

Developing The Mind Of Christ

D. W. Bailey

Introduction:

As you read through the New Testament scriptures, the importance of belief in Jesus Christ in the process of gaining salvation from sins is absolutely undeniable.

[Mention:

- John 1:12 “He gave the right to become children of God...who believe in His name”
- John 20:30-31

In this passage, the apostle John tells us that the Bible, and specifically the gospels, were written down so that those who take the time to read and understand the word of God might see Jesus Christ, the amazing life He lived and the wonderful miracles He did, and come to have faith that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and upon that belief we can go on to gain salvation in His name.

However, the New Testament also teaches that to have true faith and to be a true disciple of Christ means much more than just believing in who He is and in the life that He lived – this is evident even in the same book, **John 12:26**, where Jesus said, “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him my Father will honor.” To be disciples of Jesus Christ and to be honored for that servitude, we must follow Him. We must strive to be imitators of Jesus, following in the footsteps He left before us.

This principle is stated in another way in **Luke 6:40** – Jesus: “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.” Following Jesus to be a true servant of the Christ means that we must strive to become like Jesus. In all aspects of our lives, in all situations that we face, we must attempt to imitate and become like our Master.

There are many characteristics of Jesus’ life that we can read of in Scripture and seek to imitate – His patience, forgiveness, love, pure speech, zeal for teaching – but I would like to focus our minds this morning on **one particular way** in which we should imitate Jesus Christ, discussed in Paul’s the letter to the Philippians.

I. Let This Mind Be In You

Philippians 2:5 reads, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (NKJV).

→ Simply stated in the NIV – “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”

What does it mean to have the attitude/mind of Christ?

Illustration: Someone in a grumpy mood, perhaps having a tedious, frustrating day on the job, so they grumble and complain. An observer might remark, “That guy needs an attitude adjustment.”

- We know what that means: Need a better, more objective outlook/viewpoint
- That’s what an attitude is: an outlook, a frame of mind, how we look at life and what’s going on around us
- And Paul, by inspiration of the H.S. teaches that we should adopt the attitude of Christ

- We must learn to think like our Master, imitating His attitude and outlook
- We need to look at who we are and how we live and our priorities and our responsibilities to God in the same way that Christ looked at those things

There are many examples and illustrations in the New Testament that would aid us in defining and imitating the mind and attitude of Christ, but this morning I'd like for us to open our Bibles together and consider just two aspects of the attitude of Christ: 1) He was humbly submissive to God, and 2) He loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

II. Jesus' Attitude Toward God Was Humble Submission

A. Even early in life, Jesus displayed an attitude of submission and obedience to His authorities – **Luke 2:51-52**

- Why was He submissive to His parents? Because it's what God wanted Him to do
- So even though He was deity, and somehow conscious of it, He was subject to...

B. Jesus lived out His entire life with this outlook

- **John 6:38** His number one priority and goal in life was to always do God's will above and beyond His own
- This was His outlook on life; this is what He was here to do
- And He lived that goal → John 8:29 "I always do those things that please..."
- No matter where He was, no matter what the situation, no matter what outside forces were pressuring Him to do otherwise, Jesus did what pleased God!
- AND, furthermore, Jesus didn't submit in obedience grudgingly with murmuring and complaining – we do that sometimes, on the job, to our parents, etc. –

C. Jesus Submitted Humbly

- **Matthew 26:39** Three times He prayed in the garden with this humility!
- His attitude was humble, giving priority to God's will above His own

1. And how did Jesus feel about death on the cross?

- **Hebrews 12:2** "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
 - Sometimes in popular hymns we take too much license in beautifying the cross as though it were a symbol of Christ's love
 - When Jesus Christ looked at the cross He didn't wondrous beauty: He saw it as something that had to be endured, and He despised the shame of it

2. That being the way that Jesus viewed death on the cross, why did He do it?

- Because He ALWAYS humbly served God's will!
- Sometimes we focus so much on Christ's death, the things that He suffered that we don't stop to consider that He didn't have to sacrifice Himself for us
 - Matt. 4:8-10 The devil tempted Him with all the kingdoms of the earth -- He could have chosen glory, to forsake God's plan of redemption
 - Matt. 26:52-53 He could've said, "Forget it!" and destroyed mankind

– But He didn't – He humbly did the will of God above His own will

3. What did this humble submission lead to? Philippians 2:5-11

- How did Christ get to this exalted position?
- Because He left the glory of heaven, became a mortal man, suffered the temptations and sufferings of human life, and died a cruel, torturous death on the cross in order to fulfill the will of God!

