

- Philippians 2:1-30
- Key Verse / Philippians 2:5

Have the Same Mindset As Christ Jesus

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."

In Chapter 1, Paul expressed how he loved the Philippian Christians with the affection of Christ Jesus (1:8). Then Paul told them his prayer for them. It was that they could grow spiritually and become pure and blameless children of God, filled with the fruit of righteousness (1:10,11). Later, Paul even commanded them clearly that they should not compromise whatever happened, but should strive for the gospel of Christ because this was the sign that they would be saved by God (1:27-30). Meeting Christ our Savior is not the end of our journey as Christians, but we must continue to grow spiritually to be filled with the fruit of righteousness. In today's passage, Paul continued on this topic and further taught the Philippian Christians how they could grow spiritually and become pure, blameless and fruitful children of God. May God help us to understand and accept Paul's teaching through today's message.

I. **Growing spiritually is the way to please God (1-4)**

Please look at 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...."** Here Paul mentioned the blessings we have in Christ. When we are united with Christ, we have fellowship with the triune God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Before meeting Jesus, we were powerless to do the good things that we should do, but were powerful to do evil things even though we tried different ways to improve our lives. We often suffered from our sinful nature. But God loved and thought of us. To save us and restore God's kingdom on earth, God sacrificed his Son Jesus Christ. When we accepted Jesus as our Christ and were united with Christ, we were filled with encouragement and comfort and could overcome all kinds of suffering due to our sins. Furthermore, we were empowered to live as God's children, who could have tenderness and compassion by the Holy Spirit. When we are filled with these spiritual blessings from the triune God, how do we feel? We see how great God is and we love God. We want to do something to please God and enjoy God's presence and blessings more and more. What should we do to please him?

Let's look at verse 2, **"then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."** **"make my joy complete"** implies that we are not complete and we have to grow. We are told here to grow to have the same mind and the same love. It is an imperative not for some special Christians but for EVERY Christian. ALL Christians in a church have to grow spiritually until ALL have the same mind and love and become one. As verse 2 is connected to verse 1, Paul here is clearly pointing to the mind and love of God. Therefore, what should we do to please God? We have to grow to have the same mind and love of God. Or, in other words, we have to grow to bear the image of God.

Please look at verses 3 and 4, **"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."** Here Paul explained what it means to grow to have the same mind and love of God. When we grow to have the same mind of God, we should resist selfish ambition or vain conceit rather have humility. Selfish ambition is a strong desire to achieve power, honor or recognition for self-glory. Vain conceit is a high

opinion of oneself without any basis. Both selfish ambition and vain conceit come from self-centeredness which is pride in essence. Humility is not thinking too little of oneself. Rather it is to think about oneself at the lowest priority and think about God and the others' God-given good points first. God's mind is to oppose the proud but show favor to the humble (Jam 4:6b) If we still do anything out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, we do not please God. If we pursue our own goals and dreams at others' expense, if we lord over others a sense of superiority and feel in our desire to always be right and acknowledged as right, if we constantly feel frustrated that we have not received the recognition we deserve, we must deeply repent. Then, we have to live in humility and value others above yourselves based on God-given good things in them.

Moreover, when we grow to have the same love of God, we should look to the interests of others. God's love is agape. It is unselfish love of others. It is other-centeredness. Why did God send his one and only son Jesus to this hostile world anyway? It was for the salvation of others! It was because of his sacrificial love. Everyone naturally looks out for their own interests. But to please God, we should grow to have the same love as that of God, we should look to the interests of others. We should be concerned about them, pay attention to what they actually need, pray for them and follow them up until their needs are satisfied.

In summary, we see how great our God is when we are united with Jesus by faith. What should we do to please God and keep enjoying blessings from this great God? We have to grow spiritually until we have the same mind and love of God. God called us to change from self-loving and self-centered people to God-loving and other-centered people. When believers have the mind and love of God, there is no division or disunity in a church. Such a church manifests God's glory. The early Christians were falsely accused of being anti-social, disloyal, and immoral. What changed the Romans to accept Christianity? In their writing, many Romans expressed their amazement about Christians; "See how deeply they love one another!" It was the work of the Holy Spirit through Christians' unity in love that changed Rome into a Christian nation. When we bear the image of God, we can manifest God's glory in this world. God will be pleased and we can have a joy that the devil cannot take away.

