

"Paul's Letter to the Philippians — 'That Mind Which is Above All Minds'"

Review:

- ***We began here in our last study with Paul's great example before the Philippians, a ministry of sacrifice and trial in Rome and before Caesar. In that there was great victory as the Lord of Glory had been working in Paul and he here makes that working a significant part of the introduction of this letter.***

In Paul the Lord Jesus had manifested his empowering life and spirit and that made the difference for Paul, and, he hoped, also for the believers in Philippi.

- ***But it was not Paul himself that they had come to know but the Christ in Paul that all had witnessed. Many saw and were transformed by what they saw [and heard, of course] as they believed and were transformed eternally. As verses 19-21 so well express, Paul's hope was always in the Lord of glory.***

Phil. 1:19-21

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- ***Then you will recall how in verses 29 & 30 Paul made this so relevant to each of them when he wrote:***

Phil. 1:29-30

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me.

- ***Just as their faith itself of a gift of God, so now also, he writes, the suffering that must attend their faith was also a gift - IF they would receive it as such. His words are powerful indeed:***

- ***"not only to believe on him . . .": So faith is a gift. Many make faith into a work, I am very sad to say, but here Paul writes that it is a gift and the giver is clearly Almighty God! Amen.***

- **“but also to suffer for his sake”:** ***So faith is a gift (if we will receive it) and also the suffering we must endure is a gift (again, if we will receive it). They go together, he writes. Similarly we read in 2 Timothy: 2 Tim. 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”***

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me.

- ***Paul has concluded this chapter by again setting forth himself as their example. And it is an example of suffering, yes, but also of his testimony for the Lord. His testimony (here called his “conflict”) was intended to be such a powerful example for them that they would also enter into the same “conflict”.***
- ***“having the same conflict . . .”: Again, if we will receive it. The apostle is building his case for the great theme of the letter, that some would receive this same “mind-set” that he had displayed, and, as we shall see, Christ himself would then also be displayed in and through them as he had been through the apostle. Amen.***
- ***“which ye saw in me . . . and now hear to be in me”: So the testimony he writes of himself was given to make the difference, to be used by the Lord in the lives of the believers in Philippi.***
- ***A little later in the letter his own example is provided again in order that they might indeed “follow [or “imitate”] him”:***

Phil. 3:17-21

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end [is] destruction, whose God [is their] belly, and [whose] glory [is] in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

- *Following Christ is in truth NOT an option for the believer. Phil. 3:17 establishes that so powerfully. And this does NOT contradict 1 Corinthians chapters 1 & 3 as we shall see at a later time, Lord willing.*

- ***Paul's Example Applied — His Exhortation Delivered***

Phil. 2:2-4

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye **be likeminded**, having **the same love**, [being] of **one accord**, of **one mind**.

3 [Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but **in lowliness of mind let each esteem** other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

- *“Mind” is again the key word here [as elsewhere, as in Rom. 8:5, minding the things of the flesh or the things of the spirit].*

Transition:

- *But now we must change our focus from Paul and his testimony and personal exhortation to an even more exalted exhortation. “Mind” is still the theme, but now it is the “mind” of Christ Jesus himself. Indeed, this letter starts with concerns about vain conflicts between specific named women in the Philippian assembly to such an exalted theme as the mind of Christ in heaven’s glory as he considered what was written “in the volume of the heavenly ‘book’” and then entered willingly into the incarnation event.*

Our Outline Today:

- ***Christ's Glorious Incarnation:***
 - ***The Exhortation: Christ's “Mind” Should Be Ours***
 - ***The Question: What Was Christ's “Mind” in Leaving Heaven's Glory?***
 - ***The Capstone Teaching: Through His Incarnation & Sacrifice All Enemies Shall Be Defeated!***

I. The Exhortation: Christ's “Mind” Should Be Ours:

[READ] Phil. 2:5

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

- **The apostle returns to his central theme in this letter, the “mind” of Christ and our opportunity to share in that same mind. Yes, Paul is our example. But he is here pointing to the Christ himself in heaven’s glory. As Paul wrote in many scriptures, he himself is our example of the heavenly Christ: “to follow, to imitate” him is our privilege AND responsibility. See 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Heb. 2:14; 5:1; 6:12.**

- **So we are to follow or imitate Paul, having the same “mind”, and in so doing that, also to imitate Christ Jesus. But what does this all mean? We shall spend several meetings here looking carefully into this, one might say, among the greatest of all subjects for our study in all of the Bible.**

