he says in verse 5. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, or which is yours in Christ.

So he's saying, banish this sort of selfish ambition and glory-seeking. And he's saying, just look at the Savior. And if Jesus Christ was somebody who had only wanted what was good for him and not good for others, then Jesus would never have left the realms of glory, and he would never have come into this world.

[8 : 03] Now, of course, we do know that it was going to be good for him to have a church, to have a bride. Because there will be aspects of the glory of God the Father and the Son and the Spirit that we wouldn't be able to see or discern were it not for what he has done in the whole way of salvation.

However, he need not have done it. God would have been completely right in himself to have left us through our fall, just as the fallen angels were left, never ever to be recovered.

God could have abandoned. That could have been his purpose, to have abandoned us as well. But he didn't. And so there was this great purpose from way back in the councils of eternity.

But if Jesus Christ had said, well, I don't want, I don't want to have to go through the horrors that I'm going to have to go through.

Because it was horrors that he had to go through. We remember him saying, if it was possible, let this cup pass from me. As he was praying and pleading before the Lord, he was sweating the intensity that his whole being was going through, that he was sweating, as it were, drops of blood.

[9 : 31] And this is where Jesus was. So if Jesus Christ had said, well, the Son of God had said, I'm not prepared to do that. I want to look after myself.

If Jesus Christ at any point had been selfish, there would be no salvation to the world. But this is how the apostle is, this is what the apostle is pleading here.

That he would, that we would focus upon who Jesus is and what Jesus did. And so we find then in verse 6, the apostle then highlights to us something of who Jesus is.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient. Sorry, no. Verse 6. Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. Now, of course, as we know here, the form of God has nothing to do with, like, the shape of God. Because God, as we know, has no bodily parts.

[10:41] This word form really is meaning the very essence of God, the very being of God, of who God is. And as we know, what this is doing is highlighting the eternity of the Son.

It is highlighting the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is altogether and completely God. Equal, as the Shorter's Catechism tells us, equal in power and in glory. He is the one by whom all things were made. He is the one who is altogether glorious.

And yet he leaves the riches of glory for us. The one who is God, of very God, leaves that. He leaves his riches to become poor in order that we, in turn, will become rich.

Remember how the apostle put it elsewhere. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor. That we, through his poverty, might become rich.

[11:48] It's a most incredible exchange. He didn't need to do it. But he did do it. He wanted to do it for us.

And this is why the apostle keeps coming back to this. Think of who Jesus is. The Son of God. The eternal delight of Father and Spirit and glory.

All of them fully satisfied with one another. The three persons, distinct persons, and yet the one God. And yet, he's going to come down.

And he's not going to come down as a king and as a prince to walk through this world receiving the world's adoration. He's going to come down to the very lowest place. To be despised and rejected by men.

If we saw Prince Charles or Prince William or Prince Harry or someone of the royalties saying, You know, it's wonderful the privilege that I have been born into royalty.

[12:53] But it's troubling me when I look around at this world. And I look at these refugee camps. And I see what's happening. All these refugees pouring into Pakistan.

And escaping what's happening there. And I see all the refugees making their way to Canada. All the refugees all across this world. And these huge camps. And they don't seem to have any hope for future.

And you see, supposing Prince William saying, You know, I'm turning my back on the royalty. I'm going into that camp. I'm going to spend. I'm going to give myself.

I'm going to become one with these refugees. And I'm going to do what I can for them. People will be saying, Whoa, that is amazing. But that was nothing compared to what Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did.

Because he left the highest realms of glory. And he humbled himself all the way down to the very depths.

[13:52] From the highest height to the very lowest depths. And so it's incredibly difficult for us often to understand just what he did.

Because he made himself nothing. And in order to make himself nothing, he had to become human. And of course it's here that we come into the great mystery of the gospel.

And people will often say, Well, you know, I can't understand. How can Son of God, the second person of the Godhead, Altogether glorifies God of very God.

How can he become a man as well? And so many people are just saying, Well, this is beyond me. Well, you know, there is a level. We know what it tells us. We believe it implicitly. Faith grasps hold of every single thing. And we say, I know that is true.

[14:52] But attached to that, there remains a mystery. And a mystery is something that cannot be completely explained. If you can completely explain a mystery, it's no longer a mystery.

And that's why the Bible says about the incarnation, Great is the mystery of godliness, Christ manifests in the flesh. Because from our perspective and our complete understanding, there are aspects to it that are mysterious.

We know every aspect of it is true. But that doesn't mean that we can completely understand every part of it. Any more than when we look at this creation.

We know God created. He created the dry land. He created the sun, the moon, the stars. We know them. We see them. We believe it. But we don't know.

We can't. He spoke by his word. He brought into being. The Bible tells us that. But we cannot say to people, Do you know how it happened? I'll tell you how it happened. It's just, it's the very same at the come the resurrection.