To adopt the mind of Christ, we must learn this level of submission – to swallow our pride and stubborn will and strive to do only what God commands. As Jesus did in facing the cross of Calvary, we must constantly practice putting God's will in front of our own, making our number one attitude and goal in every decision and situation we face to do the will of God – and not grudgingly! Not in an attitude of stubbornness, dragging our feet and complaining about not getting to do things our way, but with humility accepting the divine will of the Father as wise and just.

TRANSITION:

Hebrews 1:8-9 also explain why Jesus Christ is now enthroned in heaven at the right hand of God [read] → Jesus was glorified by God, not just because of His attitude of humble submission, but because He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. And that's the second attitude of Christ that we as His disciples must imitate:

III. Jesus Loved What Is Right And Hated What Is Wrong

A. When Tempted in Matthew 4

Even as we see in Matthew 4, Christ overcame temptation because He hated what God condemns and loved what God declares to be good.

- The devil tempted Him, and what did He do? He quoted the word of God
- “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds...”
- “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”
- “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve!””
- He showed Satan that his temptations had no power, because Jesus loved what's right – what's right in God's eyes – and He hated what's wrong.

B. At His Baptism – Matthew 3:13-15

- Seemed right to John (and might seem right to us, too) that he should be baptized by Jesus, instead of the other way around
- But Jesus said no – He was going to fulfill the righteousness of God

C. At The Defiled Temple – **John 2:13-17**

- Jesus Christ loved the will of God, and He wanted what belonged to God to be treated in the right way

And Jesus showed just how much He loved the truth by suffering for it, preaching the truth even though it brought the hatred and ridicule of His fellow men:

D. Jesus Suffered For The Truth

- **John 15:18-20,25** There is a definite temptation implied in these statements of Jesus: The devil tries to trap us by making us want to save face with other people – he wants us to desire friends above all else, to strive to be well thought of, to escape any and every form of rejection or persecution from the people around us
- Jesus didn't give in to this temptation – even though people hated Him, even though people lied about Him, even though people betrayed Him, even though people tortured Him and killed Him, He immovably loved right and hated what was wrong

Jesus Christ lived with an attitude of humble submission to God. He humbly obeyed God's every command with no grumbling or complaining because He molded His very will to love right and hate wrong.

TRANSITION: With all these things in mind, we must now look at ourselves:

- How do we view our lives? What are our goals and our priorities?
- What is our attitude about serving God?
- What is our attitude toward the unrighteous ways of the world?

We should read these verses about the Christ, and others like them, and realize that to be honored by God as faithful servants:

V. We Must Become Humble In Submission To God

A. John 10:1-6,27

- Jesus speaks metaphorically of Himself as the True Shepherd and His disciples, sheep
- We should not have an exalted view of ourselves, but should humbly follow in Christ's steps
- We don't lead ourselves – we don't have the ability, the omniscient knowledge and infallible wisdom
- We don't serve God saying, "I think we should do this and this....," or, "I judge this or that to be OK in my sight..."
- But we should follow like sheep – Does that offend you? I would rather be compared to a courageous, independent animal, like a lion or a grizzly bear, sounds good to me (e.g. "We don't have to be *just* sheep!")
- However, Christ doesn't want us to be courageously independent, He wants us to hear His voice and follow His paths

In fact, it seems evident from Scripture that we have much more reason to humbly obey in all things than even did Christ. Consider:

B. James 4:6-10

Do I come before the presence of God as an equal?

Should I come to God puffed up in my own abilities, demanding that I will worship in whatever way seems best to me?

Should I come to God demanding that He must accept me as I am because I'm going to live in whatever way pleases me the most?

Certainly not! If Jesus, who was equal in divinity to God Himself, submitted to the Father in humility, even though it stripped Him of glory and dignity and led Him to shame and death, how much more so should we, weak sinners, follow Christ in humble submission, no matter what He commands, no matter what we think is best or what paths we have to forsake for His name.

If we will constantly strive to submit to the will of God, it will have a further affect on our outlook toward this life: it will mold our wills so that we'll love what's right and hate what's wrong, just as Jesus did.

