

# Imitating Christ

Phil 2:1-13

SS Lesson for 01/13/2013

**Devotional Scripture:** 1 Cor 2:10-16

## OUTLINE

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We can also participate in God's Divine Nature (2 Pet 1:4)

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Jesus, as a servant, brought the light to the Gentiles (Isa 49:6)

God's Spirit was upon His servant Jesus (Matt 12:18)

Jesus became a servant to confirm God's promises (Rom 15:8)

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CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR COMMENTARY

PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON THE MIND OF CHRIST FROM THE LIFEWAY COURSE "THE MIND OF CHRIST" BY T.W.

HUNT AND CLAUDE KING (1994, LIFEWAY PRESS)

*Six Characteristics of The Christlike Mind*

*Three Stages In Developing The Mind Of Christ*

# Introduction

## Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson teaches that we should always **Imitate Christ** in our lives. The **study's aim** is to understand what it means to self-sacrifice as Jesus did. The **study's application** is to seek to become as humble and as submitted to the will of God as it is possible for us to be in this life.

### Key Verse: Phil 2:5

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

*Commentary from UBS New Testament Handbook*

***The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:***

This verse functions as an introductory formula for the hymn (cf. Eph 5:14; 1 Tim 1:15; 3:16; 2 Tim 2:11).

The Greek of this verse is somewhat cryptic; it is literally "this you think in you which also in Christ Jesus." "this" does not refer back to what has been said in verses 2-4, but rather introduces what comes after. The verb translated "you think" (which has already appeared in Phil 1:7 and 2:2) connotes more than mere thinking (it is rendered *feel* by TEV in 1:7). It denotes primarily, not an act of thinking, but a state of mind, an inward disposition. It signifies sympathetic interests and concern, reflecting the action of the "heart" as well as the "head." In this context the verb is best rendered "have the attitude" (TEV Gpd NAB Brc). The mood of the verb is present imperative.

"In you" in this context is best taken in the sense of "among you" or "within your Christian community," not "within you" in the sense of "in your hearts." The exact sense of the clause can best be brought out by restructuring; thus TEV has **the attitude you should have is....** and NAB "your attitude must be...." Since the action implied in the verb is continuous, the clause can also be translated "the attitude you should always have is..." Brc is even more explicit: "try always to have the same attitude...." (cf. GeCL).

The second half of the verse presents translators with two problems. Since the clause is without a verb, the first problem is to determine what verb to supply. One solution is to supply the main verb used in the first part of the verse, that is, "think among yourselves that which also you think in Christ Jesus." The resulting meaning then would be "have among yourselves the disposition which you experience in Christ Jesus," or "adopt toward one another the same attitude you adopt towards Christ Jesus." This interpretation is followed by Mft: "treat one another with the same spirit as you experience in Christ Jesus." Another suggestion is to supply the verb "was," with the resulting meaning "have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (cf. KJV ASV). NEB appears to adopt the latter interpretation as an alternative rendering: "have that bearing towards one another which was also found in Christ Jesus." This solution seems to suit the context better.

Closely related to this problem is another: how to interpret the expression "in Christ Jesus." It is argued by several commentators that the regular Pauline sense of "in communion with Christ Jesus," or more specifically "in your Christian fellowship," is the meaning in this context also. Paul would then be urging the Philippian Christians to put into practice in their common life the disposition or attitude (described in vv. 2-4) proper to those who are members of Christ's church.

However, the context seems to indicate that the characteristic Pauline sense of the expression should not be pressed in this particular instance. It is rather to be interpreted in the sense of "that belonged to Christ Jesus or, as TEV renders it, **that Christ Jesus had** (cf. Gpd Brc). With this interpretation, the transition to the Christological hymn becomes natural. Paul is here making an appeal to Christ as the supreme example of humility—an act of utter self-negation. The past tense "Christ Jesus had" is significant, since Christ's attitude of humility is exemplified in his accomplished saving acts. Note that in Greek all the verbs (except verse 11) and participles (except the first) used in the hymn are in the aorist tense. Christians are only called upon to tread the path already trodden by Christ himself (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-25).

In a number of languages the closest equivalent of **attitude** is "thinking." Therefore verse 5 may be rendered as "You should think the same way that Jesus Christ thought." However, in the hymn which

follows more is involved than mere thinking. The emphasis is on what Jesus Christ did, and **attitude** must be understood in a broader sense than mere thinking. This may be expressed in some languages as "What you do should be the same as what Jesus Christ did."

