

# HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

Philippians 2:1-18

Key Verse: 2:5

**“Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”**

Jesus calls us to be his disciples and he commands us to go and make disciples of all nations. What is a disciple of Jesus? A disciple is one who follows Jesus and learns from him. We must not only learn Jesus’ serving life, his obedience to his Father God, his love of the Bible, and his moral standards, but also we must learn Jesus’ mind and heart until we have the same attitude or mindset as that of Christ Jesus. (The New KJV says, **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”**)(NIV 84 says, **“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”**) I must continue to grow in Jesus’ mindset until I meet him in the heavenly kingdom.

## **1. United with Christ - God’s amazing grace (1-4)**

Read verse 1. **“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ...”** We have received great and amazing grace from God. We have received the grace of union with Jesus. Everything flows from this. This is God’s amazing grace poured on sinners who don’t deserve it. (Rom 6) We are united with him in his death. So our sins are forgiven - nailed to the cross. We are united with him in his resurrection and we have eternal life. To be united with Christ is to have a vine and branch relationship with him.(Jn 15) His love comforts us when nothing and no one can. We should be his enemies, but while we were still ungodly sinners, enemies of God, Christ loved us and died for us. (Ro 5:8) We have fellowship with other believers through the Spirit who dwells in each of us. It is God’s grace. How can the Holy Spirit come and dwell with sinful people? We are forgiven and cleansed by Jesus’ blood, then his Spirit can come to dwell in us. We have fellowship with his Spirit, and fellowship with one another in the Spirit. It is God’s grace.

Jesus does not condemn us. He treats us with tenderness and compassion (1). He told a sinful woman, **“Neither do I condemn you; go and leave your life of sin.”** (Jn 8:11) When Peter denied him, Jesus did not condemn him. He did not even rebuke him. He went to the shore of Lake Galilee, restored Peter’s fishing failure and cooked breakfast for him. From the cross Jesus prayed for his tormentors, for those who crucified him and for us: **“Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”** This is God’s grace. This grace poured

# HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

out on us is free. It is free to us, but it was very costly for him. It cost him everything. He died so that we might be forgiven. It is this grace for which the world longs. Jesus is God's precious gift of grace and forgiveness to the world. We just celebrated Christmas. We came with wise men, shepherds and angels to worship him. The baby in the manger is God's amazing grace. Jesus came as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. His love and grace find culmination on the cross at Easter - Passover. We can find forgiveness in no one else. **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."** (Ac 4:12) The world cries out for forgiveness. This gift of the grace of forgiveness is the best news that the world can have. When there is no forgiveness, the cycle of anger and hatred and revenge is repeated again and again - in Israel and the Mid-east, in Turkey, Iraq, in Ireland, in Sudan, in the hearts and lives of people everywhere. Bitterness is passed down from generation to generation. Unforgiveness destroys families. It destroys people; it destroys nations. Only the grace of forgiveness can break the vicious cycle of revenge.

Last year the Uganda UBF held a Bible conference in Rwanda. The Rwanda young people really like Bible study..They experienced unspeakable suffering and they are learning the meaning of the grace of forgiveness. In 1994, from April 7 through mid July the Hutu tribe, long subjugated by the majority Tutsis made a genocidal war on the Tutsis, killing from 500,000 to 1,000,000 of them, intending to kill them all. The Hutu and Tutsis lived side by side in villages. They knew their neighbors but the Hutu militants made an environment for killing. They mobilized young people. The war ended only because of outside intervention and international pressure. After the war ended some 400,000 murderers were released from prison. They returned to the villages. How could the surviving Tutsis deal with them? No one could ask the Tutsis, who had suffered so much, to forgive them. Pastor Gahagi's, sister had been brutally murdered by Mattias, a neighbor he knew. When he saw the man, hatred filled his heart. Then the love of Jesus came in. He could forgive. He embraced his sister's murderer. Then he realised that God had called him to be a mediaor. I read a book entitled "As we forgive: stories of reconciliation in Rwanda." Reconciliation looked impossible. But this book tells amazing stories of forgiveness and reconciliation, like that of Pastor Gahagi. Such forgiveness could only happen through the grace of Jesus, crucified and risen.

Jesus came to bring forgiveness and healing. He came to save us from the guilt and power and shame of sin. He saves us by dying for us the death we should die. He cried out from the cross, **"Father, forgive them; they don't know what they are doing."** **"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.**

# HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

**He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed.”** (Isa 53:4-6) He saves us by being with us so that we can show his tenderness and compassion to others. He is Immanuel, God with us. This is God’s gift of love and grace to us sinners who don’t deserve it.

