

Having the Mind of Christ – Philippians 2:5-8

Introduction: We began last Sunday night a series of messages on Spiritual Health. Generally speaking, we're talking about maintaining the health of the church. But in order to do that, we said that one's own spiritual health must be maintained.

From her book entitled, The Key to a Loving Heart, Karen Mains shares a parable about the church. It tells about the most climactic moment in a wedding ceremony. The families have been seated. The groom and his attendants are in their places. The bridesmaids have come down the aisle. The minister is waiting. The organ begins the bridal march, and as everyone rises, the bride comes down the aisle limping. Her gown is ripped and covered with mud. One eye is purple and swollen. Her hair is mussed. In the parable, the groom is Christ. "*Doesn't He deserve better than this?*" the author asks. His bride, the church has been fighting again.

Nothing is more of a hindrance to the work of the kingdom of God than a church that is in turmoil. There can be numerous causes of church fights, but I suspect that the main cause is this: There is a real sickness among Christians who have not transformed their mind to the mind of Christ.

Romans 12:2 (NIV) says, "*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.*"

If our churches are going to be healthy, then not only do its members need to develop a heart for God, but we also need to develop the mind of Christ. Each person in the Body of Christ needs to have the same mind or attitude that Christ had.

Our text tonight speaks about that very thing. **READ Phil. 2:5-8.** Having the mind of Christ means having the same attitudes of Christ. And the first thing we see in this passage is:

1. The Mind of Christ is Unselfish (6)

Prior to the incarnation Jesus existed in the form of God. John 1:1 says "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" **John 1:1 (NIV).**

Jesus shared glory with God. But here, Paul tells us that Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be laid hold of selfishly. In other words, the things that Jesus possessed in heaven were not

something that He had to hold on to in order to come to earth to fulfill His mission. Jesus was unselfish in His attitude.

We can't truthfully say that we're unselfish when we're called to share our faith, but we keep it to ourselves, or when we're called to give our money to the cause of Christ but we selfishly hold on to it, or when we are called to serve others, but we hold on to our selfish desires.

But if we truly have the mind of Christ, we will not operate from selfish ambition. People who truly have the mind of Christ, realize that the work of His church suffers because of selfishness, so they put aside their personal agendas for the call of Christ.

People who have the mind of Christ do not seek power and position in the church. They do not seek glory or want to be patted on the back, or get their feelings hurt over some trivial matter. They realize that the mind of Christ says to not to do anything from selfish ambition or vain conceit. (Phil 2:3). If we have the mind of Christ, we will be working to please Him and Him alone! As we look further in our text we see that:

2. The Mind of Christ is Willing to Sacrifice (7)

John tells us that when Christ became flesh, He emptied Himself of the glory that He had with the Father. **John 17:5 (NIV)** *“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

Paul puts it this way: He says that Jesus, *“made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.”* Notice that Jesus, the King of King and Lord of Lords, did not come as a King, or a rich man, but came as the son of a lowly carpenter.

The Son of God became a human being - born into the world and subject to the same elements we are. He had to learn to walk and talk and eat. He got tired, frustrated, and angry. He felt pain. He needed rest. He knew what rejection felt like. Jesus came as a man, and was tempted like we are.

Jesus was God in the flesh, but He temporarily emptied Himself of that glory, even though He knew that He would die the worst kind of death that a person could imagine. Jesus sacrificed the glory of heaven for us.

Paul tells us that we are to have the same attitude. *“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”* **Philippians 2:4 (NIV)**. That means that not only are we to see to our own

basic needs, but we are to make sure that we make room in our lives for the needs of others. That will require us to sacrifice at times. That's what we do when we go on mission trips or give to missions. That's what we do when we take a meal to the home of the sick or the elderly. That is having the mind of Christ because that is what He would do.

Also, in our text we see that

3. The Mind of Christ is One of Humility. (8).

Paul says in vs. 8 that not only was Christ found in the appearance of a man, but He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on the cross.

Humility will lead to obedience. Throughout Jesus' ministry, He said that He was here to do the will of His Father. His humility was what allowed Him to take the punishment that He did. Jesus could have come down from the cross and called upon God to destroy those who were about to kill Him, but He did not because of His humility.

Paul said in vs. 3 that we too are to have a humble mind. **Phil 2:3 (NIV)** "*...in humility consider others better than yourselves.*"

The opposite of humility is pride. Pride gets in the way of admitting that we are wrong and it keeps us from doing things for people when we think that the job is too menial.

Dwight was relating to me just the other day about taking someone with him down to Super WOW at Jekyll Island a few years ago to deliver some supplies. As soon as he pulled up, several people were there, and they all came out to help unload the truck. Well, Dwight said they decided to stay over for the evening worship rally so the other person could see what Super WOW was all about. When the speaker came out, the fellow with him said, "*Isn't that one of the guys who helped us unload the truck this morning?*" Dwight said, "*It sure is!*"

He said that the underlying philosophy of the Super WOW staff is one of humility. Doug Couch says that if someone is not willing to get in there and help with the menial things, they cannot be on his Super WOW program.

It is not so out in the world, but in God's church, humility is a virtue to be desired. We have to be humble in dealing with other people. We just never will know how it might positively affect people by our spirit toward them.

Romans 12:16 (NIV) says, *“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.”*

Conclusion: If the church is going to be healthy, then its members must be transformed by the renewing of our minds so it can reflect the mind of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) says that *“...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* And **Colossians 3:8-10 (NIV)** tells us what the old is. Paul says, ⁸*“But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”*

So, we have an active part in the renewing process. We are a product of what we put into ourselves. Are you filling yourself up with the Word of God? You'll never be transformed by the renewing of your mind unless you are filling it with the things of God. God's church can be healthy if we have a heart for God and develop the mind of Christ.