

There was evidently one weak spot in the church at Philippi, for three times in this letter the apostle Paul reproves the Christians, not for doctrinal error, but for careless and undisciplined living (**1:27, 2:1-5; 4:1-5**). They were sound in doctrine, but they were not manifesting “**the unity of the Spirit**” (**Ephesians 4:3**). Instead of unity there was discord; instead of harmony there was disharmony; their believing was all right, but their behaving was all wrong. It is very easy for those who are sound in doctrine to fail to “**make the teaching about God our Savior attractive**” (**Titus 2:10** NIV). What is the reason for the presence of these hindering things in the church? Failure to have the mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

- Grammatical Usage: “**mind**” or in the Greek “phroneó” meaning, “attitude; understanding, reasoning”
- Literal Interpretation: Adopt this attitude of Jesus which will guide your understanding leading to correct reasoning among yourselves which also is in Christ Jesus.
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word.

1. THE EXHORTATION WE ARE TO OBEY

In **vv. 1-4** we see why the exhortation of **v. 5** was (and is) so necessary. Because of the failings indicated, and because Paul knew the root cause for their presence was pride, he exhorted the Christians to have the same attitude as the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a humble, meek, loving attitude. But the apostle did not leave the matter there. Notice:

2. THE EXAMPLE WE ARE TO FOLLOW

In **vv. 5-6**, we see the Lord Jesus’ humility personified. He is the supreme example of humility. In **vv. 6-11**, the amazing condescension and the glorious exaltation of the Lord Jesus are contrasted.

Who is this who stooped so low and whom God raised up so high? **Vv. 5-6** tell us - “**Christ Jesus who...**”:

- “**Being in very nature God...**” As God the Father has no visible form, this can only mean that Christ Jesus was, and is, Himself God. He always was, and is, and always will be God (**John 1:1**).
- “**Did not consider equality with God something to be grasped**” Because He was God, He was not taking something to Himself that did not belong to Him when He claimed equality with God (**John 5:18; 5:23; 10:33**).

The amazing condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ is described in **vv. 7-8**. They tell us of the seven steps He voluntarily took from the throne down to the cross:

- He “**made himself nothing...**” (v. 7). This does not mean that He divested Himself of His deity; it means that when He became man, He voluntarily laid aside His glory. He took off His royal robes as the Creator to come among His creation, but He was still, and is, the same royal Person (**Colossians 2:9**)
- He took “**the very nature of a servant...**” (v. 7). Two Greek words mean ‘servant’ – one means ‘employee’ while the other, “doulos”, means “slave.” A slave is considered the possession of their master. The slave is bound to the master and cannot come and go as they please. Jesus always manifested what God is like. Jesus never ceased to be God, but in being God, He embraced a self-emptying service and love expressed towards others in line with His Father
- He “**was made in human likeness...**” (v. 7). Compare **Romans 8:3**: Jesus was only in human likeness - truly God, but truly man
- He was “**found in appearance as a man...**” (v. 8). He looked like a man (**Hebrews 2:17**); He became hungry (**Matthew 4:2**); He was tempted (**Matthew 4:3**); He was tired (**Mark 4:38**); He wept (**Luke 19:41**; **John 11:35**).
- “**He humbled Himself...**” (v. 8). He was born in little Bethlehem (**Micah 5:2**); He lived in despised Nazareth (**John 1:46**); He plied a humble trade (**Matthew 13:55**); He had nowhere to lay His head (**Luke 9:58**)
- He “**became obedient to death...**” (v. 8).
- “**Even death on a cross**” (v. 8). This was the most degrading and shameful death known, yet He willingly submitted to this awful “**shame**” (**Hebrews 12:2**) because He loved us so!

3. THE ENABLING WE ARE TO ENJOY

V. 13 tells us how. What we have to do is to let go (v. 5), and let God (v. 13), so that we work out what He works in. This isn't the first time Paul instructs regarding the mind of Christ. In **1 Corinthians 2:16**, Paul quotes **Isaiah 40:13** and then makes a statement concerning all believers: "**We have the mind of Christ.**" Having the mind of Christ means sharing the plan, purpose, and perspective of Christ, and it is something that all believers must possess.

Having the mind of Christ means we understand God's plan in the world to bring glory to Himself, restore creation to its original splendor and provide salvation for sinners. It means we identify with Christ's purpose "**to seek and to save what was lost**" (**Luke 19:10**). It means we share Jesus' perspective of humility and obedience (**Philippians 2:5-8**), compassion (**Matthew 9:36**) and prayerful dependence on God (**Luke 5:16**). In the verses leading up to **1 Corinthians 2:16**, we note truths concerning the mind of Christ:

- 1) The mind of Christ stands in sharp contrast to the wisdom of man (vv. 5-6)
- 2) The mind of Christ involves wisdom from God, once hidden but now revealed (v. 7)
- 3) The mind of Christ is given to believers through the Spirit of God (vv. 10-12)
- 4) The mind of Christ cannot be understood by those without the Spirit (v. 14)
- 5) The mind of Christ gives believers discernment in spiritual matters (v. 15)

- Conclusion: Will I empty myself of self...allow the Holy Spirit to overtake me...and gain the mind of Christ? It is our only hope of true, lasting and pure fulfillment.