*Commentary from Bible Expositor and Illuminator*

A reflection is an image given by an object. It is also the careful, long consideration of a thought. We see a reflection of ourselves in the mirror. A Christian should be a reflection of the image of Christ by being even-tempered and helping the poor. He should also think like Christ. When the Christian's thinking reflects the will of God, then his actions will also fulfill the will of God. When God sees us, He should see a reflection of Himself. When others look at us and our lives, they should see a reflection of God.

**Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson**

The major outlines were determined by reviewing the Scriptural Text to find out what it teaches us about how to Imitate Christ in our lives?" Using this question, I found the following lesson points from the Scriptural Text phrases as outlined:

<b>Verse</b>	<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Major Outline</b>
2	fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind	Preparation to Imitating Christ
5	Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus	Elements of Imitating Christ
13	For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure	Results of Imitating Christ

**Lesson Background**

**From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Bible scholars are widely agreed that Philippians 2:6-11, part of today's text, is a quotation from an early Christian hymn. This would have been a song or chant used in worship and/or fellowship settings. In addition to the poetic rhythm of the original Greek text, the content of this passage closely resembles other texts that also seem to cite ancient hymns; some possibilities are John 1:1-18; Luke 1:46-55; Colossians 1:15-20; and 1 Peter 3:18-22. These focus on the nature and work of Christ by highlighting his divinity and preexistence, role in creation, incarnation, painful death, resurrection, and exaltation (although not all these passages contain all these elements). The hymn in Philippians 2 includes most of these elements, as we shall see. Just as listeners today recognize the words to familiar hymns or worship songs in sermons, Paul's readers would have recognized immediately the source of Paul's thoughts. They would have seen the relevance of Christ's example to their own situation of conflict.

**From Barnes' Notes Commentary**

This chapter (Phil 2) is made up principally of exhortations to the performance of various Christian duties, and the exhibition of Christian virtues. The apostle first exhorts the Philippians, in the most tender manner, so to live as to give him joy, by evincing among themselves unity and concord. He entreats them to do nothing by strife and a desire of distinction, but to evince that humility which is manifested when we regard others as more worthy than we are; Phil 2:1-4. This exhortation he enforces in a most impressive manner by a reference to the example of Christ-an example of condescension and humiliation fitted to repress in us all the aspirings of ambition, and to make us ready to submit to the most humble offices to benefit others; Phil 2:5-11. He then exhorts them to work out their salvation with diligence, assuring them, for their encouragement, that God

worked in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; Phil 2:12-13. To this he adds an exhortation that they would avoid everything like complaining and disputing-that they would be blameless and harmless in their walk, showing the excellency of the religion which they loved to all around them, and exerting such an influence on others that Paul might feel that he had not labored in vain; Phil 2:14-16. To excite them to this, he assures them that he was ready himself to be sacrificed for their welfare, and should rejoice if by his laying down his life their happiness would be promoted. He asked the same thing in return from them; Phil 2:17-18. He then tells them, in expressing his interest in them, that he hoped soon to be able to send Timothy to them again-a man who felt a deep interest in their welfare, and whose going to them would be one of the highest proofs of the apostle's love; Phil 2:19-24. The same love for them, he says, he had now shown by sending to them Epaphroditus-a man to whom he was tenderly attached, and who had an earnest desire again to return to the church from which he had been sent. Paul sent him, therefore, again to Philippi, that he might be with them and comfort them, and he asked for him a kind reception and affectionate treatment, in view of the sufferings which he had experienced in the cause of the Redeemer; Phil 2:25-30.

# Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

## **Preparation to Imitating Christ (2:1-4)**

- 1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,
- 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
- 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.
- 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

## **Prepare by having consolation in Christ**

### *Commentary on consolation in Christ from Barnes' Notes*

He appeals to the tender considerations which religion furnished-and begins by a reference to the consolation which there was in Christ. The meaning here may be this: "I am now persecuted and afflicted. In my trials it will give me the highest joy to learn that you act as becomes Christians. You also are persecuted and afflicted (Phil 1:28-30); and, in these circumstances, I entreat that the highest consolation may be sought; and by all that is tender and sacred in the Christian religion, I conjure you, so to live as not to dishonor the gospel. So live as to bring down the highest consolation which can be obtained-the consolation which Christ alone can impart. We are not to suppose that Paul doubted whether there was any consolation in Christ but the form of expression here is one that is designed to urge upon them the duty of seeking the highest possible. The consolation in Christ is that which Christ furnishes or imparts. Paul regarded him as the source of all comfort, and earnestly prays that they might so live that he and they might avail themselves in the fullest sense of that unspeakable enjoyment. The idea is, that Christians ought at all times, and especially in affliction, so to act as to secure the highest possible happiness which their Saviour can impart to them. Such an object is worth their highest effort; and if God sees it needful, in order to that, that they should endure much affliction, still it is gain. Religious consolation is always worth all which it costs to secure it.