II. **Jesus Christ is our hope for spiritual growth (5-11)**

Please look at verse 5, **"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."** After giving us the direction to grow spiritually until we have the mindset of humility and other-centeredness, we are told in verse 5 to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. What is the relationship between the mindset of Jesus and the mindset of humility and other-centeredness? They are the same. Let's look at verses 6 to 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!"** Jesus is in very nature God. He is God with all of his divine attributes. He did not try to exalt himself, but honored and obeyed his Father. God the Father's will was for him to be made in human likeness and die for our sins, so that we can be saved. Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. He feared God and obeyed God's will. In humility, Jesus valued us sinners above himself and looked into our benefits. He gave up his glory, authority and privileges as God and took the very nature of a servant. He obeyed God's will to death — even death on a cross! Jesus obeyed the will of God to the point of death for our sins. This is Jesus' mindset. If we submit ourselves to Jesus and let Jesus' mindset be our mindset, we will do nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility value others above ourselves and look to the interests of the others.

At this point, some of us may feel scared to obey these words and to have this mindset of Christ. We might think, "If I make myself nothing, becoming a slave of God and others, and become obedient to death, won't I lose everything? Won't I be stepped on and abused by others, and last of all, live a miserable life?" Let's see what God did for Jesus who obeyed

him to the point of death. Please look at verses 9 to 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 was so pleased by Jesus’ humility that He raised him from the dead and exalted him to the highest place. God gave him the name that is above every name and made him King of kings and Lord of lords. Being shown how Jesus was exalted by God for his humility, we are told why we should have the same mindset as Jesus Christ and live in humility. As God exalted Christ with the highest honor for his humility, servanthip, and obedience, God will honor each of us most for our Christ-like character, as well as our God-loving and other-centered life. When we have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with more. When we live a life of giving, God is glorified and we become a blessing, fruitful, and happy. After this life, in the kingdom of God, God will surely honor us with the crown of righteousness.

Even though we are saved by Jesus Christ and want to have spiritual growth that pleases God, we are still weak sinners. It is very difficult if not impossible for us to live in humility and an other-centered life. Can we really change? We are told in this part that yes, certainly we can by Christ Jesus. When we fix our eyes on Jesus, have faith to welcome him in our hearts, then our mindset can be changed to Jesus’ mindset and we can live in humility and an other-centered life.

III. **Summary of Paul’s exhortations and examples of encouragement (12-30)**

In verse 12, we are told: **“continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”** Clearly, **“continue to work out your salvation”** does not mean to gain salvation by our work. From verses 13 to 16, we can see that Apostle Paul means to work with God and accomplish God’s salvation purpose in us. God’s good purpose is to transform us into blameless and pure children of God who can do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that we can shine in a warped and crooked generation. For this, we have to hold firmly to God’s word - the word of life and grow in our faith until we are fully united with Jesus. Verses 12 to 16 in fact is a summary of all the teachings in this chapter. First, it is by God’s grace that we can be saved but our Christian journey does not finish there. We need to continue to work out our salvation. We need to accomplish God’s salvation purpose in us to keep enjoying God’s blessings. Second, to accomplish God’s salvation purpose, we need to grow spiritually until we have the same mindset as Jesus. We need to hold firmly to the word of life, so that our faith can grow.

Please look at verses 17-18, **“But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”** Here, Paul introduced his own example. Paul loved all the churches. And he died every day to serve them. He said, **“I face death every day”** (1Cor. 15:31). He compared his life to a drink offering, poured out on the sacrifice of their faith. Paul didn’t take thought just for his own interests; he took thought for others’ and their faith, and was willing to deny himself over and over, and in the end die, so that their faith would be strong. He testified that he could rejoice when he had Jesus’ mindset and lived a sacrificial life. He encouraged the Philippians to be glad and rejoice with him by following his example.