VI. We Must Love Right and Hate Wrong

Galatians 1:3-4 and Ephesians 5:15-16, 6:10-13

- We face the same trials as all Christians who ever lived: maybe not torture and death (Satan switched to more subtle means for now), but we are surrounded by evil
- The apostles knew this, thus they pleaded with the Christians of the 1st Century:

I Thessalonians 5:21f “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”

Romans 12:21 “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

I Corinthians 15:33 “Do not be deceived: evil company corrupts good habits.”

And yet still today, many Christians fall into the trap of not seeing sin as the terrible thing that it really is, the greatest tragedy to plague mankind:

- Watching and listening to things full of profanity/vulgarity: “every show is like that”
- Wearing immodest clothing (men and women): “you can't find modest shorts/dresses”
- Refusing to confront brethren living in sin because it's “sadly inevitable”

DO NOT BE DECEIVED! We all together must realize that we are at war with sin! That sin is the reason for all the death, destruction, and suffering that we see in the world! That sin is the reason Jesus Christ had to hang bleeding on the cross until He hadn't the strength to draw one more breath! We cannot afford to look at sin as though it's normal and unavoidable, but we must learn to flee from, hating the very appearance of evil, always striving to practice righteousness – **I Timothy 6:11-12**

There are a lot of other attitudes possessed by Jesus Christ that we should imitate: compassion for the lost, thankfulness, self control, confidence in God's faithfulness, forgiveness, contentment and trust in God, zeal for God's word, patience, generosity, and the list goes on.

But this is the bottom line: Christianity is NOT a belief or a sophisticated philosophy. To be A Christians means changing your lifestyle to be like Christ—and no matter how firmly we believe in Him, if our belief and Bible knowledge does not motivate us to change the way we live before the world, then we are not Christ's disciples and our religion is useless.

We are servants of God – Christ said to be His servants, we must follow Him. A huge part of imitating Christ, if not the first step in becoming like our Master, is developing the attitude of Christ. We must learn to adopt His outlook on life, striving to humbly submit to God, and to love what God calls right and hate what God calls wrong.

Developing The Mind Of Christ – II

D. W. Bailey

Introduction:

In the last lesson, we studied developing the mind of Christ, specifically in our service toward God. We began that lesson with **Luke 6:40** (“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher”) and **Philippians 2:5** (“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”), and we made two points: in serving God we must be 1) humbly submissive, and 2) we must learn to love righteousness and hate all forms of wickedness.

This morning, I’d like for us to study further in how we might develop the attitude of Christ – that is His outlook, viewpoint, frame of mind as He demonstrated while on earth – and specifically that attitude of Christ toward His fellow man. How can we imitate the mind of Christ in dealing with the people around us every day, both the unbelievers and the saved?

I. Jesus Felt Compassion For The Lost

We see this compassion in **Matthew 9:35-38**

- Almost mournfully, Christ was moved with compassion because there were so many lost souls and yet so few godly workers to teach them
- It may be bold, but I’d say today the situation is only worse
- Christ was moved with compassion for the lost, and He told His disciples to pray
 - Pray that God would, literally, “thrust out” workers into the harvest field

We see this compassion in **Luke 9:51-56**

- Christ had the authority and power to destroy these people, but instead He was compassionate
- He came to save the lost, not to destroy them
- **I Timothy 2:4 & II Peter 3:9** God wants the lost to come to repentance and be saved, He doesn’t *want* to destroy anyone! And the same was Jesus’ attitude while He was on this earth!

As children of God and followers of Christ, we must learn to feel this compassion for the lost souls of the world!

- We cannot afford to walk through life with a lackadaisical, nonchalant attitude toward unbelievers, not caring whether they live or die, repent or perish!
- Think how many New Testament commands have no meaning at all if we have an attitude of indifference toward the lost souls of the world!
 - II Corinthians 5:9-11; II Timothy 2:24-26 James 5:19-20
 - How could we possibly read such commands and think, “Who cares?”
 - We cannot be faithful followers of Christ w/o compassion that moves us to pray for the lost and seek to teach them about Jesus!

II. Jesus Felt Compassion For His Brethren

For the purpose of this example, I’m using “brethren” to denote the people who were faithfully serving God when Jesus walked this earth – Jesus felt compassion for these

people: He felt their pain, He shared their burdens, He wept with those who wept.

Where is this compassion more evident than at the tomb of Lazarus in John 11?

- Jesus knew that He would raise Lazarus, **vs. 4, 11, 14f, 23**
- And yet, when Jesus gets to the tomb, He weeps with Lazarus' loved ones, **vs. 31-37**
- Jesus wept, not because He had no hope, not because *He* was in despair, but He wept at the despair and sorrow and mourning of Lazarus' sister and friends!