### *Consolation through peace given by Jesus (John 14:27)*

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

### *Consolation through Jesus' comfort (2 Cor 1:5-6)*

5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

### *Consolation through God's encouragement (2 Thess 2:16-17)*

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

## **Prepare by having comfort from Jesus' love**

*Comfort through having complete joy (John 15:10-12)*

10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

*Comfort in having the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22)*

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

*Comfort through encouragement and understanding (Col 2:2)*

2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,

*Comfort in being born of God and knowing Him (1 John 4:7-8)*

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

## **Prepare by having fellowship with the Holy Spirit**

*Participation in the influences of the Holy Spirit (from Barnes' Notes)*

The idea here is, that among Christians there was a participation in the influences of the Holy Spirit; that they shared in some degree the feelings, views, and joys of the Sacred Spirit Himself; and that this was a privilege of the highest order. By this fact, Paul now exhorts them to unity, love, and zeal--so to live that they might partake in the highest degree of the consolations of this Spirit.

*Mutual partakers of the Holy Spirit (from Adam Clarke's Commentary)*

If there be an intimate relation established among all Christians, by their being made mutual partakers of the Holy Spirit;

*Fellowship or joint participation of the Spirit (from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)*

'If any fellowship of (joint participation of) the Spirit' (2 Cor 13:14). As pagans meant those who were of one village, and drank of one fountain, how much greater is the union which conjoins those who drink of the same Spirit (1 Cor 12:4,13). The adjuncts of "fellowship of the spirit." The first (united with Christ) and third (fellowship with the Holy Spirit) mark the objective sources of the Christian life-- Christ and the Spirit; the second (comfort of love) and fourth (tenderness and compassion), the subjective principle in believers. The opposites of the two pairs into which the four fall are reprobated, (Phil. 2:3-4)

*Fellowship with the Holy Spirit through spiritual baptism (1 Cor 12:12-13)*

12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

*Fellowship with the Holy Spirit through obedience (1 John 3:24)*

24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

*Fellowship with the Holy Spirit through adoption (Rom 8:15)*

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

## **Prepare by being tender and compassionate**

*Compassionate through forgiveness (Eph 4:32)*

32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

*Compassionate through the God of compassion (2 Cor 1:3-4)*

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

*Compassionate through being God's chosen people (Col 3:12)*

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

*Merciful to those who need it (Jude 1:22)*

22 Be merciful to those who doubt;

## **Prepare by being united with other believers**

*Perfectly agreed (from Adam Clarke Commentary)*

Being perfectly agreed in labouring to promote the honour of your Master; and of one mind, being constantly intent upon this great subject; keeping your eye fixed upon it in all you say, do, or intend.

*Think the same thing (from Barnes' Notes)*

Greek - That you think the same thing. Perfect unity of sentiment, opinion, and plan would be desirable if it could be attained. It may be, so far as to prevent discord, schism, contention and strife in the church, and so that Christians may be harmonious in promoting the same great work-- the salvation of souls.

*On one accord (from Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament)*

Same thing." The expression is a general one for concord, and is defined in the two following clauses: unity of "affection, the same love; unity of sentiment, of one accord." The general expression is then repeated in a stronger form, "thinking the one thing." The King James Version and English Revised Version (1885): "of one mind."