In verses 19-30, Paul introduces the faith of Timothy and Epaphroditus. Paul had hoped to send Timothy to them because there was no one else like him who showed genuine concern for their welfare. Everyone looked out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy proved himself to be a Christ-like person. Paul calls Epaphroditus **“my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier.”** He served with Paul, even though he was sick. He was distressed when he learned that the Philippians found out about his illness. Paul asked them to welcome him in the Lord with great joy and to honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ. Both Timothy and Epaphroditus were Christ-centered and genuinely concerned about others. They followed Jesus faithfully and had the same mindset

as Jesus. Paul honored them and entrusted to them the gospel ministry. In the same way, God will honor those who have the same mindset as Christ and entrust to them God's work in the kingdom of God. God will say to them, **"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"**

When we have the same mindset as Jesus and become obedient to him, worldly people will see us as foolish and miserable people. But the Apostle Paul helps us to see that we are not foolish and miserable when we follow Jesus and let his mindset be our mindset. It is God who works in us and brings us salvation and all blessings. When we have Jesus' mindset and submit to God, we fulfill God's good purpose and please God. We become stars in God's eyes and enjoy God's presence and all joy and glory from Him.

I would like to share my personal story. Before knowing Jesus, I was like Levi the tax collector and thought that gaining worldly achievements and wealth would be a wonderful life. When I did everything out of my selfish ambition, I could not control my sinful nature and became a slave to lust and pornography. I also became selfish and self-seeking, focusing on my own academic achievement. Physically, I suffered from a skin disease. Spiritually, I was full of anxiety and darkness. But God had mercy on me through 1 to 1 Bible study at Hong Kong UBF. In John 8:11, "Jesus said, then neither do I condemn you, Go now, leave your life of sin." I repented my sins of pleasure-seeking and self-seeking. I devoted my heart and my life to Jesus and began to live a Christian life in Hong Kong UBF and participate in the campus ministry. Jesus' love filled me to be compassionate to the wandering souls in campus and serve as a Bible teacher for them. I even could establish a house church with Msn.Carol. Now we have two sons Daniel and Enoch. God healed my skin disease and gave me wisdom to do difficult research and get my PhD. In 2014, my wife Carol was offered a job as a lecturer at QUT in Brisbane, Australia. At that time, I was a senior engineer in a high tech company in mainland China. But I resigned my job and moved my family to Brisbane to serve QUT campus ministry. At first, I had no friends, no relatives, no job, and no Bible student, though I went fishing every week. I was often hurt by the cultural difference. I began to doubt my decision to move to Brisbane as a missionary. Then Hebrews 12:1b and 2 spoke to me, "And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." By holding this word, I looked up at Jesus instead of my poor situation. Jesus gave me His words to feed my family every Sunday joyfully and a shepherd heart to find lost souls in QUT campus and students began to come. In 2016, Msn. Carol's supervisor said her 2 years' performance was unsatisfactory even though she worked very hard. He even warned her that she might not continue if she could not make a significant improvement by the end of the year. Even though Msn. Carol was in danger of losing her lecturer job, the gospel of peace overcame my selfishness and anxiety. My family co-worked with other Australian missionaries to have the first Bible Academy at QUT. We had 15 attendees including QUT students and coworkers from other UBF chapters. After the Bible Academy, God moved the heart of Msn. Carol's supervisor, and he changed his evaluation from unsatisfactory to satisfactory and even exalted her to be a senior lecturer. Even though there was a long period of lockdown in campus due to COVID pandemic last year, amazingly our number of Bible students and Sunday Worship attendees grew through coworking with Msn. David & Sarah Park's family. Through this, I deeply experienced that we can really live a joyful and fruitful life to manifest God's glory in this crooked generation when we do not compromise but keep our faith to be fully united with Jesus until Jesus' mindset becomes our mindset. When we are faithful even to the point of death, and continue to work out our salvation by fixing our eyes on Jesus, God will surely honor us and give us a victor's crown on the day of Christ. Let's continue to work out our salvation and have the same mindset as Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, to keep enjoying all good things from God, we need to grow in our faith and have the same mindset as Jesus. Then we will live in humility a God-loving and other-

centered life. God exalts such people. May God help us to have faith claiming Jesus' mindset as our mindset so that we can become blameless and pure children of God and shine like stars in the sky in this crooked generation.