

## Philippians Ch 2 Vs 5-11

Obedient unto death

I want to just briefly conclude the question that I left you hanging with last week. You recall we left off in vs 4 actually using vs 5 as our text and vs 3 and 4 supporting that or demonstrating what it means for you and me to have the mind of Christ. We'll see how it was worked out in His life today, but how is it demonstrated practically in my own life? Well, as it says in vs 3, by nothing being done through (finish vs 3 and 4) and such is the mind of Christ in us. The question is, is it possible to actually come to the point where I do indeed have the mind of Christ? and You remember how we examined Peter's life and how after spending 3 years physically with Jesus, having private times with the Lord being able to probe His heart and mind and yet when it was all said and done, (while Jesus was still on this earth) Peter still just couldn't think His thought's. Jesus said to him, you aren't *mindful* of the things of God, but of men, because he sought to get Him to avoid the cross. and The mind of God will always take us to the cross (and time forbids us to get into all the implications of that today) but the cross is at the center of the heart and mind of God because it's there that man is reconciled to Him.

It's there that old things pass away and all things are made new, it's there that the sin of the world was atoned for and the ultimate service of laying down one's own life for the sake of other's was demonstrated and it's to that point that God wants to take us. That we might be reconciled to Him, that we might be forgiven of our sin and become a new creation in Christ, being brought out of darkness and into light, out of death and into life. and Then in turn laying down our lives, for the sake of others (and we'll get into that in a little more detail later.) But that's a summary of vs 3 and 4. and You remember I gave you the literal translation of vs 4, that being "Each one looking out, not for the things of himself, but each one for the things of others."

In that literal rendering that little word "only" does not exist, because you're not to be your priority, this whole time the Holy Spirit through Paul has (with in the context) been seeking to get you, to get me out of the picture so that we might focus on others, not doing things with selfish ulterior motives i.e. what's in it for me or how does this make me look? But looking out for others, and is it possible for us as mere human beings to actually, in reality come to this place? Has anybody ever gotten there? Well, Paul addresses that just a little later in this ch, look over at vs 19.

### Vs19-21

Now this is interesting because once again when you look into the Greek you find that what this literally says, is "For all seek the things of themselves." Now in vs 4 he says, "Each one looking out, not for the things of himself." and When you get to vs 21 you find out the direct antithesis of this vs, in vs 4 he says don't be doing this, but in vs 21 he acknowledges the reality, that everybody's doing it. But in vs 20 he's saying but Timothy is different, he's likeminded with me (Paul is saying) everyone else is in on the deal for what's in it for them, and now notice vs 22.

## Vs22

Timothy had a proven character, one that sought after (not the things of himself, but the things of others). and Don't think that this is the only place where Paul taught this radical aspect of the faith, turn to 1<sup>st</sup> Cor ch 10, now when you get to vs 23 you find that he's been talking about the eating of certain foods and how nothing should be done to stumble the weak conscience and so he says. Vs23- (now watch this) Vs 24

Now let me give you 1 guess as to the literal rendering of this vs, "Let no one seek the things of himself, but each the things of others." Sound familiar? Don't seek the things of yourself, but rather the well-being of others.

Well, what about you Paul, did you get to this point? Look down at vs 32 (in other words be careful not to be the cause of offense even if what you're doing is perfectly legit, think of the other guy and pray for him, but God forbid that I be the cause of another brother stumbling.) Now notice

## Vs33

Not seeking the things of myself, but that of many, why? So that they may be saved, now notice this next vs, it's absolutely staggering. (Read vs 1 of ch11)

In other words Christ came to the place where He cared more for you, and more for me, than He did, even for Himself and Paul is saying and I've let Him get me to that place as well, where I care more for you and your needs than I do my own, that's why I'm in these chains. Because I'm so focused on the cross and the salvation of others. and So if Paul got there, and Timothy got there, the question is, is how did they get there and do I have an excuse for not getting there? Are they somehow superhuman, more than mere men? I don't think so, and can you imagine the difference it would make if we did get there?