*United through harmony (Rom 12:16)*

16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

*United through endurance and encouragement given by God (Rom 15:5-6)*

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*United through agreement (1 Cor 1:10)*

10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

## **Prepare by being humble**

### *Having a modest mind (from Barnes' Notes)*

This is one of the effects produced by true humility, and it naturally exists in every truly modest mind. We are sensible of our own defects, but we have not the same clear view of the defects of others. We see our own hearts; we are conscious of the great corruption there; we have painful evidence of the impurity of the motives which often actuate us-- of the evil thoughts and corrupt desires in our own souls; but we have not the same view of the errors, defects, and follies of others. We can see only their outward conduct; but, in our own case, we can look within. It is natural for those who have any just sense of the depravity of their own souls, charitably to hope that it is not so with others, and to believe that they have purer hearts. This will lead us to feel that they are worthy of more respect than we are. Hence, this is always the characteristic of modesty and humility-- graces which the gospel is eminently suited to produce. A truly pious man will be always, therefore, an humble man, and will wish that others should be preferred in office and honor to himself. Of course, this will not make him blind to the defects of others when they are manifested; but he will be himself retiring, modest, unambitious, unobtrusive. This rule of Christianity would strike a blow at all the ambition of the world. It would rebuke the love of office and would produce universal contentment in any low condition of life where the providence of God may have cast our lot.

### *Humility through grace (James 4:6)*

6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

### *Humility before God (James 4:10)*

10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

### *Humility that is not false (Col 2:17-19)*

17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. 18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. 19 He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

### *Humility that comes from godly wisdom (James 3:13)*

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

## **Prepare by serving others (from Barnes' Notes)**

It is the duty of every man to do this. No one is at liberty to live for himself or to disregard the wants of others. The object of this rule is to break up the narrow spirit of selfishness, and to produce a benevolent regard for the happiness of others. In respect to the rule we may observe: (1) We are not to be "busybodies" in the concerns of others. We are not to attempt to pry into their secret purposes. Every man has his own plans, and thoughts, and intentions, which no other one has a right to look into. Nothing is more odious than a meddler in the concerns of others. (2) we are not to obtrude our advice where it is not sought, or at unseasonable times and places, even if the advice is in itself good. No one likes to be interrupted to hear advice; and I have no right to require that he should suspend his business in order that I may give him counsel. (3) we are not to find fault with what pertains exclusively to him. We are to remember that there are some things which are his business, not ours; and we are to learn to "possess our souls in patience," if he does not give just as much as we think he ought to benevolent objects, or if he dresses in a manner not to please our taste, or if he indulges in things which do not accord exactly with our views. He may see reasons for his conduct which we do not; and it is possible that he may be right, and that, if we understood the whole case, we should think and act as he does. (4) we are not to be gossips about the concerns of others. (5) where Christian duty and kindness require us to look into the concerns of others, there should be the

utmost delicacy. Even children have their own secrets, and their own plans and amusements, on a small scale, quite as important to them as the greater games which we are playing in life; and they will feel the meddlesomeness of a busybody to be as odious to them as we should in our plans. A delicate parent, therefore, who has undoubtedly a right to know all about his children, will not rudely intrude into their privacies, or meddle with their concerns. So, when we visit the sick, while we show a tender sympathy for them, we should not be too particular in inquiring into their maladies or their feelings. So, when those with whom we sympathize have brought their calamities on themselves by their own fault, we should not ask too many questions about it. We should not too closely examine one who is made poor by intemperance, or who is in prison for crime. And so, when we go to sympathize with those who have been, by a reverse of circumstances, reduced from affluence to penury, we should not ask too many questions. We should let them tell their own story. If they voluntarily make us their confidants, and tell us all about their circumstances, it is well; but let us not drag out the circumstances, or wound their feelings by our impertinent inquiries, or our indiscreet sympathy in their affairs. There are always secrets which the sons and daughters of misfortune would wish to keep to themselves.

However, while these things are true, it is also true that the rule before us positively requires us to show an interest in the concerns of others; and it may be regarded as implying the following things: (1) We are to feel that the spiritual interests of everyone in the church is, in a certain sense, our own interest. The church is one. It is confederated together for a common object. Each one is entrusted with a portion of the honor of the whole, and the conduct of one member affects the character of all. We are, therefore, to promote, in every way possible, the welfare of every other member of the church. If they go astray, we are to admonish and entreat them; if they are in error, we are to instruct them; if they are in trouble, we are to aid them. Every member of the church has a claim on the sympathy of his brethren, and should be certain of always finding it when his circumstances are such as to demand it. (2) there are circumstances where it is proper to look with special interest on the temporal concerns of others. It is when the poor, the fatherless, and the afflicted must be sought out in order to be aided and relieved. They are too retiring and modest to press their situation on the attention of others, and they need that others should manifest a generous care in their welfare in order to relieve them. This is not improper interference in their concerns, nor will it be so regarded. (3) for a similar reason, we should seek the welfare of all others in a spiritual sense. We should seek to arouse the sinner, and lead him to the Saviour.