Philip Yancy wrote a book called, “What’s so Amazing About Grace?” He contrasts grace and “ungrace.” He points out that forgiveness sometimes seems to undercut justice. When the prodigal son came home after squandering his father’s money in riotous living, his father welcomed him with the finest robe and a wonderful feast of celebration. This was grace. The older brother, however, was full of ungrace. He felt that this gracious treatment which his younger brother received was not fair. **“I’ve served you hand and foot all my life and you never even killed a goat to make a feast for me and my friends, but for this brother of mine who squandered your money and shamed the family you killed the fatted calf.”** The elder brother was right. Forgiveness is not fair. But where would we be in a world with no grace and no forgiveness? Our hearts would become hard and cold because of old hatreds and old grudges. If we followed the Old Testament law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, many people would be blind and toothless. God’s gift of his precious child is grace. It is this grace of forgiveness to sinners like us makes it possible, indeed, imperative that we forgive others.

How can we be full of grace and love? How can we overcome the anger and desire for justice that arises naturally in our hearts? When we come to Jesus by faith and invite him to come into our hearts, he comes in and dwells there. (Jn14:23) When he comes in, his love begins to fill our hearts. We can overcome our selfishness. We can accept others as they are. We can even regard others as better than ourselves. We can be one in spirit and have the same mind. This union with Christ is the source of Christian character. **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone and the new has come!”** (2Co 5:17) when we have the mindset of Jesus we are like-minded. Verse 2 says, **“Then make my joy complete by being like-minded.”**

## **2. Have the attitude of Christ Jesus (5-11)**

We who have received Jesus into our hearts and have tasted his love and grace must grow in him until we have in us the attitude of Christ. Read verse 5. **“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”**

# HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

Our union with Christ is the foundation of discipleship. To have the mind or (mindset) of Christ is the goal of discipleship. Jesus calls those of us who would be his disciples to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow him. The first disciples physically followed Jesus around here and there, learning from him. But Jesus is no longer with us physically. Rather, we have invited Jesus to come into our hearts to make his home with us. We follow him by listening to and obeying his word, yielding to his Spirit's leading until Christ is formed in us, until we have his mind and attitude.

What is the attitude (or mind) of Christ? Read verses 6-8. **“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross.”**

## **First, Jesus humbled himself.**

Jesus is humble. Jesus was in nature God. Jesus is the Creator God, the eternal Word. All authority in heaven and on earth was given to him. But he did not exercise authority to lord it over people. He did not hang on to equality with God. Read verse 6. **“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped...(used to his own advantage)”** God visited earth in the most humble way. His love and life were in the Manger of Bethlehem. Caesar brought death and slavery to mankind. Jesus brought glory to God and peace and real freedom to mankind. Jesus invites us and all people: **“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart...”** (Mt 11:29) What can we learn from humble Jesus?

**1. Manger spirit.** Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger. Caesar reigned in pomp and glory, exercising almost absolute power and authority over the Roman world, while Jesus, the king of kings, shared a stable with animals and was laid in a manger because there was no room for him in the Inn. -The manger of Bethlehem is the hallmark of Jesus' life and ministry. To welcome Jesus, we must have hearts like the manger. Sometimes we become like the inn in which there was no room for Jesus. When I went to Korea in 1955, Korea was like the manger. In the aftermath of war, everywhere there were broken lives and broken homes as well as broken buildings. Wounded people sought healing and peace and meaning. Young people's hearts were empty. They were ready to welcome Jesus. They found in him forgiveness, healing and peace. They found life direction and life

# HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

purpose. God worked among the students. Jesus came into the hearts of the Korean people. Jesus changed Korea. He has worked and continues to work in Korean missionaries to share the good news of Jesus with the people of the world. Now God has blessed Korea in many ways. I pray that in their wealth and abundance, the manger spirit may not be lost from the hearts of the people. I pray that humble Jesus may find room to come in and dwell in the hearts of Korean students today.

Our UBF chapters everywhere must also keep the manger spirit. Many of our UBF ministries around the world are manger ministries. One of these is in the Philippines. This year part of our Christmas offering was sent to help with the construction of a Bible house in Antipolo. (a new growing chapter under the leadership of Dr John Talavera) When they have money they build; when they run out, they stop, and, in the meantime, they make full use of what they have. When I visited the Philippine UBF in 2004, my first impression was “joy.” Dr. William and Sarah Mina Altobar, their children and coworkers are so joyful. At that time, their home was the Bible house. Their family all slept together on the floor in one room. In the morning, they roll up their bedding and their room became the Bible house. They share their outdoor kitchen with two other house church families. They could have allowed a cloud of sorrow to cover them, for they lost one little boy, Paul, in 1997. He was born with Downs’ syndrome and a heart problem. When he went to heaven, he helped them to put their hope in the Kingdom of heaven. They are joyful because of Jesus. Sh. Sarah Mina’s key verse was **“Be joyful always, give thanks in all circumstances; pray without ceasing, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”** Their home is overflowing with joy and love. I could learn the mind of humble Jesus there. With this foundation, the Philippine ministry is growing.

