

2 - HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST

Philippians 2:1-30

Key Verse: 2:5

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"Your attitude should be the same as that of 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 as that of Christ Jesus. The New KJV says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

1. God's amazing grace—union with Christ (1-4)

Read verse 1. "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with 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. This is God's amazing grace poured out on sinners who don't deserve it. We are united with him in his death and are forgiven. We are united with him in his life and have eternal life. To be united with Christ is to have a vine and branch relationship with him. This is God's love. This is his grace. 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) It is God's grace that he gives us his Holy Spirit. How can the Holy Spirit come and dwell with sinful people? Jesus' blood cleanses and forgives, then his Spirit comes to dwell in us. We have fellowship with his 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. Jesus prayed for his tormentors, for those who crucified him and for us from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." This is God's grace. This grace poured out on us is free. It is free to us, but it is 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 at Christmas. 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 reach culmination on the cross at Easter. 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 12:4) 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 Kosova and Serbia, in the Mid-east, 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. 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 so that we might be forgiven. "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, .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 live victorious lives. 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. This is his promise. When we are united with Christ, his love begins to fill our hearts, and his Spirit testifies to our spirits that we are children of God. It is from this union with Christ that God's life flows into us. This union with Christ is the source of Christian character and of all the blessings and fruits of our salvation. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone and the new has come!" (2Co 5:17) It is from Jesus who came with unconditional love and forgiveness that we get grace and love sufficient to share with others. Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me. Each of us must make a decision to invite him in. (Rev. 3:20) When he comes in to dwell we can have his attitude.

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. "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Our union with Christ is the foundation of discipleship. To have the mind 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. 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) 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,(which is the Bible) yielding to his Spirit's leading until Christ is formed in us, until we have his mind and attitude.

What is the attitude of Christ?

Read verses 6-8. "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

Part one, Jesus humbled himself.

Jesus is humble. Once he said, "take my yoke and learn of me, for I am gentle and humble in heart..." (Mt 11:29) 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..." 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. 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. What can we learn from humble Jesus?

1. Manger spirit--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 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. The Philippine UBF was pioneered by a medical student from the Chicago UBF. While he was in medical school in Manila he fished another medical student, William Altobar, and his girlfriend, Mina. After the American student returned to the US, Dr. William Altobar established a house church with Sarah Mina and they pioneered the Philippine UBF. When I visited the Philippine UBF my first impression was "joy." Dr. William and Sarah Mina Altobar, their children and coworkers are so joyful. Their ministry is a manger ministry. The Altobar's home is the Bible house. Their family all sleep together on the floor in one room. In the morning, they roll up their bedding and their room becomes 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. Dr Altobar could have had a good job and made money, but he and their coworkers live humbly and sacrificially in order to serve students. They pioneered Fatima medical college and are pioneering the University of the Philippines. They have sent out about 12 missionaries to England, UAE, America and Saudi. They are joyful because of Jesus. Sh. Sarah Mina's key verse is "Be joyful always, give thanks in all circumstances; pray without ceasing, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Their manger ministry is full and overflowing with of joy and love. I could learn the mind of humble Jesus there.

There are small house church ministries all over the world which welcome students with love and Bible study and sometimes with food. And they pray for the universities of the world. Many times missionary children are the best coworkers. May God establish prayerful, manger-like house church ministries for each of the college campuses of the world. May the house churches of Philadelphia continue to have a manger ministry that is fruitful.

2. Incarnation. 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 to go and be like him. He calls us to have the same attitude as he had. Missionaries who follow Jesus must learn the principle of the incarnation. To practice the principle of the incarnation we must also go to all nations. We must learn languages and customs of the people we serve. Verse 3 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than your selves." We must respect the people to whom we go. We must learn to laugh with them and cry with them. We must go with a desire to learn. Many Korean missionaries who have come to Germany are incarnational missionaries. When I studied the Bible in Korean with M. Sarah Chang and Maria Park I found that they were almost as poor in Korean as I am. I realized that they were really Germans, and the German language had become their first language.

