

Having the Mind of Christ

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[0 : 00] Philippians chapter 2, we're going to read verses 1 to 11. You'll find an outline in the weekly bulletins there. I'm really glad that the ladies got to go to the Grow Conference and hopefully next week we'll hear a bit about it from some.

Tell us a bit about what happened there. So I'm glad you got to go and I trust that you've been encouraged by that time away together. Let me pray. Our Father in Heaven, as we gather together this morning, sitting under your Word, we do pray that the things we hear from you would transform our hearts and our minds and conform us into the likeness that we might think and act and live as Christ.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen. Well, to think of like Christ is to think differently to the world. Our society primarily thinks that the way up is the only way to go and you do that by self-seeking and accomplishment, but Jesus spoke exactly the opposite.

Because Jesus says that the way up is the way down. And He taught it and He modelled it. The way up is first of all by sacrificial humility.

Remember when the disciples of James and John came to Jesus and asked Him for positions of power in the Kingdom of God, you know, Vice President and Secretary of State if you like?

[1 : 37] Oh. I've got to read the Bible, haven't I? Yeah, thanks, Tosh. Thank you. Yeah. Let's read it. Philippians chapter 2.

I'm too excited by the passage to get into it. Philippians chapter 2, verses 1 to 11. Here we go. So, Well, let me pick it up with the disciples coming to Jesus and asking Him if they could have the right hand, left hand seats of glory.

And Jesus said to them, You don't know what you're asking. It'll mean suffering just like me. Are you up for it? And they say, yes, we are up for it.

We can do that. And He goes on to say to the disciples, You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them, but it shall not be so among you.

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many.

[3 : 58] So, Jesus is saying that the Kingdom of God is all about the way down is the way up. And Jesus taught it, and He modelled it. And the way up for Jesus to glory was the way down in humility.

And the way up for His people is the same way, down the way of humility. And this is all because of who we are, God's people, and who we follow, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the topic sentence for the book of Philippians is in chapter 1, verse 27. Have a look at it with me there. Chapter 1, verse 27. I'm going to let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. There you go. There's the topic sentence. And what does a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ look like? Well, the answer is a life that looks like Jesus.

That's how it is. And last week we saw that a life worthy of the Gospel is one that's not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus. We're striving together for the cause of the Gospel of Jesus, we saw.

[5 : 04] And we have encouraged to stand in the face of opposition. And we know that suffering for the sake of the Gospel is from God as well as belief. And suffering particularly is those who are actually people opposing us for what we believe.

And now this requires Christ-like thinking. That's what it needs. Which is at odds with the way the rest of the world thinks naturally. Paul goes on to tell us what this upside-down thinking looks like. And we see it here in Philippians chapter 2, 1 to 11. And you see in verse 1. So, if there's any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and

sympathy, complete my joy by being.

Therefore, that so, if there is, or if it really is this way, this is the way it is, this is the current situation. And we see four things, that are the basis for the way we're to think and to live. So here's four things that are the basis for the way we're to think and to live. If there's any encouragement in Christ, which there is, by the way, the idea is being comforted.

[6 : 27] We are safe in Christ. And so have been saved, which means that we are in the Kingdom of God. Second, if there's any consolation of love, which there is, knowing that Jesus loves the Philippians in the midst of the opposition and suffering they've endured.

And three, if there's any participation in the Spirit, which there is, right, that is what Christians have in common, God's Holy Spirit dwelling within us, what unites us in the body of Christ.

God has given His Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit of God is dwelling in us and at work in us. The Holy Spirit is at work in those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is something that we share together in our life as Christians, being in one body in Christ, as Romans chapter 12 and 1 Corinthians chapter 12 speaks about. And since we are partners in, participation in, the Spirit, it should be impossible, right, for there to be any division and factions amongst God's people.

people. And if that's not enough, there is affection and sympathy. It's a deep and tender mercy from the bowels, from the splenker, the seat of emotions, the sympathy or compassion, concern for one another.

[7 : 50] this is what we have and we should have more and more of. And so then, and this is because of the foundations, right, of those four truths, there is a mind to have, right, which really is an appropriate way to think, verse 2.

See verse 2? Complete my joy by being of the same mind, the same love, being in full accord with one mind.

Sometimes we say that we have a mind to do this or that, don't we? So I've got a mind to go here or do that. That is, we particularly will be going about something in a particular way. There's a common way to think.