- **Some challenges to our understanding:**

- **The meaning of "mind": Think of how in our language, English, how this word is used:**
 - **Physically, as a synonym for the brain**
 - **As something beyond the mere physical, as our pattern of thought or the convictions of our “heart”: “minding the store”, “otherwise minded . . .”, etc.**
- **That there is a great gulf between divine mind and our minds should be clear here from the beginning. But the apostle makes it clear that even we may possess the mind of Christ:**

1 Cor. 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

II. The Question: What Was Christ’s “Mind” in Leaving Heaven’s Glory?

- **What we find here is unquestionably one of the most exalted revelations of the entire Bible, and one that could consume us for a long time.**
- **This is all about Christ’s “mind”. But in what sense? What specifically is the apostle referring to here? Let’s read the passage and consider what is written:**

[READ] Phil. 2:6-8

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- ***We see that the background of all of this takes us back in time to a “moment” in heaven before the incarnation had been accomplished.***

We must read in Heb. 10 (which quotes Ps. 40) to see the context of that:

[READ] Heb. 10:5-10

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and [offering] for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure [therein]; which are offered by the law; ==> **verse 6 & Ps. 40:5-8**

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].

- ***This is exalted and heavenly language indeed, isn't it?***
- ***God's will is at the center of this. There are several phases mentioned.***
- ***Now for the quotation here which is from David's Psalm 40:***

[READ] Ps. 40:5-8

5 Many, O LORD my God, [are] thy wonderful works [which] thou hast done, and thy thoughts [which are] to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: [if] I would declare and speak [of them], they are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book [it is] written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [is] within my heart.

- ***What is the “will” referred to in Heb. 10:10? It is the will mentioned in Ps. 40:8, the will of God as exemplified we read in the coordinated will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ps. 40:8 “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [is] within my heart.”***
- ***So we do now know what the mind of Christ was. It was his willingness to leave behind not absolutely everything that he was as the son of God and a person of the Holy Trinity. Not everything of what he was as God, but rather [what does it actually say?]:***

6 Who, being [originally] in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

- ***Now we see the seven degrees of humiliation of the Son of God in detail set before us:***

7 But made himself of no reputation **(1)**
and took upon him the form of a servant **(2)**
and was made in the likeness of men **(3)**
8 And being found in fashion as a man **(4)**
he humbled himself **(5)**
and became obedient unto death **(6)**
even the death of the cross **(7)**

- ***So verses 7 & 8 give us an in depth insight into exactly what was involved here when Christ recognized in heaven’s glory that it was now “time” to fulfill that which was written. And his “mind” was set on exactly that, the incarnation with everything that that would mean.***

As we see written here, he knew all that it would mean because it had been already well established in eternity past, far before the actual creation of the universe, of Lucifer and the angelic host, of then Adam and Eve, and what came after that. All this was known from before the foundation of the world.

All this had already been agreed upon between the members of the Holy Trinity. But now the execution of the plan came into clear vision. It was now the occasion of ACTING out that plan.

- ***We will not leave this behind too quickly and will need to come back here in our next study. But for now, recognizing the gravity of what our Lord undertook as stated here, we must stand in awe of it and grasp to comprehend its full meaning as it relates directly to us, as the apostle defines this challenge here. That we must share in this mind or we will surely be missing what is most important in this life — the living out of newness of life in Christ Jesus. Amen.***
- ***We can and should already ask this question though: how does this directly relate to the issue at hand in the church in Philippi? What about the two named women. How humbled were they, we wonder, when they read or heard read these words of the beloved Paul?***
- ***And what is our response? What indeed in our response?***

III. The Capstone Teaching: Through His Incarnation & Sacrifice All Enemies Shall Be Defeated!

[READ] Phil. 2:9-11

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;

11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- ***Here we have the great and general statement of Christ's victory over all his enemies. It is a summary. All of it will be based on Christ's work on the cross for our sins but there is more when we consider satan's enemies. There is much truth here and elsewhere that Christ's death goes beyond the redemption of sinners since also the entire creation will be delivered and satan and his emissaries will be brought to full justice.***

- ***Surely we must continue with this passage of this great letter next time. Amen.***

Conclusions & Application:

Phil. 2:5

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being [originally] in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

**7 But made himself of no reputation
and took upon him the form of a servant
and was made in the likeness of men**

**8 And being found in fashion as a man
he humbled himself**

**and became obedient unto death
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heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;**

**11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**