In 1908 there was a great revival in Wales (British Isles). It was the year after the 1907 revival in Korea. 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 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 them the Bible. One 15 year old boy named Chawnga accepted Jesus. After 3 years, Watkin Robert was expelled from India by the British government. The government disapproved of his "going native." Chawnga became an evangelist. After 40 years, through his work, more than 100 churches were started in the Hmar tribal area. He refused to join a Baptist mission, but remained fiercely independent. He prayed earnestly that someone would translate the Bible into the Hmar language. Finally, he sent his 10 year old boy to the outer world to study and learn and translate the Bible. Rochunga did so, and the movie is about him. The Bible is the powerful word of God. It changed head hunters into people who forgive and love each other. Watkin Robert was an incarnational missionary.

3. Serving. Jesus came to serve. Verse 7 continues, "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 men 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. He said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Many of our UBF chapters in the USA and Germany were pioneered by sacrificial missionaries. Canada UBF was pioneered by 23 sewing machine operator missionaries. In Chicago, in 1977, 6 graduates of SNU College of nursing rented a 1 bedroom apartment near Northwestern U and lived and prayed and shared a common life together. They had no beds, just mattresses on the floor and no furniture except a table and two chairs for one-to-one Bible study. They fished Northwestern students and taught them the Bible and fed them kimchi and pul-gogie and rice. And the ministry to students in Chicago was born. Dr Paul Hong also knows the serving life of Jesus. When he first came to the USA as a lay missionary, he worked as a butcher in an Atlanta hotel. Later, after many struggles and many years, and a PhD, he became an instructor in the U of Toledo. He became a tenure-track and then a tenured professor because of his

servantship. He was willing to do anything he was asked to do, and to teach any course the department asked him to teach. He just got a book and studied ahead of the class. Now, he is the director of Toledo UBF and a full-time professor in Toledo University—a self-supporting lay missionary, pastoring a large chapter, delivering the Sunday message each week. He still has the spirit of the servant Jesus.

4. Obedience and sacrifice. Jesus was obedient to death. Read verse 8. "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became 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 death. 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 and his life of sacrifice.

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 Europe and Asia have overcome war, sickness, run-away-sheep, language, and difficulties in self-support to remain on the mission field to shine like stars in the universe. Jesus was obedient to death, even to death on a cross. God has accepted and blessed the sacrificial lives of missionaries and shepherds around the world.

Part Two, 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 every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." When Jesus humbled himself and obeyed God, not seeking his own glory, God exalted him. God accepted his sacrifice and made him the source of eternal salvation for those who obey him. (Heb 5:9) 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 and our most precious possessions and our lives and even the lives of our children. He is our hope. He is our treasure and our great reward.

Conclusion: Shine like stars in the universe (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 according to 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, his humility, his love 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 it out!" The good news is that it is God who 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.

Paul says, "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the

universe as you hold out 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 do everything without complaining or arguing. These things hinder God's work in our lives. Instead, with his help, we must put into practice his humble, serving life. The Bible challenges us to live like God's children in a godless world.

God tells us to keep our hearts and minds and bodies pure. This is not easy in the age of the internet. 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 all people. When God's people refuse to compromise with the crooked and depraved world, but maintain joyful and obedient faith, growing in the attitude of Jesus, we shine like stars in the universe as we can hold out the word of life to the dark, troubled and directionless students of our time. May God use us to plant the word of God and gospel of Jesus Christ in the universities of the world; may he bless and use us as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Paul mentions two men who had the attitude of Christ—Timothy and Epaphroditus. Timothy was a man who took a genuine interest in the welfare of others. Most people look out for number one. But Timothy put Jesus first and others next. He learned the mind of Jesus from Paul. Epaphroditus also was a man with the attitude of Jesus. He almost died for the sake of the gospel while he was serving Paul. May God raise many young men and women to be disciples of Jesus who have the mind and heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.