Well to cut to the chase I believe that the only way that we're able to arrive at such a place as to where we are so overwhelmed with the burden for others, leading people to the cross for the salvation of their souls, unwilling to stop no matter what the cost, is by grace. Grace holds the power to give you the mind of Christ, and to take it one step farther I believe it's by grace, through the fellowship (as we seen in vs 1) of the Spirit. Getting to know the mind of God through fellowship with the Spirit of God, 1 Cor 2:9-13 says, "*as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."* But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." and In Vs 16, "*For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*" Which brings us into this mornings text, seeing how the mind of Christ was illustrated and demonstrated practically in His own life, so we've seen the proclamation in vs 3-4, (read) vs 5 is the exhortation (read) and now we come to the illustration as it pertains to the life of Christ for our example.

## Vs6-11

Let this mind, this attitude be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, now I want to draw to your attention that little 3 lettered word there “let”. “Let” this mind be in you, what’s the insinuation? That you have a choice in the matter, now I understand that some of your bibles may say something to the affect of “have this attitude” or “Your attitude should be” but regardless of all of that, the point is, is that you have free will to operate, and to facilitate the working of the mind of Christ into your life. Believe me when I tell you that Jesus would have us have His mind more than we could desire to have His mind, well what then is the problem? Me, myself, my flesh, the flesh man rebels at the thought of having in me the mind of Christ because I know that that is ultimately to die to self and esteem others above myself even as Christ did. and

Vs 6 begins to explain how He humbled Himself and esteemed others. and As we enter this portion of scriptures we’re treading upon what many bible scholars believe to be one of the greatest doctrinal passages of the bible, concerning what exactly took place in the life of Christ. From who He was in eternity past, and what took place in Him stepping out of all time and eternity in order that He might become a man, what took place while He was a man and then the exaltation of Christ being seated at the right hand of God as a man. An area known by some as the “kenosis” meaning “the emptying”, what was it that Christ emptied Himself of in stepping out of eternal glory, becoming a man taking upon Himself the sin of the world, and suffering the death of the cross that you might enjoy eternal life, was it His deity, no way, He never emptied Himself of deity, but there was some things that He willingly gave up, and we’ll get into that a little bit.

## Vs6

Who being in the form of God, who is the “who” that this is in reference to? Well obviously we’re speaking here about Christ, and this vs is dealing with the pre-existence of Christ, who He was prior to stepping into the human frame. You see this vs reminds us of the fact that Jesus was around well before the birth of a little baby boy in a manger in Bethlehem, you remember that Jesus said, “*most assuredly I say to you, before Ab was, I am.*” In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. and It says here that He was in the “form” of God, now don’t be confused by this word “form” here. It has nothing to do with shape or size, we know that God is Spirit (that’s what the bible says) and so it’s hard to articulate the essence of God when we’re limited to human vernacular or vocabulary. We speak of the eyes of God, or the hand of God but the given is that we know that God the Father doesn’t have a human frame.

When we speak of being created in the image of God we're not speaking on a physical level, again because God is Spirit. But rather God has humor, we have humor, God gets angry, we get angry, God reasons, we reason, and so on, now all of God's "emotional makeup" for lack again of a better term is good and pure, most of the time ours is self centered and perverted. But in such ways we were created in His image. and This word "form" it could've just as easily been translated as "nature" so that what this is saying is that the very being, or the very nature of Christ is of God, He is God, it speaks of the outward expression of the inward nature. In other areas of scripture we read that Jesus is the express image of God, it says in Heb ch 1 that He is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. and So speaking of Jesus Paul says that He, being in the very form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. Now there are a few different ways that this can be understood or translated, for times sake we'll consider the 2 most popular and you can determine in your own heart what you believe to be the accurate one.

The 1<sup>st</sup> translation lies before us in our NKJV or the OKJV has in this case translated this the same way. and The reason why there are different translations in some of these cases is because there are a # of ways that certain words from the Greek can translate into the English and what determines which word that the translators choose is the context. and That's where the problems come in for the translators, because in determining the context there may be some minor variants in opinion and so as to where one translator will go this way, the other might go another. But even in the discrepancies in the translators opinion it doesn't change the validity of either way they choose to go because no matter how you choose to view it, they are both true. So when those who have translated the KJV "did not consider it *robbery* to be equal with God." What that means is that there was no robbery, or no lawful violation on the behalf of Jesus to be considered as equal with God. He wasn't ripping off the character of God, or bringing down the holiness of God, or depressing the righteousness of God by putting Himself on the same level as God. That is a perfectly just claim for Him to make, now for you or me, or anyone else who's ever walked the face of the planet, it completely rips God off for them to seek to equate themselves with who He is, not so with Jesus. Why, again because He is God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, all equal in power and might and divinity, Jesus shares an absolutely equal part with the Godhead. So being in the very nature of God, He didn't have to do anything that was unjust to declare His equality with God. and Because He claimed equality with God the religious leaders wanted to kill Him.