### ***Elements of Imitating Christ (2:5-11)***

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,  
6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,  
7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.  
8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.  
9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,  
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,  
11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### **Imitate Jesus who has the nature of God (Holiness)**

#### *Having God's glory (Heb 1:3)*

3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

#### *Being the image of God (Col 1:15)*

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

*God's Divine Nature is seen in His creations (Rom 1:20)*

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

*We can also participate in God's Divine Nature (2 Pet 1:4)*

4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

### **Imitate Jesus who is a servant (Servanthood)**

*God chose Jesus as His servant (Isa 42:1)*

1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

*Jesus, as a servant, brought the light to the Gentiles (Isa 49:6)*

6 he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

*God's Spirit was upon His servant Jesus (Matt 12:18)*

18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

*Jesus became a servant to confirm God's promises (Rom 15:8)*

8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs

### **Imitate Jesus who humbled Himself in obedience (Humble Obedience)**

*Humility to want God's Will above His own human will (Matt 26:39)*

39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

*To Jesus obedience was His nourishment (John 4:34)*

34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

*Jesus suffering also brought about His obedience (Heb 5:8-9)*

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

*Jesus came to do God's will (Heb 10:7-9)*

7 Then I said, 'Here I am-- it is written about me in the scroll-- I have come to do your will, O God.'" 8 First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). 9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second.

## **Imitate Jesus who has Divine Attributes (Authority)**

*Exalted by God to the highest place (from Barnes' Notes)*

As Mediator. Though he was thus humbled, and appeared in the form of a servant, he is now raised up to the throne of glory, and to universal dominion. This exaltation is spoken of the Redeemer as he was, sustaining a divine and a human nature. If there was, as has been supposed, some obscurity or withdrawing of the symbols of his glory <Phil 2:7>, when he became a man, then this refers to the restoration of that glory, and would seem to imply, also, that there was additional honor conferred on him. There was all the augmented glory resulting from the work which he had performed in redeeming man.

*Having a Name above all names (from Adam Clarke Commentary)*

If by his humiliation he has merited pardon and final salvation for the whole world, is it to be wondered that the human body, in which this fullness of the Godhead dwelt, and in which the punishment due to our sins was borne upon the tree, should be exalted above all human and all created beings? And this is the fact; for he hath given him a name, to (grk 3588) onoma (grk 3686), the name, which is above every name: to (grk 3588) is prefixed to onoma (grk 3686) here by ABC, 17, Origen, Dionysius Alexandrinus, Eusebius, Cyril, and Procopius. This makes it much more emphatic. According to <Eph. 1:20-21>, the man Christ Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. From which it appears that no creature of God is so far exalted and so glorious as the man Christ Jesus, human nature being in him dignified infinitely beyond the angelic nature; and that this nature has an authority and pre-eminence which no being, either in heaven or earth, enjoys. In a word, as man was in the beginning at the head of all the creatures of God, Jesus Christ, by assuming human nature, suffering and dying in it, has raised it to its pristine state. And this is probably what is here meant by this high exaltation of Christ, and giving him a name which is above every name. But if we refer to any particular epithet, then the name JESUS or Saviour must be that which is intended; as no being either in heaven or earth can possess this name as he who is the Redeemer of the world does, for he is the only Saviour; none has or could redeem us to God but he; and throughout eternity he will ever appear as the sole Saviour of the human race. Hence, before his birth, Gabriel stated that his name shall be called Jesus; giving for reason, he shall SAVE his people from their sins. The qualifications of the Saviour of the world were so extraordinary, the redeeming acts so stupendous, and the result of all so glorious both to God and man, that it is impossible to conceive a higher name or title than that of JESUS, or Saviour of the world.

