

Have the mind of Christ in His affection

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Date: 21 January 2024

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[0 : 00] Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

And just to comment there, when I was listening to Vicki and when she was sharing, I couldn't help think of being baptized here. And just the joy of seeing her growth in Jesus over these last couple of years has been wonderful.

Through trial, just as the Philippians experienced it, through trial, but almost, I'm not old enough to be a father as you know, but almost as a father in the faith, just to stand with her was just a joy. Right, now I've lost myself. Right, okay, verse 5. Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that here you began a good work in you, will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

[1 : 19] Good word for you, Vicki. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart. For whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.

God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ. Wow, this is hard to read. Amen. And this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Amen. Alright, let's see the next slide, please. So the title is, Let This Mind Be In You.

And it's going to be the title of a 10-week series on Philippians. We're not going to go through every verse. I'm just saying this for the sake of anybody preaching after me, just to remind you.

[2 : 38] We don't comment on every verse. We're going to comment on the theme. And the theme is the mind of Christ. And what we want to demonstrate through this letter is how Christ's mind expressed itself to us in terms of the various ways in which He does that.

And today, it's entitled, Have the Mind of Christ in His Affection. To have the mind of Christ is not simply to think like Jesus.

It is to have Jesus think through us. It is to have the Spirit of God revealing the truth of Jesus to us, as Jesus said He would, and then showing us how to live.

So to have the affection of Christ is to have the love of Jesus flowing through us to others. Paul says, I yearn for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

And when he talked about that, he was talking about something he felt really very deeply. Now you'll know there are different Greek words for love, and this one, affection, is an unusual word, not used very often, and actually should be really translated, I yearn for you with the bowels of Christ.

[4 : 02] Because it expresses deep feeling, you know, something you feel in your bowels. Now you know when you're anxious about somebody and you feel that gut-wrenching feel in the middle? That's what this affection is.

That gut-wrenching feeling in the middle of your stomach when you're worried about somebody. And it just won't go away, and you can't distract yourself from it.

That's what he means by affection. Ralph Martin in his commentary says, the modern translations are too polite. Yeah. So you can kind of fill in the dots.

But it did arise from anxiety too because of the situation the church was feeling. So this was something he was feeling very, very deeply in his stomach, in the bowels of his stomach.

And sometimes it's translated in the New Testament, the bowels of mercy. That deep desire that you have for somebody to receive mercy, especially when they don't deserve it.

[5 : 10] But you long that God will be merciful to them, though they are, just as we are, undeserving. So next slide, please. To know the mind of Christ, first of all, just to explain what that is, just to set up this series, really.

I've already suggested to you that it is to have Jesus think through us. It is to allow his spirit to so influence and permeate our being that when we act, we act as Jesus would.

When we think, we think as Jesus would. When we do something, we seek to do it as Jesus would. Now, the flesh can get in the way of that. So John Winter can get in the way of Jesus working through John Winter.

But if I allow Jesus to work through John Winter, who knows the possibilities? The only problem with John Winter is John Winter. What the Bible calls the old man, or the flesh.

And the flesh is more than just your sin. It's what makes up your personality. It's what makes you you, of course. But you're not just flesh, which is good news for when you die, because your flesh gets put in the ground or gets cremated.

[6 : 24] But your spirit, the other part of you, that makes up you, is with the Lord, which is, as Paul says, is far better. So to know the mind of Christ is to allow the influence of the Holy Spirit, the mind of Christ, to work through John Winter so that John Winter doesn't get a look in.

It's a bit like having a good nagging voice. Because you can get bad nagging voices. But it's a way of saying, you lords, think through me.

Speak through me. Work through me. May there be more of Jesus and less of me. That's what John said, didn't he? John the Baptist.

I should decrease. He should increase. And that's what we want Jesus to do in our lives every day. Why do we need the mind of Christ?

Because when you think of Christ, he says, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. You know, that's a way of saying, every day, I seek to do the will of God just as much as I seek to eat bread.

[7 : 35] When I get up in the morning and I think about having my breakfast, I think about doing the will of God. When I stop for something to eat in the middle of the day, I think about doing the will of God. When I rest for my evening meal, I think about doing the will of God.

My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. That's what I live for. He said, when you pray, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

This should be your constant desire just as it was his. And so if we are to become more like Jesus, which is the theme of our second, the second strand of our theme for our purpose statement, to be with Jesus, to become like Jesus, to do what Jesus did.

If we're to become like Jesus, we need to be thinking more like Jesus. Lord, I want to do your will. I always want to live for you every day with the confidence that you hear my prayers so that I can do your work and your will on earth as it is in heaven.

