

Philippians Ch 2 Vs 3-5

Let this mind be in you

Let's look at Vs 5 and then we'll back track from there and set up the backdrop for our text this morning.

Vs5

Now many scholarly individual's will go on to illustrate the mind of Christ in the following vs, but in reality I believe that vs 6-8 are the illustration that Paul uses to demonstrate how the mind of Christ was displayed practically in *His* life. and We can and will (next week) see some applicable things in there for us, but Paul's "sermon" so to speak, is in vs 3-4, that's where I believe you find the practical proclamation and then vs 5 is the pivot point or the exhortation and then vs 6-8 are the illustration. and When you come to this point in the book of Phil, you find that Paul has been speaking on the need for unity in the body of Christ, and really creating a case whereby we are left with no choice (if we desire to honor the Lord) then to be those individual's who seek to facilitate that unity. Being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord and one mind, because in this life you will be one of 2 person's, you will either be a peace maker or a peace breaker, and Jesus said blessed are the peace (what) makers. and So have the same love, be of one accord, and of one mind; and who's mind would that be, the pastor's? Boy for your sakes you'd better be glad that's not the case.

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Eph 5:1-2 says, "*Be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*" So we're to love as Christ loved, or to have the "love" of Christ at work in us, in vs 2 here in Phil we saw the exhortation to be of the same love, that is, the love of Christ and here we see that we're also to have the mind of Christ. The love of Christ, and the mind of Christ, or the attitude of Christ, in other words see things the way Christ sees them, or think about things the way that Christ thinks. and So what Paul is saying here is that it's actually possible to come to the place where the very mind of Christ is in me.

Now how does that happen? Well, one thing's for sure and that's that it's not by any working of my own, I can't fabricate the mind of Christ, and so it's by His power, by His Spirit working in me bringing to this place where I have the mind of Christ. Enabling me to think as *He* thinks, have the attitude that *He* has, causing me to respond as *He* would. Someone made millions of dollars off 4 little letters, W.W.J.D. (What would Jesus do?) But you see there's a question that in reality needs to precede that, and that's what would Jesus think? Because outlook determines outcome, the way that I see a situation or circumstance will dictate the way that I respond to that or what I do in light of that. If my outlook is selfish, my actions will be not only divisive but destructive, so we by the Spirit of God and the grace of God need to be in that place where the mind of Christ is a reality in our lives.

The question is, is it possible for a person to come to that place, is it possible for you to be in the situation or circumstance that you're presently in and consider those things or think of the present things in your life the way that Christ would think?

It had been 3 years, and Jesus had spent that time walking with His disciples, working with His disciples, talking to them training them and teaching them. They had seen Him perform phenomenal miracles, dumbfound the Pharisees, stupefy and stagger religious scholars, 3 years had gone by and now it was time to be alone with His boys, the disciples for a time before His departure from this world.

So He pulls the boys aside (the immediate 12 who had forsaken all to follow Him) there in Matt 16 when they came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, a region filled with pagan god's and temples dedicated to them along with a whole host of idols carved everywhere. and He looks at the disciples you recall and said, who do men say that I am, and they began to tell Him what the buzz was around the region. Some say Elijah, or Jeremiah, others think maybe your John the Baptist back from the dead or one of the other prophets. and That's when He looked at them and asked the most profoundly important and eternally significant questions that any of us will ever be faced with and that's because all of eternity weighs in the balance to our response. He said, who do you say that I am? Who do you say that Jesus is? and Peter spoke up and said, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*"

Jesus said, good, I'm glad that you realize that, the Holy Spirit has ministered that truth to your heart and you've allowed it to sink in, you've received that. and Now that you know who I am, I want you to listen very carefully (I'm paraphrasing) but He said, I've come to die on a cross. and Peter basically said, beg your pardon, could you run that past me again I could've sworn that I just heard you say that you came to die on a cross. Jesus said, that's right I came to die on a cross, and Peter said, I thought you came to establish your kingdom. and Jesus said yeah, and that's the means through which I'm going to establish it. (Peter) Through a cross, (Jesus) yep, through the sacrifice of Myself, My laying My life down on the altar of the cross for the sin of the world.