*Absolute governor and Lord (from Adam Clarke Commentary)*

[And that every tongue should confess] That all those before mentioned should acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, or absolute governor, and thus glorify God the Father, who has exalted this human nature to this state of ineffable glory, in virtue of its passion, death, resurrection, and the atonement which it has made, by which so many attributes of the divine nature have become illustrated, the divine law magnified and made honourable, and an eternal glory provided for man. Others by things in heaven understand the holy angels; by things on earth, human beings generally; and by things under the earth, fallen spirits of every description. Perhaps the three expressions are designed to comprehend all beings of all kinds, all creatures; as it is usual with the Hebrews, and indeed with all ancient nations, to express, by things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth, all beings of all kinds; universal nature. See similar forms of speech, (Exo. 20:4; Deut. 4:17-18; Psa. 96:11); and (Ezek. 38:20). But intelligent beings seem to be those which are chiefly intended by the words of the apostle; for it appears that nothing less than absolute rule over angels, men, and Devils, can be designed in these extraordinary words, and by confessing him to be Lord we may understand that worship which all intelligent creatures are called to pay to God manifested in the flesh; for all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. And the worship thus offered is to the glory of God; so that far from being idolatrous, as some have rashly asserted, it is to the honour of the Divine Being. We may add, that the tongue which does not confess thus, is a tongue that dishonours the Almighty.

## **Results of Imitating Christ (2:12-13)**

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

### **Obedience**

#### *Obedience through faith (Rom 1:5)*

5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

#### *Obedience through Jesus (Rom 5:19)*

19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

#### *Obedience through offering myself as a slave to God (Rom 6:16)*

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-- whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

#### *Obedience through service (2 Cor 9:13)*

13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

#### *Obedience through being chosen (1 Pet 1:2)*

2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

### **Working out salvation**

#### *What it means (from Barnes' Notes)*

This important command was first addressed to Christians, but there is no reason why the same command should not be regarded as addressed to all-- for it is equally applicable to all. The duty of doing this is enjoined here; the reason for making the effort, or the encouragement for the effort, is stated in the next verse. In regard to the command here, it is natural to inquire why it is a duty; and what is necessary to be done in order to comply with it? On the first of these inquiries, it may be observed that it is a duty to make a personal effort to secure salvation, or to work out our salvation: (1) Because God commands it. There is no command more frequently repeated in the Scriptures, than the command to make to ourselves a new heart; to strive to enter in at the strait gate; to break off from sin, and to repent. (2) it is a duty because it is our own personal interest that is at stake. No one else has, or can have, as much interest in our salvation as we have. It is every person's duty to be as happy as possible here, and to be prepared for eternal happiness in the future world. No person has a right either to throw away his life or his soul. He has no more right to do the one than the other; and if it is a person's duty to endeavor to save his life when in danger of drowning, it is no less his duty to endeavor to save his soul when in danger of hell. (3) our earthly friends cannot save us. No effort of theirs can deliver us from eternal death without our own exertion. Great as may be their solicitude for us, and much as they may do, there is a point where their efforts must stop-- and that point is always short of our salvation, unless we are roused to seek salvation. They may pray, and weep, and plead, but they cannot save us. There is a work to be done on our own hearts which they cannot do. (4) it is a duty, because the salvation of the soul will not take care of itself without an effort on our part. There is no

more reason to suppose this than that health and life will take care of themselves without our own exertion. And yet many live as if they supposed that somehow all would yet be well; that the matter of salvation need not give them any concern, for that things will so arrange themselves that they will be saved. Why should they suppose this anymore in regard to religion than in regard to anything else? (5) it is a duty, because there is no reason to expect the divine interposition without our own effort. No such interposition is promised to any man, and why should he expect it? In the case of all who have been saved, they have made an effort-- and why should we expect that God will favor us more than he did them? "God helps them who help themselves;" and what reason has any man to suppose that he will interfere in his case and save him, if he will put forth no effort to "work out his own salvation?"

*How to do it (from Barnes' Notes)*

What does the command imply; or what is necessary to be done in order to comply with it? We may observe, that it does not mean:

- that we are to attempt to deserve salvation on the ground of merit. That is out of the question; for what can man do that shall be an equivalent for eternal happiness in heaven? Nor,
- does it mean that we are to endeavor to make atonement for past sins. That would be equally impossible, and it is, besides, unnecessary. That work has been done by the great Redeemer.

But it means:

- that we are to make an honest effort to be saved in the way which God has appointed;
- that we are to break off from our sins by true repentance;
- that we are to believe in the Saviour, and honestly to put our trust in him;
- that we are to give up all that we have to God;
- that we are to break away from all evil companions and evil plans of life; and
- that we are to resist all the allurements of the world, and all the temptations which may assail us that would lead us back from God, and are to persevere unto the end. The great difficulty in working out salvation is in forming a purpose to begin at once. When that purpose is formed, salvation is easy.