We read in John 10:30-33 where Jesus said, "*I and My Father are one.*" and It says there that, "*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."*" You see when Jesus said, "I and My Father are one."

The Jews knew what He was saying, He was claiming deity and equality with God, now your cults will say, “that’s not really what He meant there,” really, well, the people that Jesus was speaking to understood Him to mean that. So much so that they were getting ready to kill Him right there on the spot and so as you’re witnessing to those who seek to claim that Jesus wasn’t deity and that He never claimed it, that’s a great passage to take them to. Let me give you one more (though there are many) John ch 5, you find that Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath and we read in vs 18, “*Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*”

So Jesus didn’t consider it robbery, or a violation of integrity to say, “I’m equal with God” because in fact He was. Now the other way to look at this vs (the way that at least the NIV interprets it) “*Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.*” Or in other words He didn’t consider equality with God something to cling on to. Something to hold tightly to regardless of what that would cost others. But rather He would be willing to let go of His equality with God in becoming a man (again not becoming lesser in deity, but relinquishing some of His privileges or prerogatives) for the sake of others. and In this particular context of doing nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, looking out not for the things of oneself but rather for the things of others that this 2<sup>nd</sup> particular translation is more accurate. Because the whole plea of the Holy Spirit thus far is don’t be doing things simply for how they benefit you. Be considerate of others, it’s the self-centered mentality that breeds strife and division, but you (man of God) or (woman of God) follow the example that has been set for you by Christ. Let His mind be in you, because He who *was* and *is* God didn’t think of Himself when He came to this earth.

He wasn’t thinking of the benefits that were in it for Him through the death of the cross. Because there were no benefits in that for Him, all the benefits were for you and me, He doesn’t need us, we need Him, and the benefits that were going to be imputed to you is what gave Him joy. The joy that was set before Him wasn’t what was in it for Him, it was what was in it for you, you’re that Joy, He was thinking of others, and so though He had every right to stay in heaven, and receive the worship of the heavens throughout all eternity, life with out end. He let go of that right, esteemed you above Himself came to this earth and became the servant of man that you might one-day rule with Him. Notice vs 7

Vs7

Now there’s no way that we can spend just time here, we spoke just slightly on this last week when we do things from that conceited motive “how is this going to make me look”. “What will this do for my reputation?” Consider the mind of Christ; was He concerned for His reputation when He was being spit upon for your sin? Was he placing emphasis on His reputation when He hung in open shame, beaten to a bloody pulp upon the cross for you and for me? I think not,

In reality this phrase “made Himself of no reputation.” Comes from the Greek word “kenoo” (Ken o’o) and here’s this word that we mentioned earlier, the “kenosis” the emptying, it’s saying that He emptied Himself, He made Himself of no reputation. Now what was it that He emptied Himself of, we’ve already emphatically stated and given scripture to support that He in no way emptied Himself of deity, He rightfully claimed complete equality with God. But I mentioned the fact that there *were some* of His divine prerogatives and privileges that He let go of in order that He might come to this earth as a man so that you and I might be sitting here this morning.

Because before He could be incarnate, before He could be that little babe in the manger, even though in that manger He was as much God then as He ever had been, there were some things that He had to let go of to get to that place. Or maybe it would be easier for us to grasp this understanding by saying that there were some things that He willfully laid aside in order that He might become a man. In other words, He humbled Himself, just the very thought of God being willing to humble Himself to the extent whereby He became a man is more that we’ll probably ever be able to fathom in the fullness of what that entails. I’ve heard some neat studies in regards to that but I’m certain they don’t nearly exhaust the fullness of it. Think about it, the immortal became a mortal; He laid aside for a season His immortality, in order that He might become a mortal. It was necessary that He taste death, that you might taste life, it was necessary for Him to take on mortality that you might live forever. Col 1:18 says that He is the 1<sup>st</sup> born from the dead, He said of Himself, *“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.”* Rev 1:18