The idea of mind is think, right? A unity of purpose in the way we think. A particular DNA of the way that Christians are to think.

Paul wants them to make his joy complete and so, what would enable Paul to die happy is this, that there's an ever deepening love and unity amongst the brothers and sisters in Christ in Philippi.

[9 : 17] That would enable Paul to die happy. I'll say it again, what Paul is calling to do, what would make Paul die happy would be, what would complete Paul's joy would be this, that there's an ever deepening love and unity among the believers in Philippi.

See verse 2? Paul's joy being of the same mind, that is, literally think the same, love the same, see there in verse 2, in full agreement with each other and having one mind, literally thinking the same way.

And what is it that he wants them to be thinking about getting on with? We see the way they live there in verses 2 to 4. There will be no division, no party spirit, no rivalry.

See verse 3? Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. The idea is to regard, right?

And to regard needs some consideration and to be considering things means to be thinking to do it. Christian thinking is totally counter-cultural.

[10 : 39] To think Christianly is not natural, it's supernatural. Christian thinking is only possible by having changed hearts and changed minds by God's spirit and his word at work in us, by the gracious work of God's Holy Spirit in us.

And because they now follow the Lord Jesus Christ and all the blessings that come with that, they are told, the Philippians, and by extension we are told, us St. Lucians, right?

To do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility to consider to regard others more significant than yourself.

the household of God's people is going to be totally counter-cultural. The reason that we do things for each other will be different from the rest of the world.

The way we think about each other will be different to the way the rest of the world thinks about others. And here it is, verse 4, here it is, that each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

[12:00] Wouldn't that be wonderful? Let me tell you, that would be wonderful, wouldn't it? To be in a place where there's no hidden agenda behind what is done, where there's no false motive for doing what we do, where we're not trying to gain praise from others by what we do, where we're not doing things because we think we're better than we really are, a place where those around you thought highly of you, didn't look down upon you, a place where people respected you and honoured you rather than looked for a reason to put you down.

Now wouldn't that be a wonderful fellowship to be a part of? Recognising how valuable you are in God's eyes. someone so valuable that Jesus, God's son, died for you.

That you're one of his dearly loved children. That is the way of Christ. And we are again called to engage our minds in considering who Jesus is and what he's done for us.

and he comes at passage in scripture verse 5 to 11 of Philippians 2 which is just one of those purple passages of the Bible.

We're to think like Christ. Have this mind, see verse 5, have this mind among yourselves, which is also the mind that Christ Jesus had while he was on earth.

[13:48] This is the mind you have, the mind that Jesus Christ had, the way that he thought is the way that you are to think. The way that he thought on earth is the way that we are to think on earth.

Adopt towards one another in your mutual relations the same attitude that is found in Christ Jesus, will be another way of saying it. Here is a command again, to think rightly.

It's not an optional extra. It's to be the fundamental framework of a rewired mind.

The way we are to think is the way that Jesus Christ thought and thinks still today. And this is one of those passages in the Bible we can consider for hours and hours and hours.

In it we see Jesus showing us the way up is first and foremost the way down. This is the way Jesus reckoned things, the way that Jesus considered things, the way that he thought and the way he lived.

[15:00] And we see his humiliation in verses 6 to 9. Jesus was in the form of God and did not equality with God something to be grasped.

Let's just plumb this one for a minute or two. Jesus was always God, is always God, but by becoming man he became God in the flesh.

and so because he was in the form of God he was never less than God, he was always God and he did not regard his equality with God as something to be used for his own advantage.

this is the exact opposite of the world's way of thinking. The world wants to grasp power and authority precisely because mankind is not God.

But having more and more power makes us more and more like God, God-like. Jesus was not God-like, he was very truly God through and through.

[16:18] the despots of the world grasp at God-like powers and become terrible dictators like Stalin and Pol Pod and Putin.