Please provide for me. It's kind of a summary of the Lord's prayer, isn't it? That's the mind of Christ. And it needs to be the mind of Christ at work in us.

[8 : 49] So having the mind of Christ is not just a theological proposition. It's not just, oh, well, that's an interesting theological issue. How does that happen? It's a practical, everyday thing. Jesus, think your thoughts through me.

James Denning puts it in the next slide, please. When Paul thinks of the glory of Christ, he does not look back. He looks up. Men and women were saved not by dwelling on the wonderful words and deeds of one who had lived some time ago and reviving these in their imagination, but by receiving the almighty, emancipating, quickening spirit of one who lived and reigned forevermore.

And so it must always be if Christianity is to be a living religion. It's not just an idea. It's a relationship.

I guess if anybody was to kind of tap into your mindset and my mindset, they would think you were mad because you spend half your day talking to somebody who isn't there. But he is there.

He's as real to me as you are. My relationship to him is as meaningful to me as my relationship to you. When I speak to him, speaking to him is as meaningful as speaking to you.

[10 : 13] Speaking to you over a cup of coffee is something I do with Jesus every day. I sit there with a cup of tea, usually a cup of tea, first thing, and then a cup of coffee. There has to be an order

to these things, just like you have to have boiled eggs on a Sunday morning.

There are things that I have to do. And I talk to Jesus. And I complain to Jesus. And I tell him my aches and pains and my ills. He's my best friend because he knows me so well.

And that's what it's like to have the mind of Christ, isn't it? It's not a theological proposition alone. It is a relationship. It is something that gives life to our faith.

So when we talk about having the mind of Christ, we're going to look at his affection working through us, his determination that drives us on, his humility that keeps us where we should be, his confidence that gives us faith, his attitudes which should be our attitudes, his hope which is our hope, his joyful gentleness which should be ours, rejoicing the Lord always.

I will say it again, rejoice. His serenity which should be our serenity so that we're not anxious but at peace and we give everything to Jesus. His faithfulness which should be our faithfulness I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength and his grace which we should express always to all people in the church and outside of the church.

[11:46] So what is it then, next slide, to have the mind of Christ as our mind? Well, Isaiah the prophet says, who has known the mind of the Lord or been able to give him advice?

And Paul quotes that passage in 1 Corinthians 2 and this is what he says. He says, we declare God's wisdom a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

None of the rulers of this age understood it for if they had they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written, what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard and what no human mind has conceived, the things God has prepared for those who love him, there are things that God has revealed to us by his spirit.

Sometimes we kind of misappropriate that verse and we say that verse is telling us that we can't understand what heaven's going to be like. That's not what it says. Paul is not saying you can't understand what heaven's going to be like because he tells you what it's going to be like in some places and the apostle John does as well.

Okay, we can't imagine it. It's kind of like a bit too mind-blowing but that's not what he's saying here. What he's saying here is that in the Old Testament, when Isaiah was speaking to rebels who rebelled against God and sought to live their own way, they were blinded to the truth of God.

[13:07] They couldn't understand it. They didn't know it. They had the mind of the flesh. So they couldn't understand the things of God and the prophets spoke they wouldn't accept it. They rejected it. But when a man yields to God and when God's spirit works in the mind and heart of a man or woman, then they have understanding, revelation.

God has revealed it to us, Paul says, by his spirit. So we have knowledge and understanding in a way that an unbeliever does not.

And that's the good news of the gospel. Let's notice what Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 2. The spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them?

In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world but the spirit who is from God so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

Notice, Paul is not saying you will live ever in ignorance because this almighty God is infinitely indescribable and difficult to understand and so you live in darkness.

[14:19] He doesn't say that. He says, actually, that would be true unless the spirit of God was in you. And now, you have the mind of Christ. You can know the things of God because the spirit of God is moving within you.

And that's wonderful, isn't it? It's why we talk to God. You see, the general will of God is revealed in Scripture but the personal individual will of God for you and I is not so revealed.

So, God, should I do this? Or God, should I do that? Or God, should I do the other? Please show me and guess what he does? He shows you because you have the mind of Christ.

And the spirit of God whispers into your heart or shouts at you sometimes and you know what to do. God is communicating with you.

Imagine that. God is communicating with you as you communicate with him every day. The thing about prayer, you see, prayer is not a one-way thing. It's not me speaking lots of words to God.

[15:16] It is being silent to hear his voice speaking back to me. Two-way. And so, Paul says, this is what we speak not in words taught by us by human wisdom but in words taught us by the Spirit explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things but such a person is not subject to mere human judgments for who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him but we have the mind of Christ.

