

#### 4. Learning to Have the Mind of Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that they do not need to fear death. Paul gave us an example by his life because he was ready to serve Christ either through life or through death. His concern was to do what the Lord wanted him to do. We also saw that it is a privilege to suffer for Christ because Christ works through that suffering to draw others to Himself. In our topic today, we want to learn how to help our children learn to have the same attitudes in their lives that we see in the life of Christ.

Philippians 2:1-2 says, “Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.” The word that is translated “consolation” means *to call someone near for help*. The word can also be translated by such words as “encouragement” or “comfort”. 2 Thessalonians 2:16 says, “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace.” Here, we are reminded that Christ does come alongside us to encourage us. In addition to encouraging us, Christ also gives us a message of love to comfort us.

The word that is translated “fellowship” can be translated by either “fellowship” or “communion”. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, we read, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.” In this verse, we are reminded of the fact that each member of the Trinity ministers to us in our lives. The word that is translated “affection” speaks of love that comes from the heart. In Philemon 1:7 we read, “For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.” In this verse, the word is translated by the word “hearts”. As a result, we are reminded of the fact that God has a heart of mercy for us.

As we come to verse two, Paul told the Philippians that his joy would be complete if the Philippians developed these same attitudes toward one another. The word that is translated “like-minded” is also the word that is translated “one mind” at the end of the verse and also in verse five. As a result, Paul said that three things would make his joy complete. First, it was his desire that they would have the same love that Christ has for us. Christ said in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Second, it was his desire that they would be of “one accord” (one-souled). Paul wanted the Philippians to have the same will (desires), the same emotions (passions) and the same way of thinking (goals). Third, it was the desire of Paul that they would have the same purpose of heart.

Philippians 2:3-4 goes on to tell us how these attitudes will change our actions when these verses say, “*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” When we have attitudes in our heart that bring glory to God, it will change two negative attitudes. We will not have actions based on selfish ambition. James used the word translated “selfish ambition” twice in James 3:14 and 16 where we read, “But if you have

bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth...For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there.” From these verses, we can see that selfish ambition speaks about those who want their own way. In addition, we will not speak words based on conceit. Galatians 5:26 says, “Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” Here, we see that we are to speak nothing that would be based on conceit or pride.

Instead, we see the attitudes and actions that the Lord wants us to have in our lives. The word that is translated “lowliness of mind” means *humility*. Colossians 3:12 says, “Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.” Here, we see that we are to put on humility. When we have an attitude of humility, we will esteem or think of others better than self. This means that we will place a high value on each person. We will seek to do what is best for that person in his or her spiritual growth and development. Here, we see that since we are bondservants of Christ, we want to show our children, by example, what it means to highly value other people and do the things that are needed to first help them come to repentance and faith and then help them to grow in Christ.

We go on to read about the example that Christ gave us to follow in Philippians 2:5-8, which says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” We saw that the word translated “mind” was used twice in verse 2. In that verse, we saw that Christ wants us to develop certain attitudes in our lives. The way that we develop those attitudes is by yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit so that He can develop those attitudes. Christ gave us the example by yielding Himself to the Father.

The word that is translated “form” speaks of the unchanging character or what Christ is in Himself. This same word is used both in verse six and again in verse seven. As a result, we see that Christ is in the exact image of the Father. This helps us to understand that Christ is unchanging and has the same character as the Father. When God appeared to Moses in the Old Testament at the burning bush, Exodus 3:14 says, “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”” In the book of John, we see that Christ repeatedly called Himself, “I am”. In John 11:25 Christ told Martha, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.’” In this one verse, we see two of the “I ams” that Christ called Himself. Then Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.” The New Testament makes it very clear that the Father and Christ have the same form.

Christ knew that He and the Father were One and that they were equal. Christ said in John 10:30, “‘I and *My* Father are one.’” However, Christ did not cling to that fact that He was equal with the Father. Instead, Christ willingly set aside the privileges and rights that He had for a time so that He could come and pay the penalty for our sin. John 17:4-5 says, “‘I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me

together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” Here, we see that Christ prayed, the night before His crucifixion, that once He had completed paying the penalty for sin, the Father would restore those privileges and rights that He had set aside in order to pay for our sins.

Christ was equal with God, so He did not feel that it was something that He had to take or seize by robbery. The word that is translated “equal” means *the same in quality, character, size and quantity*. The Jews also recognized that was what the word meant. That is why John 5:18 says, “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.” In this verse, we see that the Jews really wanted to kill Christ because He had said that He was equal with the Father.

The word translated “made of no reputation” means *to make empty*. Here, we see that Christ chose to lay aside that equality with God for a time so that He could pay the penalty for our sins. Instead, Christ chose to take the form of a bondservant for that period of time. The word translated “bondservant” means *a slave or one who has given himself up to do the will of another*. Christ chose to completely submit Himself to the will of the Father. In fact, Christ said in John 6:38, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” Christ chose to set aside His privileges as God such as His glory to carry out the will of the Father. Instead, he took the form of a true bondservant.

In taking the form of a true bondservant, Christ took on all of the characteristics of man except sin. In Luke 2:52 we read, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” The reason for this is explained in Hebrews 2:17 where we read, “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” Here, we see that Christ became totally man in order to satisfy the requirements of God in order to pay for our sin. Christ is 100% God and 100% man.

Christ became a real human. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” However, Christ further humbled Himself by taking terrible abuse and finally going to the cross. There, He was obedient and carried out the will of the Father by crucifixion which was the worst form of death the Roman government could devise for their worst criminals. As we help our physical and spiritual children understand what Christ did for us to pay the penalty for our sins, we see that He gave all of us an example to follow. Christ esteemed us better than Himself as He came, suffered and died for us in our place. In the same way, we want to provide a model for our children of what it means to be a bondservant who is submissive to the will of the Lord. As our children see our example, they will have an example to follow in their own lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you provide an example of what it means to have the mind of Christ.