Maybe I should watch you up for the exocent missile. Demanding that those under them honour them, obey them, glorify them. Caesar was worshipped as God but he could only ever be human. He would be grasping at being God and using his power for his own glory and that is the nature of sin. Rebellion against the true and living God who rules in all righteousness and sin is always lurking in my heart and your heart too.

there's a little despot in all of us grasping at power wanting our own way lurking selfish ambition and yet instead of using his divine position and status for his own advantage Jesus emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant literally a slave he didn't disguise himself as a slave but took on the very nature and the characteristics of a slave coming to serve not to be served Mark 1045 and in the appearance the likeness of man the outward appearance of man so see the massive contrast here from creator

God right to human slave and the question is what did he empty himself of well to be clear he didn't empty himself of his divinity his godness that's the heresy of Arianism saying that Jesus wasn't truly divine that's where the Jehovah's witnesses of today are wrong he emptied himself of his rights his privileges his status by being seen in the form the character of a slave he shed off his rights and privileges to become a slave he was always God he became God in the flesh and he was truly human to say that he wasn't truly human who lived and suffered and died in the flesh if the heresy of docetism saying they only seemed to be a man didn't particularly wasn't really man and as a human he forsook his divine dignity taking the form of and making the form of

[19 : 41] God visible and himself known as a slave and losing his rights remember that he washes the disciples feet in the upper room doing that which was even beneath that of a Roman slave Jesus the one who made them served them but if being a slave lower than a Roman slave wasn't low enough Jesus being a man he is the perfectly obedient man who always lived under God's authority and obediently went to death and a particularly terrible and shameful death death on a cross that not even a Roman citizen would ever have to endure there is the model of Christian humility if we're going to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of

King Jesus then help me and join me in being willing to be like him in his humility think this way brothers and sisters the way of Christ is the way of the cross emptying ourselves of all personal rights and privileges serving as slaves slaves slaves of Jesus Christ all of God's people are of the same status status of come on slaves of Jesus Christ and if we consider ourselves as slaves then of course we will consider others greater and of more significance than ourselves of course I'll forgo my rights for a slave has none we will not think of ourselves as worthy of any particular privilege or prestige because slaves have none of course you will treat your wife kindly gently sacrificially laying down your life for her of course you will honour your husband and build him up not tear him down of course you will honour your parents of course you will be kind and generous to others of course conflict will cease of course you will agree in the Lord and because the Lord Jesus was willing to be obedient to the father to the point of death even death on the cross then that wasn't the end God not just exalted him you see verse 8 therefore

God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that's above every name God raised him to be Lord over all the cosmos God raised him from the grave conquering sin and death defeating Satan and his foes bringing forgiveness of sins and he now reigns as King of Kings Lord of Lords he could not be raised any higher in honour power status or glory the name he's been given to Jesus is the most powerful name in the cosmos and we see here every knee will bow every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord not to Jesus glory but to the Father's glory to the glory of God the

Father that is the destiny of all mankind you want to know where mankind is going this is it this is the destiny of every angel the myriads of angels this is the destiny of every evil demon this is the destiny of any ruler and authority in the heavenly realms this is the destiny of everyone and everything that has ever lived or ever will live to bow the knee to confess with the tongue that Jesus Christ is Lord now to be perfectly clear here that doesn't mean that everyone will one day be saved far from it far from it everyone is destined to die once and then face judgment and on judgment day everyone will confess that

[25 : 17] Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father the Son doesn't seek his own glory but the glory of the Father who sent him he's not grasping he's giving now some will confess Jesus Christ as Lord willingly because they've already bent the knee to him in this world now and so will enter eternal glory reigning with him in the new and perfect creation for all eternity everyone else everything else will have to confess that Jesus is Lord because they cannot deny it and it will be utter defeat it will be bend the knee to Jesus and confess with their tongue that Jesus is Lord through clenched teeth and this is also to the glory of God the Father those who have humbled themselves and taken off their crowns and confess that

Jesus is Lord will be exalted on that last day as Jesus said on that day the first will be last and the last will be first those who become his slaves in this world will be exalted to reign with him for all eternity in glory with a massive transformation how confronting will that be to those who despise him now so the question is how is your thinking how is my thinking and what is the evidence of that thinking do we think like Christ do we really think like Christ and how would thinking like Christ change the way that we relate and live in our church

I wish this thinking was all pervasive in my life let me read out to you a great hymn may the mind of Christ my saviour live in me from day to day by his love and power controlling all I do and say may the word of God dwell richly in my heart from hour to hour so that all may see I triumph only through his power may the peace of God my father rule my life in everything that I may be calm to comfort sick and sorrowing may the love of Jesus fill me as the waters fill the sea him exalting self abasing this is victory may I run the race before me strong and brave to face the foe looking only unto Jesus as I onward go may his beauty rest upon me as I seek the lost to win and may they forget the channel seeing only him we're going to sing that right now