As Thomas of Kempis who once said, he who has the mind of Christ is freed from opinion. It's a very bold thing to say. But I think I know what he means.

If you have the mind of Christ you can say it isn't an opinion anymore. When I die it will be alright. For to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

[16:29] To be freed from opinion is to be able to say I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that dare.

It doesn't mean that I don't experience difficulties it's not hard or it's not scary or anything else. It just means that I know that in spite of it all he is with me.

That is not an opinion. That is a fact. Fact of faith. Sounds foolishness to the world but that is to have the mind of Christ.

And that should be encouraging to us shouldn't it? To have the mind of Christ means that everyday the Spirit of God is moving in my life and the Spirit of God is directing my ways I am not and never ever will be alone.

Lord I am with you always. Even to the end of the world. Remember what Jesus said in John 16 I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now.

[17:39] When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth for he will not speak on his own authority but whatever he hears he will speak and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

He will glorify me for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

And this can be very practical. Lord what should I do today? Should I do this? How should I respond today? Should I respond like this? What would Jesus do? He will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Is this going to honor Jesus? Or is this about you? Is this the flesh speaking? John Winter's desire? Or is this Jesus? And that's an everyday relationship.

The mind of Christ. Next slide please. A bit of Dallas Willard because we all like a bit of Dallas Willard. Renovation of the heart. He says the intention that moves us forward in Christ likeness is to be formed to have the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as a constant presence in our mind.

[18:50] crowding out every false idea or destructive image or misinformation about God and every crooked inference or belief. Thus it is the intention to use divinely powerful weapons for the destruction of fortresses.

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God and taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Christ. And that's your struggle and my struggle every day. Lord I'm really really worried. Really really anxious. I'm really struggling with this.

What should I do? Take that thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving give your request to God.

You can worry about it. Of course you can. John Winder loves to worry about things. But Jesus within says look peace. Peace to you. You don't need to do it.

[19:55] And that's true of lots and lots of things. When I think wrong thoughts bad thoughts immoral thoughts Lord I want to take this thought captive.

Because this is not your will. Your will is whatever is good whatever is noble whatever is of good report think about those things. Not this. Not this. This isn't helpful.

What would Jesus' mind say to you? Very practical. Which is why it's so important that we understand that the mind is so vital to control by the Spirit of God in order that we might become

more like Jesus.

What we think reflects who we really are. Doesn't it? Because people say oh you're such a nice fella but you might have just been thinking of doing something really bad on the inside and you know that you would say if only you knew what I can be like.

But by the grace of God think about what you can be in Jesus. the mind of Christ at work within. All right.

[21 : 10] So very briefly it will have to be now. What does it mean next slide to take on the mind of Christ by expressing his affection? Oh that verse is so important. Romans 12.

I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God what is the good and acceptable and perfect will.

The renewing of your mind. I always think like this I know I shouldn't think like this no you shouldn't you don't need to you can think like Jesus instead of taking oh this is terrible it's all going to go wrong have a little faith that actually Jesus might intend it to go right indeed he does all things work together for the good of those who love him who are called according to his purpose.

All right. Taken on the mind of Christ by expressing his affection. Mike told us about the Philippians chief city of the Roman Empire in Macedonia a really important place to live the kind of London equivalent where you got you know some exemptions on your taxes and all kinds of things really important.

Also the church was planted there Mike went through that so Lydia was converted her heart was opened by the spirit of God and she received Christ then the Philippian jailer was converted and all his family through a miracle at night when they were singing praises to Paul and Silas was singing praise to God and then the prison doors burst open the chains all fell off and the people didn't run away and this guy comes in here thinks what's going on here and then he's converted and baptized and added to the church and then before that the young girl the slave girl who had a demon she was converted as well so there was a big change and then the church met in Lydia's house it was going really really well then Paul ends up in prison they get worried for Paul he sees what's on the horizon in terms of persecution and difficulties keeps sending messengers to them they get worried for him he gets worried for them they're all worried and then he's saying I long for you with the affection of Christ what's come to me what's happening to me is really going to serve to advance the gospel because even people in Caesar's household have believed and at the end he greets he says those in Caesar's household greet you so there are conversions among the emperor's family amazing so the gospel is going forward but persecution is coming and he's worried for them it's going to be hard he says