### **God working in us**

*God gives us the mind (ability) to do His will (2 Chr 30:12)*

12 Also in Judah the hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind to carry out what the king and his officials had ordered, following the word of the LORD.

*All our competence come from God (2 Cor 3:5)*

5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

*God equips us to do good (Heb 13:20-21)*

20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*God directs our paths (Prov 21:1-2)*

1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. 2 All a man's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart.

*We are taught by God (John 6:45)*

45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary***

We are enjoined to have the same mind, or attitude as the Lord Jesus. This is a command, yet it has the force of an invitation or exhortation. Having this mind-set is a matter of asking for and receiving it from the Lord. You cannot attain it by personal effort alone. It is given by God's grace. But you can, of course, resist and refuse it and hang on to your pride and selfishness. When Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you" (Phil. 2:5), he was exhorting us to adopt an attitude that imitates Jesus Himself. If we are truly Jesus' followers, we will adopt His essential attitude of humility. Pride is perhaps the devil's own original sin (cf. Isa. 14:12-14). It is as far from the mind of Christ as is east from west, night from day, and darkness from light. Moreover, we should not adopt just the humility of Jesus; in addition, we should adopt humility toward Jesus. Our humility must be based on the fact that Jesus is humble and that we are under His authority. We cannot really understand how the Lord Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, could in any sense humble Himself toward God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We do not know how Jesus, who is God, could humble Himself so as to be born as a man. He came to live as a human being, to work in the carpenter's trade, and to walk the dusty streets and roads of a humble Middle Eastern country. He humbled Himself to suffer; hunger and thirst, to preach the kingdom, and to be rejected by His own people. He came to die a horrible and excruciating death. The essential point is Christ's humility. Jesus did not regard His wonderful and beautiful existence in heaven as a privilege to be grasped and held on to by rights. This point is made for our instruction so that we do not hold on to our own self-importance but are willing to let go of it to humbly do the Father's will. What we are or can become as individuals is not important. What is important is serving and glorifying God!

The self-humbling of Christ (Phil. 2:7-8). Again, we can read the words, and they make sense; but it is hard if not impossible for us to grasp the depth of the self-emptying and self-humbling the Lord Jesus endured. Although He was the Creator and will be the Judge of all the earth, He took on the form of a man. This idea was so radical that the religious authorities of His day could only judge it as blasphemy. He became a servant of the very sinful men who would cause His torture and death. This self-humbling went all the way to the extreme of suffering crucifixion. Beyond all the taunting and abuse, both physical and verbal, the pure, sinless Son of God bore our sin and its defilement to pay the penalty for the sins of wayward men and women. He humbled Himself to receive the condemnation and the wrath of God that we deserve. He paid the just penalty for our sins. In response to Christ's self-humbling, God has exalted Him above everything. This means above the authority and virtue of every created being. The name of Jesus embodies all that He is as God and man. It includes God's reputation and honor as a promise-keeping God. The exaltation of Christ will result, at some time in the near future, in the bowing of every knee to Him. Every human being and all angels and demons will bow down to Jesus. Every voice will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, that He is God, that He is supreme above each and every being in the universe. This will bring glory to the Father. This is the reason God created all the universe and mankind. It is the culmination of the great eternal plan of God. It is the ultimate end and summary of all human history.

### ***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator***

1. We should not just follow Jesus' actions but also reflect His way of thinking (Phil 2:5)
2. God asks that we serve Him as He directs and not go our own way (vs. 6-7)
3. Christ's death was not a defeat but a victory for all Christians (vs. 8)
4. Humble submission to God's will often comes when we know His plans for us are eternal (vs. 9)
5. Christ's ultimate glorification validates any suffering we must endure (vs. 10)
6. Knowing someone will ultimately praise God makes worthwhile our struggle to win him (vs. 11)

### ***Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh***

(from his study "To Live Is Christ: A Study of the Book of Philippians")