So you see there are certain privileges He laid aside in order that He might become a man, what’s something else that He was willing to surrender, we know that He laid aside His glory, John 17:5 Jesus praying prior to the crucifixion, *“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”* Speaking of the glory that He shared in total equality with the Father before His incarnation, before (in fact) the world ever was. He let that go, He emptied Himself of that privilege that was rightfully His. He humbled Himself, gave up His glory, esteemed you better than Himself in coming to this earth so that you might receive complete remission of your sin. Think about that, how humbling that is, He gave up riches, 2 Cor 8:9 *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”* So He was willing to lay aside not only the glory of heaven, but the riches of Heaven, in order to become the servant of all here on earth. Why did He wash His disciple’s feet? Was He somehow esteeming Himself in that act? He gave up riches to become a servant, He could’ve stayed right where He was, He could’ve looked out for His own interests and stayed right there sharing the glory and riches of Heaven right there with the Father, but He didn’t.

Man that's an incredibly wonderful thing, but it's powerfully convicting, because Paul's main emphasis in writing this isn't doctrine (as wonderful as it is) but it's in exhortation. He's illustrating the Lord's attitude and now saying contrast that with yours, how do you measure up? Consider your Lord, the attitude of Christ, the mind of Christ, and what are you doing, He wasn't sitting around thinking wow, too bad so sad for them but that's not My problem, they got themselves into this mess and if they can't get themselves out then I guess they'll just have to deal with that. Now He would've been absolutely just in having that mind set, but He didn't, it kind of goes back to that Col 3:12-13 Principal. *“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”* Christ led by example and now we're to respond by His grace and the power of the Holy Spirit in like manner so that we might reflect His love and His grace and His mercy to others. We've been forgiven so much, who are we to hold out unforgiveness on another by comparison? Well, in like manner Christ emptied Himself of so much for the sake of others, who are we to think that we have some self centered privilege that we need to hang on to because after all, we deserve it and they made their own bed, now they can lay in it. -- God Almighty, owing nobody anything, willingly took upon Himself the form of a servant, coming in the likeness of men, humbled Himself and became obedient (submitting even His own will over to the Fathers) to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Vs9-11

You can see that we're going to need to rest in these vs for a time next week as well, (I wasn't able to even exhaust vs 5-8 as I would've liked to) but suffice it to say for now that he who humbles Himself will be exalted and the one who exalts himself will be abased. and Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of that for us, you know we honor those who go on missions trips and give of themselves for the sake of others and that's a neat thing. But believe me when I say that going to Africa and leaving all these modern luxuries for a people less “civilized” or leaving our families and going to China, or any other thing, is nothing to be honored compared to Jesus Christ be willing to leave and lay aside His rightful place in heaven. To come to earth for a people so destitute, so poverty stricken of spirit, so uncivilized of heart, so desperate for healing, out of a love so pure, with nothing in it for Himself. He humbled Himself for us, and because of that God has highly exalted Him, and given Him and Him alone the name which is above every name, and there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we ***must*** be saved. and At His name every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. It will happen, it's now or later, to confess Jesus Christ now, is confession unto salvation, but after this life it will be a confession unto condemnation as you reconcile yourself to the fact that He is Lord of all.

I Encourage you this morning to allow the Holy Spirit to bring you to that place whereby whatever has gone on this week, but that you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and that you

humble yourself under His righteous right hand fresh this morning. Because as believers that His will for all of us as well, that we would humble ourselves, and become obedient to Him unto death, even the death of the cross. Oh not physically so much, but spiritually that we would die to ourselves, deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him, follow His example, and be submitted to His leading, and esteem others better than ourselves, place their needs above our own.

But maybe there are those of you here this morning who don't know Jesus Christ and This morning though I didn't go into it as much as maybe I would've liked to, I trust that the Holy Spirit has quickened your heart with just a taste of what Jesus went through, the distance that He went, in order that you might be made new. Humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, (literally) that you might be given life, don't let the Lord's death be in vain when it comes to your life, I beseech you this morning, as though God were pleading through me, be reconciled to Christ, humble yourself before Him, that He might lift you up. He died for your sin and was raised for your justification; don't refuse His gift of life today.