Do you remember what Peter said, how he responded to that conversation, the bible tells us that at that point in the conversation that, "*Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"*" You see, Peter just couldn't think His thoughts, and this wouldn't be the only time that Peter was confronted with this predicament of not being able to be on the same page with the Lord. At the last supper when the Lord began to wash the disciples feet and Peter said, "*Lord, are You washing my feet?"*" and Jesus looked right at him and said, what I'm doing you don't *understand* right now. In other words he wasn't thinking His thought's, he didn't have His disposition or outlook on things. In the garden the men approached Jesus to take Him away and Peter pulled out a sword and cut the servant of the high priest's ear off, and Jesus basically looked at him and said, what are you *thinking*, and then He picked up the ear and placed it back on the guys head.

You see here Peter had spent all these years with the Lord physically and still hadn't come to that place where he had the mind of Christ. Where he was thinking His thoughts, and on the same page as He was concerning the issues of life, now if Peter spent 3 years walking with the Lord, sharing private times with the Lord physically, able to ask questions and probe the thoughts and intents of the Lord's heart and mind and yet still not think His thoughts. What makes me think that I would be able to somehow automatically think His thoughts and have His mind? Now you remember what Jesus said to him after he had rebuked the Lord and said, far be it from You Lord, as long as I'm alive You'll never die on a cross. It was at that point that Jesus turned to Peter and said in some of the strongest, if not *the* strongest language that He ever used with anybody (stronger than He used when He dealt with the Pharisees), He said, *“Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not (listen) mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”*

In other words, you don't think the way that *God* thinks. Why, because he was seeking to get Him to avoid the cross, Satan did the same thing, Jesus is saying Peter, you're reasoning (you're thinking) couldn't be any farther from godliness right now, as a matter of fact it's satanic. Because it seeks to avoid the cross, but when you think like God thinks, it'll take you to the cross every time.

Paul, who came to the place (and I'm getting a bit a head of myself but that's ok) where he could say I have the mind of Christ, and what was his message, what was his passion? He said, for I determined, I purposed unwaveringly to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him what, crucified, Paul's focus was on the cross. You see God thinks very differently than the way man thinks, our reasoning has been tainted by sin, perverted, polluted, contaminated and corrupted by sin, we don't think (in the natural, or even the carnal) the way that God thinks. and Jesus told Peter, listen, you don't think the way that God thinks, because when you come to the place where you think like God thinks you will know and understand that the cross is the only way that My Kingdom can truly be established, that sinful man might have a personal and intimate relationship with a Holy and righteous God.

You remember that it was at that point that Jesus looked at the rest of His disciples and said, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”* and So Paul is writing to the Philippian church and he might live, he might die, (he believes he's going to live but he's not sure) and so what is it that he wants to encourage them with. You know when someone believes that they may be near death many times that's when some of the most profound and important words come from their mouths. Because they're choosing their words carefully because they may not have many left and so they don't worry about sounding mushy, they bear their heart. More than in any other book in the NT the overwhelming emphasis in the book of Phil is on the disposition or the attitude of the mind. You remember when we began this book I told you that Ch 1 dealt with the single mind, the key vs being 21.

Ch 2 deals with the submissive mind the key vs being vs 3 Ch 3 deals with the spiritual mind, setting our minds not on earthly things and the thing of this world but upon heavenly things, and the things that pertain to the Kingdom of God. and Then ch 4 deals with the secure mind focusing in on vs 6-7 there, be anxious for nothing, don't worry about things, give it over to the Lord and trust in His ability to take care of the situation based upon His sovereignty. But you know all of these various points can be summed up in this one vs, "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*" Which brings us back to our text, what was the mind that was in Christ Jesus as He walked this earth? Well we see the demonstration or illustration in the vs following vs 5, of how it was facilitated in His life, but it's proclamation I believe we see in vs 3-4 in how it's practically facilitated in our lives.

Vs 3-4

So what is the mind of Christ to be in your life, and in my life? That we would do nothing through selfish ambition (or maybe your bible says strife, or selfishness) or conceit or empty or vainglory. But in humility, or lowliness of mind, we would esteem others better than ourselves not looking out simply for our own interest, but for the interests of others.