[15 : 59] We can't explain to people what's going to happen when the Lord opens the graves. But every grave is going to open. I've said it before, I often think of it. Whether I'm at Agonish or Sandwick or Grace or whatever cemetery I'm at, I often think what an incredible moment it's going to be for those who are still alive.

On that day when all the graves will open and the dead will rise and the sea will give up instead. How is that all going to happen? I don't know. But it will happen. These are mysteries, but they're true.

And faith lays hold upon it as sure as anything. We know it's true. And so it is with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he took our nature completely.

And as we know, the Bible tells us, and it puts it in really beautiful language, Jesus was born and he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

And the Bible tells us that, this is how it puts it, the Holy Ghost, this is what it's saying of Mary, the Holy Ghost shall come upon you and the power of the highest overshadow you.

[17 : 13] Therefore that Holy One which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God. And so the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, overshadowed Mary.

And in this amazing way, within her, there was this conception and Jesus grew in the whole embryonic growth that takes part, takes place within the womb until the normal period when he would be born.

He was made of the substance of Mary. And yet he was freed from sin because she was a sinner. And this is the amazing thing that when Jesus would have been born and when people would have, in Nazareth, would have looked at Jesus as a baby and looked at him growing up, I'm quite sure that there would have been aspects of Jesus, parts of his, maybe his physical makeup and people would, you know how you'll often see, oh well, there's no disguising whose son or daughter that is. You'll often hear people say that because there is a strong resemblance to father or mother or whatever. Now of course there couldn't be a resemblance to Joseph because Joseph was not the father. But there would have been, no doubt, there would have been resemblances to Mary because Jesus was formed of part of her.

Maybe there were mannerisms, maybe there were characteristics and yet here he is, he is Lord of glory, the Son of God manifest in the flesh.

[18 : 56] And he had to come this way in order to be our representative and in order to die. You see, there were times in the Old Testament that the Son of God appeared and he stood beside people in human appearance.

He had the appearance of a man. But he wasn't actually a man. He had the appearance of it. In order to die, he couldn't just come with the appearance of.

He had to become human. He had to become one like us apart from sin. Otherwise, it would be impossible for him to die. And so, it's the most amazing thing where he becomes completely our representative.

And so, everything that he was and everything that he did, he did for us. And that tells us then, it goes on to tell us in verse 8, that he, but he made himself nothing and he didn't count, 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 by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

You know, Jesus' life in this world was a hard life. I think we've often said that before. You know, some people have the idea that it must have been easier for Jesus in some way because he was, he had no sin.

[20 : 33] And that somehow, because he was the Son of God in this world, that he would be able just to walk through this world immune to all the pains and all the suffering and all that was going on.

That he was above all that. No. In fact, it was the very reverse. It was more painful for Jesus in this world than for any other person. And you and I, know that when a person becomes a Christian, our attitude to life changes.

Our sight of sin changes. Our awareness of the impact of sin changes. We get a glimpse of what sin really is in the sight of God.

We get a view of the terrible, destructive nature of sin that ends in death. Our eyes are open spiritually to see things that we couldn't see before.

Well, for Jesus, in his absolute sinless purity, he saw the ugliness of sin in a way and in a manner that you and I cannot.

[21 : 42] And that is why at times, like at the grave, where we find him weeping, and it was almost uncontrolled, but it's like his whole being was moving. It was like he was gripped almost by a violent struggle within himself as he saw the ravages and the impact of sin in the form of death.

He was seeing it in a way that you and I cannot see it. So we've always got to remember that it was far worse and far harder for Jesus walking through this world than it is for you and for me.

And so this place, world, was an incredibly sad place for Jesus. but he humbled himself. All his life it was a downward spiral. Remember where he was born?

You would expect him to be born. He's a king? Born in a palace? No, it was in an outhouse. You would expect him to be wrapped in the finest silk and embroidered clothing.

No, it was in his outhouse. We're told he was wrapped in swaddling clothes. You would expect that he would be taken in the best chariot of the day.

[22 : 52] No, he seemed to walk everywhere. And even when we do find him riding on an animal, it's a donkey. It's not a horse.

It's not a stallion food for a king. He had to ask for a coin to answer a particular question. He had to borrow a boat to preach from.

He said, the foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests. Son of man, us, nowhere to lay his head. He had to borrow a room to institute the Lord's supper. And even in his death, it wasn't in his own grave, in his own tomb that he had got before.

It was in somebody else's. He had nothing. His whole life was one of going down and down and down. And all the time he was this man of sorrows.

We never read of Christ laughing. I know he would have. He was human. But what the scripture highlights is what he had to go through. He was a man of sorrows and he was acquainted with grief.

[23 : 55] And he went through all the sorrows that we may have joy. That's why we can have joy today, because he was sorrowful. He was despised and rejected of men.

As the psalm said, I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised by the people.

Everywhere he went, he met opposition and hatred. And people were slandering him and saying things about him.