In the inspired pages of the New Testament, all Christians are commanded to have this same kind of compassion for all children of God – compassion which enables us to place ourselves in the shoes of our brethren, to share their emotions, their struggles, their woes, and thus help them bear the burden of trials.

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

- Each part of this command comes with its share of difficulties
- Rejoicing with those who rejoice is sometimes hindered by pride, envy, covetousness
- But weeping with those who weep is sometimes stifled by pride, indifference, and lack of compassion
 - It's a temptation to look at the struggles of others as if they cannot possibly compare to the magnitude of my own struggles, and thus feel no pity
 - It's sometimes a temptation to view the trials of our brethren as insignificant and easy, as if they shouldn't be struggling with those issues at all
 - It's a danger to simply refuse to care about the struggles of our brethren because, after all, we all have our own trials so who has time to bother with other people's business?

We must learn to develop compassion for the struggles of our brethren, as Jesus had. Each of us has unique weaknesses and problems, and though you may not fully understand my trials, and I may not fully understand yours, we must learn to put ourselves in each others shoes, we must learn to share the load – as Paul states in **Galatians 6:2**, “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

III. Jesus Exalted The Interests Of Others

This fact is the very basis for Paul's argument in Philippians 2! [Read **Phil. 2:1-8**]

- Jesus recognized the needs of others, and made it His goal to first serve God, and secondly serve others
- Consider the extent to which He went to meet the needs of mankind!
“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (utilized, NASU footnote), but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”
- He left the glory of heaven for rejection, torture, and death in a mortal body
 - And look who He did it for: sinners, spiritual enemies of God!
 - So that, through His sacrifice, we might become rich (**II Corinthians 8:9**)

And with that example in mind, the apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said “let this mind be in you”! This doesn't mean serve the people who you like or the people you approve of;

it doesn't mean serve others when it's convenient and fits nicely into your busy schedule – this command means developing the mind of Christ to the point that we're willing to drop everything, to even suffer loss, in order to help others who need you, whoever they may be!

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition of conceit...” – Christians are promised such precious rewards in heaven, but they come at a cost! We must store up for ourselves treasures in heaven by devoting our lives to serving, not ourselves and our own interests constantly day by day, but God and our fellow man.

IV. Jesus Taught And Practiced Forgiveness

A. Taught Forgiveness, Even Of Enemies

- **Matthew 18:21-22** – as many times as your brother seeks forgiveness, forgive!
- **Matthew 5:43-45a** Is there not an implication of forgiveness in this command to love?

These are easy commands to understand, but difficult to follow – however, Jesus didn't live with the attitude “do as I say, not as I do”! He lived out these principles in His mortal life:

B. Practiced Forgiveness, Even Toward His Murderers

- **Luke 23:34** Even prayed that God the Father would forgive His accusers & murderers
- **John 21:15-17** Even after he vehemently denied Jesus three times, Jesus welcomed Peter back with the rest of the apostles, teaching him and commissioning him to carry the gospel to the world
 - His prompting of Peter's repentance was so gentle! (Galatians 6:2)
 - His questions, which so resembled Peter's own boasting in **Matthew 26:33** (“Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.”), showed His own tender love and affection toward Peter
 - Christ did not receive His apostles back in a haughty, oppressive, grudging way, but welcomed them back into His arms tenderly with instruction (remember **Isaiah 40:11**)

In imitating the mind of Christ, we must learn to be forgiving of those who harm us, even our worst enemies, even our closest brethren, no matter who trespasses against us.

- Being forgiven ourselves by God hinges upon our forgiveness! **Matthew 6:14**
- Forgiveness is part of love - **I Corinthians 13:5** NIV “love keeps no record of wrongs”
- Consider Esau's example in **Genesis 33:1-4** (remember **Genesis 27:41**)

Too many Christians forgive a brother or sister for harming them, and yet those relationships remain tense and cold and unloving ever after, never are they able to work together as they once did – we need to be the kind of people who forgive and put the past behind us, who are so overjoyed with having a brother or sister in Christ restored to faithfulness that we can't even see their past trespasses anymore.

Conclusion: These aspects of the mind of Christ are difficult to imitate – I have so much work to do! Let us continually petition God to help us, and help each other to grow into the perfect image of Jesus Christ!