So the 1st thing that the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul brings to our attention is that nothing is to be done out of selfish ambition. Now again I would have you notice that *ambition* in and of itself isn't a bad thing, later on Paul will encourage us to forget that which is behind us and press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of god in Christ Jesus. But when you tack on that little word "selfish" it corrupts the whole thing. and I had the privilege of hearing a wonderful bible study on this very passage from a man by the name of Dennis Kinlaw and he brought up 4 very interesting things about this passage here found in ch 2 and 2 of them are found right here in vs 3 in these words that have been translated "selfish ambitions" and "conceit", and What the motives are that constitute "selfish ambitions". The next 2 he pulls out of vs 14 and I'll touch on it briefly as it all ties into

vs 5

But there are few ways that this word "selfish ambitions" is used in the Greek and one of those ways speaks of when you do something for someone and in return they give you a gift for services rendered. (Just to say thanks) Now later on it came to be used for where you pay a person to work for you, the emphasis being upon the person who's doing the giving and the paying. But he brings up the fact that somewhere down the line it got turned around where the emphasis came upon the person who was getting paid. and So now you have the person who works for what he can get out of it, he becomes a hireling, and on an occasion it would even be used for the term of buying a prostitute for hire, you've bought her body, you've paid her for the use of her body. It was used of a politician who accepted a bribe, he or she was paid for a service, and they accepted the bribe for what they were able to get out of it. Be it money or whatever, so the 1st characteristic of selfish ambition is that which looks at any given situation and says, "what's in it for me."

Most all of you who are employed would to some degree probably fit into this category, with regards to the work force. Meaning that when you applied for the job, you probably weren't thinking man I know that I could bless this companies socks off and make them millions of dollars for minimal pay. You wanted to know when you went to work for them, what was in it for you, what was the pay, what were the benefits, would it be worth your time. and Those questions in and of themselves aren't wrong. But what Paul is saying here is don't let what's in it for you be that which determines what you are or aren't willing to do. Don't let it contaminate you, as it pertains specifically to your relationships with one another, the 2nd thing that's brought up here in this word "conceit" which is the Greek word "kenodoxia" (ken-od-ox-ee'-ah); which comes from 2 Greek words "Kenos" which means "empty" and "doxia" which means "glory" or "appearance" in other words, don't do anything for empty show or for appearance sake.

Now let this one mull you over a little bit, especially if you do any type of public ministry or work that places you before people, which to some degree that's probably all of us because we all deal with people to some greater or lesser degree. But what this is saying is that when see any situation the 1st thing that shouldn't be going through your mind is "how will this make me look". Now think about this, every one of the disciples fell into this category on the night that Jesus was betrayed, why was it that they all either denied Him or forsook Him? Peter fell into this at least twice, why did he lie about his relationship to Jesus when that young girl looked at him as he was warming his hands near the fire and said hey, aren't you with Him?

As He was there on trial, why was it that later on (and Paul addresses it in Gal) that he would eat with the gentiles but when certain men came from James he with drew and ate only with the Jews fearing those who were of the circumcision. Because he didn't want to appear associated with a certain group of people, or to put it another way, "how will I look", this could damage my reputation and I could be ruled out of a certain group of people (and we'll see that more in vs 7) but appearances sake. and So if the mind of Christ is to be in me, so far we've seen at least 2 things that can not dominate me or dictate my thinking so as to persuade my decision. #1 What's in it for me, and #2 How will I look? Because if you take careful notice of the emphasis there in each of those questions regarding their concern, what is it on? Me, it's all about self, but Paul tells us here that in lowliness or humility of mind, that each of us are to esteem others better than ourselves. You see in this world there's much emphasis on self esteem, but the bible teaches that in reality that's our problem, we esteem ourselves to the neglect of others when in reality we're to esteem others above ourselves.

You say well, what about me, well that's up to everyone else, if you're esteeming others above yourself, and others are esteem you above themselves then everyone is looked up to and no one is looked down on and so the balance is created. Now just so that you see the last two points look quickly at vs 14 (read)

Maybe your bible says “murmurings” and disputings, God hates it when we murmur or complain, you remember the children of Israel were always murmuring about their wilderness situation, because they remembered the leeks and garlic’s of Egypt and had a pity party about what was going on in their lives and so they vented all over Moses. and God dealt with them in a rather swift and decisive manner and in 1st Cor ch 10 as Paul rehearses a bit of that history he brings out some of the various sins of Israel during that period and right in there with lust, adultery, and idolatry is murmuring, or complaining. Why, what is murmuring, it’s that self-pity that screams so loudly or even subtly and softly whispers, “I deserve better than this.”