According to Paul's words, our Lord's equality is with God the Father, not with man. He became one of us, but we are surely not equal with Him. He set aside His divine privileges as One equally divine with God the Father. Paul is not stressing the fact that our Lord subordinated His interests to ours, but that He subordinated His interests to the interests of the Father. And the intended goal in our text is not our salvation (though this is certainly a goal of His incarnation and atoning work at Calvary), but rather the glory of the Father (verse 11). The focus is not just on the elect, who are saved by the atoning work of our Lord at Calvary. Paul insists that "every knee shall bow...and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). In other words, the incarnation and atoning work of Christ not only produces praise from those who believe in Him for salvation, it also results in the praise of every living thing. What a word of warning this text has for those who have not yet trusted in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life! My friend, who is reading these words, do you think that if you reject Jesus Christ and His offer of salvation that is the end of it? You are wrong! All mankind, dead and alive, believing and unbelieving, will bow the knee to Jesus Christ as Lord. Those who die without trusting in Him will acknowledge Him as Lord, but not as Savior. The most terrifying thought I can imagine is being one who must bow the knee to Jesus Christ as His defeated enemy. The remedy is to acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior now; to trust Him for the forgiveness of your sins, and for entrance into heaven. Then, like Paul, you will no longer dread death, but welcome it. Then you can look forward to bowing before Him as your blessed Savior and Lord. I urge you not to leave this life without first trusting in Him. I urge you not to end this day without doing so. Our text was not primarily written as a warning to unbelievers; it was intended to be an incentive and an example for Christians. It was meant to teach us about humility, using our Lord Jesus Christ as the supreme example of humility. As I now understand this passage, I can see that I have misunderstood and misused it in the past. I have always wanted to think of our Lord as subordinating His interests to mine, and His happiness to mine. I have wanted to think of God as serving me, rather than of myself as His servant (remember Paul's words in 1:1). Now our Lord did come to serve, rather than to be served (Mark 10:45), but my whole focus and orientation in looking at this text has been wrong if I think only in terms of the benefits I have received from our Lord's incarnation, suffering, and death on the cross of Calvary. Paul's words remind us that our Lord put His Father's interests above His own, and the fruit of this is seen in His obedience to the Father's will, even unto death. The result is that our Lord is exalted, but the primary aim of our Lord was to bring glory to the Father. He did not subordinate His interests to the interests of the Father in order to further His own interests. He subordinated His interests to the Father's, so that the Father's best interests would be served. Our Lord's exaltation was a fringe benefit, as I view it, and not His primary goal.

Paul is contrasting the "mind of Christ" with the mindset of the world. Our Lord had all power and glory. He could have demanded man's homage and praise. Instead of seeking His own interests, our Lord humbly submitted His interests to those of the Father. Jesus submitted to the Father's will, left the glory of heaven, took on human flesh, and then endured suffering, even unto death. Our problem is that we tend to think of humility as the fate of the poor and the powerless, rather than the choice of the powerful and successful. Our Lord is the extreme example of humility in the context of power and glory. If He could manifest humility as the One who is equal with God the Father, then surely you and I can manifest humility when we are on equal terms with our fellow-believers. There is a great deal of difference between the humility of our Lord and our humility. Our Lord was humble when He had everything to be proud of. We are often proud when we have nothing to be proud of. Think of it for a moment. What is there they we can be proud about? Salvation, our spiritual gifts, and our ministries are all given to us by God. We cannot take credit for anything of spiritual value. As Paul put it, "For who concedes you any superiority? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Corinthians 4:7). We should be humble, because there is no basis for pride. Our Lord has every reason to be proud, and yet He manifests humility. Meekness is not weakness; it is power focused on the good of others, even at one's own expense. As I think of this text and the humility of our Lord, I am overwhelmed by Him. Who can fathom a God who is infinitely powerful and worthy of all praise, who would humble Himself to dwell among men, and who would even suffer and die, to bring glory to God the Father, and bring salvation to sinful men like us? Hallelujah, what a Savior!

***Additional Thoughts on the Mind of Christ from the Lifeway Course "The Mind of Christ"  
by T.W. Hunt and Claude King (1994, LifeWay Press)***

**Six Characteristics of The Christlike Mind**

1. Alive  
"The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6)
2. Single-Minded  
"I am afraid, lest . . . your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ"  
(2 Cor. 11:3)
3. Lowly  
"In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3)
4. Pure  
"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even  
their, mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:13)
5. Responsive  
"He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:43)
6. Peaceful  
"The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6)

**Three Stages In Developing The Mind Of Christ**

- 1. Beginning: The Will Principle** - *Set your* mind on things above. (Col 3:2)
- 2. Growing: The River Principle** - Allow God to *renew* your mind. (Rom 12:2)
- 3. Qualified: The Readiness Principle** - *Gird up* your mind for action. (1 Peter 1:13)