**2. Incarnational life.** Jesus is the Word who became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (Jn 1:14) He came as God’s missionary to the world. He sent his disciples out to go and be like him. He calls us to have the same attitude as he had. Disciples of Jesus must learn the principle of the incarnation.. We must learn languages and customs of the people of mission lands. Verse 3 says, **“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”** We must respect people. We must learn to laugh with them and cry with them. We must have a desire to learn from them. Father Damien was a missionary to the lepers of Hawaii. He lived with the lepers and became a leper.

In 1908 there was a great revival in Wales (British Isles). A young man named Watkins Robert met Jesus and accepted his command to go and make disciples of all nations. He was only 22 years old and he was a chemist. But he left

# HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

everything and went to North India. He found the Hmar tribe, a tribe of head hunters who had massacred a British army unit stationed there. He only brought the Bible, and the love of Jesus. He learned their language, ate their food, wore their clothes. He loved and respected them and taught the Bible. One 15 year old boy named Chawnga accepted Jesus. After 3 years, Watkins Robert was expelled from India by the British government. The government disapproved of his “going native.” Chawnga continued to follow Jesus. After 40 years, more than 100 churches were started in the Hmar tribal area. God used an incarnational missionary and the Bible to changed head hunters into people who forgive and love each other.

**3. Servant leadership.** Jesus came to serve. See verse 7: **“but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”** No one wants to lower himself, but God humbled himself and became a man. Sinful people struggle for bits and pieces of worldly power and glory. When they get some small position or place of authority, they eagerly lord it over others. Jesus had all authority in heaven and on earth, but he only used his great power to serve sick and sinful mankind. At the last supper he washed his disciples’ feet. He said, **“Love one another as I have loved you.” “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

**4. Obedience.** Jesus was obedient to death. Read verse 8. **“And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”** Jesus’ real humility is found in his obedience. You and I must become humble when we see ourselves as we really are - sinners saved by God’s grace. But Jesus was sinless. His humbleness is found in his obedience to his Father. He hung there on the cross between heaven and earth, quietly enduring the mocking and insults of sinful men, and praying, **“Father, forgive them.”** He could have come down and saved himself, but he didn’t. He obeyed God’s will and fulfilled the mission God gave him. We can have the mind of Christ when we learn his obedience.

Obedience means doing God’s will instead of my own. Jesus prayed in the Garden, **“Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will. ...may your will be done.”** (Mt 26:39, 42) Obedience means doing what pleases God instead of what pleases myself in study, in work, in leisure time, in marriage. It is because of obedience to Jesus’ command, **“Go and make disciples of all nations”** that many of our small house church ministries in Africa Europe, Asia and the Americas have overcome war, sickness, rejection, language,

# HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

and difficulties in self-support to remain on the mission field to shine like stars in the universe.

## Second, God highly exalted him.

Read verses 9-11 **“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** God exalted humble Jesus who did not seek his own glory. **“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”** **“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”**

Someday, he will come in glory with the holy angels, and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. God breaks and crushes the proud, but he exalts the humble. Jesus is the one worthy of our worship. He is the one to whom we can give our hearts, our hopes, our most precious possessions, and even the lives of our children. He is our hope, our treasure, our great reward.

## Conclusion: Shine like stars in the sky (12-18)

Read verse 12. **“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”** Verse 13 continues, **“for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”** We want to grow in the attitude and mind of Christ. We want to grow until we see people—ourselves and others, with his eyes. We want to grow until his character is reflected in everything we think and say and do. This is an impossible goal, humanly. But he commands us not to give up. He says, **“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”** The good news is that it is God is working in us, his children. He is working out his own good purpose in us. This is an ongoing process. His image is being formed in us. We must continue to learn his attitude and grow in him.

There is no grumbling or complaining in Jesus’ mindset. Verses 14-16 say, **“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked**

# HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

**generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.”** (14-16) We must continue through prayer and the study of the word to maintain our vine and branch relationship with Jesus. We can grow until we have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, until his mind is in us. We must look at people as Jesus does and see what God is doing in and through them. A complaining mind hinders the work of God in our lives. Instead, with the Spirit’s help, we must put into practice Jesus’ humble, serving life. The Bible challenges us to live like God’s children in a godless world.

The Bible says, **“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus,”** so we should keep our hearts and minds and bodies pure. He does not want us to compromise with the crooked and depraved world around us. He wants us to hold out the word of life to the troubled and directionless students of our time. When we do this, we will shine like stars in the universe. May God use us to plant the word of life and gospel of Jesus Christ in the dark skies of our world; may he bless and use us as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.