[24 : 08] I long for you with the affection of Christ I've already told you what that affection is next slide it's the heartfelt affection for the church it comes from deep within that bowel movement forgive me that leads him to feel great concern and he has great concern because of course he planted the church he was concerned for the church concerned that they might be able to stand in what he calls a crooked and depraved generation among whom you shine as lights in the world chapter 2 verse 15 and he said it is right for me to feel this way about you all because I hold you in my heart for you are all partakers with me of grace both in my imprisonment and in my defense and confirmation of the gospel so Mike was at the house of commons on Wednesday with MPs trying to convince them to take an interest in the persecuted church where believers across the world suffer terrible terrible indignities imprisonment confiscation of properties even the loss of their lives for standing for Jesus he has them in his heart because he's been to see them in Sudan when you love God's people you pray for them you care for them you long for them their suffering is your suffering you stand with them as Paul as the writer of the Hebrews says keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters do not forget to show hospitality to strangers for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison as if it was you feel for them like that that's why I really want us as a church to take an interest in the persecuted church and to feel for them in their suffering because if you feel for somebody you'll do something for them you give to them you pray for them you long for them you'll even visit them if you can and also Paul had learned affection by learning and following the example of Jesus whoever claims to live in him

John says must walk as Jesus walked must live like Jesus so what is happening on the inside is revealing itself on the outside in terms of the character formation that's going on we're always being formed in our character you know that don't you you watch the news it influences you it informs your ideas sometimes it informs your politics sometimes it informs your attitudes it does that all the while you can't be not formed everybody is formed by something makes me smile and people say well I'm my own person nobody influences me well actually no because I can hear your mother just as you say that or your father and you talk just like your brothers and sisters and actually you have the attitudes like so many other people on this subject and loads of people have influenced you but you carry on thinking that it's your own your own because it's not true so we're all being formed by something and the question is who is forming us and the answer should be Jesus

Jesus should be forming us actually transforming us from what we once were by the earth the flesh's formation of us to what we can become as the spirit of God transforms our mind and hearts and behaviors through Jesus we become more and more like Jesus and I'm a little ashamed to say more than a little ashamed to say I've walked with Jesus 40 years and I'm not more like him I need to be more like him and the only one that gets in the way is me and I need to be more like him in his affection compassionate next slide please accepting just as Jesus accepted sinners see when I'm kind of cross with the world like the other day when that poor little boy was found dead next to his father and I'm cross with the social workers and I'm cross with the police and I'm cross with nobody checking on him and I think who am I to be cross I have no idea about the set of circumstances that led to that I do feel terribly sad though that a little boy died in such a way and then I discovered there's a bit of John Winter there in his crossness and a bit of Jesus there in the compassion compassion because I cared deeply for somebody I've never met that's compassion to love people because you love them for no other reason don't need to know anything about them you don't need to decide whether they're deserving or not you just love them I watched a great film yesterday afternoon because I just wanted to watch a film I watched a film called Seven Pounds Will Smith is in it you ever seen it great film about a guy

[29 : 45] I won't try and spoil it but I can't not spoil it really a guy who wants to give well I won't spoil it he wants to give something important to seven different people but he wants to discover first whether they're deserving of it and I think it's a great film except for this it's not a Jesus film because Jesus gives to people who are undeserving of it that's a great difference still a great film still watching to have the compassion of Christ is to love and care for people regardless of their merit or worth just as he cared for us next slide please and that's the sermon focus we need to have the affection of Jesus to express the mind of Christ as we hold our brothers and sisters in Christ in an affectionate love which causes us to grow together in the fruits of righteousness that comes through Jesus

Christ to the glory of God the Father so this is your first lesson in the mind of Christ some homework to do spend some time asking asking Jesus to help you to love like he loves but pastor I can't do that you don't understand how much I've been hurt by Lord help me to love them even though they've hurt me with the love of Jesus but you don't know pastor how awful my neighbor is so difficult to get on with help me to love my neighbor with the love of Jesus but he hurt me so bad he betrayed me he walked out of me he left me with my children to struggle alone he brutalized me he beat me help me to love him with the love of

Jesus it seems so hard doesn't it it seems so simplistic to say it but I'm convinced that only love and forgiveness heals a broken heart I don't want in any way to minimize what you may have suffered or to deny the pain of it I simply want to say the way to healing for you is by loving and forgiving with the affection of Jesus and as I close today if that's going to be really hard we're happy to stand with you in it we don't want anybody to put themselves in danger of course but we are to say to you that you are not excusing the evil that has been done to you by forgiving and loving you are simply allowing yourself to breathe to be free and not to be further damaged by the evil that has been done to you may the affection of Christ flow through you and me to the glory and praise of our saviour king

Jesus amen let us pray amen