He was made under the law. Wasn't that extraordinary? The lawgiver becomes the lawkeeper.

Every day. And we've always got to remember that. There was the active and passive obedience of Christ.

Every day, for you and for me, he had to fill the law and make it honourable. He obeyed all the time.

If he had ever disobeyed, our salvation would have been cancelled out.

All the time. So all the way down, Jesus made himself of nothing. And he couldn't have gone further because he, of course, became the sacrifice.

[24 : 59] Jesus didn't die as a martyr. He died as a sacrifice. And we've always got to remember that. And even on the cross, everything was against him.

it was against him all round because those who were around the cross were mocking him, they were hating him, they were despising him, they were even saying to him, ah, if you come down from the cross, we'll believe in you.

Satan was having a last go there. If Christ had come down from the cross, they wouldn't have believed in him, but there would have been no salvation for us.

he had to remain on the cross. It wasn't the nails, we often said that it wasn't the nails that held him there. It was his commitment and his love to us. So that all around him, there was everything against him.

Below him, everything was against him, because the powers of darkness were unleashed. Jesus said that just before the cross. I said, this is your hour and the power of darkness. These were dark moments.

[26 : 02] It was where hell was given an opportunity on earth that it never really had before and will never have since, where they were given complete access to the Son of Man.

And then there was everything coming to him from above. All was in the past, everything that came to him from above was beautiful, because he had only ever known the peace, the fellowship, the togetherness of God as Father.

But for once, heaven remained silent. no longer this is my beloved Son. Jesus, in fact, on the cross cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

The pain and the anguish that he was going through as he was bearing upon himself the complete punishment for our sins. It's really quite extraordinary.

And so the apostle is saying, look, that's who Jesus is. That's what Jesus did. How dare any of you push yourself up and push the church down and say, it's got to be my way.

[27 : 20] Remember what Jesus did. And again, as we conclude, we have to think that next week we come to the Lord's Supper. And it is the great privilege that has been given to us to remember the death of our Lord, to remember all we've been reflecting upon, all that Jesus did, and we've only just looked at it so briefly.

But when we think of where he left, what he became, what he did for you and for me, you know, so often we take his death for granted.

We become used to it. And that's the beauty of a communion time. It's the beauty of the sacrament. Because it brings to us, it takes our thinking right back.

And that's one of the reasons why Jesus has left this for us. And he says, do this in remembrance of me. We would say to ourselves, I'll never forget what Jesus did.

But some days it's not true. There are periods where we might not forget it, but it maybe doesn't mean to us what it should. That's the beauty of the sacrament. It brings us back face to face with what he did of who he is.

[28 : 38] And that's what he wants. And he says to all his people, do this in remembrance of me. That's important. Doesn't say you have to be the greatest saint in the world.

Doesn't say you have to have the most faith, more faith than anybody. what we have to remember is that it's for poor sinners. That's what the table is for. Sinners that have experienced God's grace. Sinners who have been drawn by his love. Sinners who have come to say, you know, Lord, I love you. There was a day I didn't, but now I do.

That's who the table is for. And, you know, it's one of these things, please don't leave this world not doing the one thing that Jesus really has asked you to do.

I think I've said it before, there was an old man, and as he was dying, he was a good man, everybody knew he was a fine Christian, but he had never gone to the table.

[29 : 42] And somebody said to him as he was dying, oh, well, you're going to meet your Lord. Oh, yes, he said, I am. And I'm really, really looking forward to it, but except for one thing, he said.

He said, Jesus did everything for me. And there was really only one thing he said to me, I really want you to do for me. I want you to remember my death.

Do this in remembrance of me. I never did. And while I know where I'm going, there's an element of shame in me as I die, because I have to meet my Savior who did everything for me, and I didn't do that for him.

It's a sobering and a solemn thing. And so the Lord says to all his people, and you might feel the weakest, you might feel that your faith is insignificant, that you don't have much faith.

if you have faith as Jesus said, like a grain of mustard seed. If you are able to see God's love, you might not see it, well, you might say, I've got the dimmest view of anybody in this church.

[30 : 59] That doesn't matter, as long as you can see, as long as faith is sufficient to say, well, I believe, I believe that the Lord Jesus died for me.

That's who I'm looking to, nobody else, nothing else. Then the Lord says, do this in remembrance of me. Let us pray. Oh Lord, our God, we ask you to bless us today, and even although we've gone through a piece of scripture that we're all familiar with, we pray that even today, that we may again be able to lay hold upon you, and to be amazed at your love towards us.

We ask, Lord, that you will encourage us as we go forward, looking ever to you, accepting you, trusting you, believing you. Take us to our home safely, we know it's very dangerous underfoot, it's so slippery, and we pray that you will keep our feet from falling, and our eyes from tears.

Watch over us all we pray, and do us good, and take away our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. Psalm 16 in conclusion, the last two verses of the psalm, psalm number 16, verses 10 and 11.

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Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen.