

Sermon Notes: The Mind of Christ in the Economy of God

Text: Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

⁶ *Though he was God,
he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.*

⁷ *Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;
he took the humble position of a slave
and was born as a human being.*

When he appeared in human form,

⁸ *he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross.*

⁹ *Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor
and gave him the name above all other names,*

¹⁰ *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

¹¹ *and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

Central Theme: Paul uses the "Christ Hymn" (verses 6-11) as a supreme illustration of the attitude believers should have toward one another: self-emptying humility leads to God's exaltation, a pattern that runs counter to the world's ways.

Big Idea: True greatness in God's Kingdom is found not through self-promotion and grasping for power, but through humble service and obedience, just as perfectly demonstrated by Jesus Christ.

Matthew 23:11-12 - *The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.*

I. Have the Mind of Christ (v. 5)

- **"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus":** This is not just a suggestion for individual piety but a command for the *community* to foster unity and love by adopting a specific mindset.
 - **Related References:**
 - **Philippians 2:1-4:** The immediate context, calling for unity and putting others' interests first [1].

- **Romans 12:2:** "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" – highlights the necessity of a renewed mindset.
- **Ephesians 4:22-24:** "Put off your old self... and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God" – speaks to changing our fundamental disposition.
- **The World's "Script" vs. The Kingdom's "Script":** The world's way is "me first," seeking power and status. The Kingdom's way whispers, "others first," prioritizing relationships and service over personal gain.
- **Attitude Determines Action:** Our inner disposition (mind, attitude, worldview) shapes our outward behavior. To live like Christ, we must first think like Christ.

II. Jesus Humbles Himself (vv. 6-8)

Paul presents a two-part movement: Christ's humbling of himself, followed by God's exalting of him.

- **He Existed in the Form of God (v. 6):** Jesus is, in his very nature, God. He did not need to prove this or cling to his divine privileges.
 - **Related References:**
 - **John 1:1:** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
 - **Colossians 1:15-20:** "[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."
 - **Hebrews 1:1-4:** "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature".
 - **John 8:57-58** - "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"
⁵⁸ "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"
- **He Did Not Grasp for Equality (v. 6b):** Unlike Adam, who grasped for equality with God (**Genesis 3:5** "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."), Jesus, who was God, willingly set aside the *advantage* of his status for the sake of others.
 - **Jesus is the 2nd Adam** (did what Adam could not do)
 - **I Corinthians 15:21-22** - For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.
- **He Emptied Himself (Kenosis) (v. 7):** This means He "poured Himself out," taking the very nature of a servant (or slave) and being born in human likeness. He did not cease to be God, but added humanity and set aside the independent exercise of His divine attributes.
 - **Related References:**
 - **2 Corinthians 8:9:** "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."
 - **Luke 22:27:** Jesus' own words, "For who is the greater, one who recline at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves."
- **He Humbled Himself Further (v. 8):** His obedience was not just to become a man, but to be obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. The cross was the most shameful and excruciating form of execution, a sign of total degradation in the Roman world, highlighting the depth of His sacrifice.

- **Related References:**
- **Matthew 20:28:** The Son of Man came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- **Hebrews 12:2:** Jesus "endured the cross, despising the shame".
- **Isaiah 53:3-5:** Prophetic description of the Suffering Servant, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief".

III. God's Response (vv. 9-11)

Because of Christ's radical obedience, God responded with a dramatic reversal.

- **God Highly Exalted Him (v. 9a):** God lifted Jesus up to the highest place, a sign that humility is the true path to greatness in God's economy.
 - **Related References:**
 - **Acts 2:32-33:** "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God..."
 - **Ephesians 1:20-22:** God seated Christ "at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion".
 - **1 Peter 5:6:** "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you".
 - **Gave Him the Name Above Every Name (v. 9b):** This points to the divine title of "Lord" (Greek *Kyrios*, often used in the Old Testament for Yahweh).
 - **Every Knee Shall Bow and Every Tongue Confess (vv. 10-11):** A day is coming when all creation will recognize the absolute sovereignty of Jesus Christ as Lord.
 - **Old Testament Background (Isaiah 45:22-24):** Paul is quoting this verse directly, applying to Jesus what Isaiah said of Yahweh, confirming Jesus' divine status [1].
 - **Isaiah 45:22-24** - "Turn to me and be saved,
 all you ends of the earth;
 for I am God, and there is no other.
²³By myself I have sworn,
 my mouth has uttered in all integrity
 a word that will not be revoked:
 Before me every knee will bow;
 by me every tongue will swear.
²⁴They will say of me, 'In the Lord alone
 are deliverance and strength.'"
 - **Related References:**
 - **Romans 14:11:** Paul uses the same Isaiah quote to speak of judgment where all will acknowledge Christ's Lordship.
 - **Revelation 5:13:** A picture of all creation worshipping Christ.
 - **To the Glory of God the Father (v. 11b):** Christ's Lordship ultimately brings glory back to God the Father, demonstrating the relational, other-centered nature of the Trinity.
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Application Points

- **Check Your Mindset:** Do you live by the world's script of self-promotion or the Kingdom's script of self-giving love?
- **Embrace Humility in Relationships:** True Christian unity requires putting others' interests above our own, as Jesus did.
- **Release Your "Rights":** We often cling tightly to our rights, status, and privileges. The mind of Christ calls us to willingly surrender these for the good of others.
- **Trust the Paradox:** The Christian life follows the "down to go up" pattern. When we humble ourselves, God promises to lift us up in His time (**James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6**).