Why is this happening to me? Again what’s the reference, what’s the emphasis? and God says, hey, that’s sin; now why is that attitude is sin? Because if you believe that God is in control, that’s a reproach and accusation against God Himself, it’s to say that He owes you more, now if in your book Satan is in control, (and I’m speaking here with regard to the goings on in the believers life) then you can blame it all on him. But in reality Satan is not in control, because we know that he’s not allowed to do anything to you that God the Father doesn’t permit, therefore if it’s in your life or mine we’ve got to look at it as something that God the Father permitted. Now what does that mean?

It means that the things that you want so desperately to shun in reality you need to embrace, we talked about the lessons of suffering and how we need to learn not to waste our suffering. Because it’s during those times that God is carving on us, molding us, and teaching us, drawing us near to Him. and This falls in that similar line, because if you say I deserve better than this, then what you’re doing is attacking and challenging, in fact criticizing the very character of God. and So Paul says, I want you to think like the Lord thought, let this mind be in you, that when He was confronted with suffering, when He thought of the cross, He didn’t say “Father, why are you being so hard on Me, don’t you know that I deserve better than this?” Sure He expressed His humanity and said that if there could be another way He’d prefer it, there’s no sin in that. But He didn’t let that control Him, or contaminate His attitude and so when they approached them in the garden He said, who are you looking for? and They said Jesus of Nazareth, He didn’t cringe and hesitatingly raise His hand and recoil back from them as they approached, He walked right up to them knowing the end that awaited Him and said, I’m the guy your looking for lets go. He embraced the will of His Father, so # 3 we’re not dominated by the attitude, “I deserve better than this.”

Finally we see here disputing or arguing, in this case with God about His will for our lives. It’s the “yes Lord, but” mentality. God says this is what I want you to do and we say, well, I was really hoping to do this, or, go there and so you let that affect your service to God. and So our 4 characteristics that we see differentiating between the mind of the flesh and the mind of Christ are #1 What’s in it for me, #2 how will I look, #3 I deserve better than this, and 4^{thly} yes Lord but...By the grace of God we need to be careful lest these attitudes persuade us and affect our service in Christ. Now all of this is summed up nicely in vs 4 and then capsulized in vs 5.

Vs4

Now for the sake of time I'm going to cut straight to the chase, as I mentioned earlier regarding Dennis Kinlaw, he brings out in his study what this vs literally says in the Greek. and I found it very interesting, it says, "Each one looking out not for the things of himself, but each one for the things of others?" Now did you catch what word was missing there, where did the "only" go? It's not there, now I believe that the Authorized Version, the KJV leaves it out but nearly every other translation I looked at had it, and it's not that it's sin to be concerned for what's going on in your life. But that little word "only" right there changes the entire flavor of that vs, because if you include that word it makes it perfectly legitimate for me to look out for my own interest to look out for #1 with the same intensity that I'd look out for others.

What I mean by that is that in vs 3 Paul just said don't be doing things from selfish ambition, and esteem others better than yourself but if you allow that word "only" to find it's way in to vs 4, it brings you right back into the picture, the very thing that the Holy Spirit through Paul has been working so hard to get removed. So find a spot to reference this to in your bible and pencil this in there, "Each one looking out, not for the things of himself, but for the things of others." Now that's a high standard isn't? The question is, is it possible for anyone to really get there on this side of eternity? Well, we'll let that thought lead us into our text next time we gather as we proceed on in Phil ch 2 Lord willing next week.

But maybe for you this morning having the mind of Christ, having the heart of Christ isn't where you're at because you haven't taken that 1st initial step of having Christ in your heart. and Today Jesus wants to renew your mind, He wants to give you a new life and a hope, and reason for living, the bible says that if any man is in Christ he's a new creation, old things pass away and behold all things are made new. and Jesus Christ came to this world, laid down His life upon the altar of the cross, shed His blood for the remission of your sin and was raised for your justification. and He's bridged the gap between sinful mankind and a Holy and righteous God. and Jesus is still in the business of resurrection, He takes lives, dead in sin and transgression and by His love and grace and mercy raises them from the dead by the power of His Holy Spirit. If Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart this morning, don't harden your heart, the bible says that today is the day of salvation, come to the cross.