

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 54

Philippians 2 - Having the Mind of Christ

INTRODUCTION: The church at Philippi was the model church. In the letter that Paul wrote to them, the word “sin” is not found one time. The “flesh” is mentioned only once. There seems to have been no problem in the church except one little misunderstanding of some kind between two good women—Euodias and Syntyche. Concerning them, the Apostle wrote in Philippians 4:2, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” The church was obviously sound in doctrine, as nothing is mentioned concerning false doctrine. The church was, in general, in one accord because there was nothing in the church that the Apostle was writing to set right. Because of this, he could deal with growth in grace and deeper things of the Lord and of the Christian life. The hub of this is found in chapter 2 where our Lord mentions the condition that the mind of a Christian should have. This is found in verse 5, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” In describing the mind of Christ and the kind of mind that we ought to have, there are seven steps downward that Christ took in order that He might be what He ought to be and do what He ought to do. Bearing in mind that we are to have the same mind, then we, of course, are to take these seven steps downward. Let us notice them.

I. HE DID NOT GRASP AFTER FAME AND POSITION. Read Philippians 2:6, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” The word “robbery” also means “grasp after.” In other words, He did not grasp after His own position or status. We could say, “He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.” In other words, He was not thinking of Himself; He was thinking of others. He was willing to step down for others. We are to have this same mind. In other words, we are not to exalt ourselves; rather, we are to lose ourselves in the service of others.

II. HE "MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION." See Philippians 2:7a. Notice, He is stepping down again, like going down on a ladder or going down the steps. The second step is that He made Himself of no reputation. He truly “emptied Himself of reputation.” We are all so concerned about our reputation. The important thing is to be concerned about our character. Character is what we are; reputation is what people think we are. Jesus was willing to empty Himself or pour Himself out of reputation. We are to have that same mind.

III. HE BECAME A SERVANT. Notice the words in Philippians 2:7b, “and took upon him the form of a servant.” Again and again in the Bible we find the greatness of being a servant. Jesus said that the servant is greatest of all. The writers of the Bible loved to speak of themselves as servants. We want the big title, but God says the biggest title is to be a servant. This is just another step that our Lord took downward on the ladder.

IV. HE WAS "MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN." Notice Philippians 2:7c. What humiliation this must have been, yet it was all done for us! Here was the very Son of

God, Who had from eternity known fellowship with the Father. Angels were His servants. He was the very God of gods, yet He was willing to become a man. This means that He was willing to weep like men, to suffer like men, to work like men, to hunger like men, to tire like men, to want like men, to need like men. In other words, He was willing in all points to be tempted and to suffer as we. Remember, He was admonishing us to have the same mind that He had. This means that we are to bear the burdens of others, suffer with them, cry with them, feel with them, have compassion with them. This is necessary if we have the mind of Christ.

V. "HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF." See Philippians 2:8a. Notice the steps down. He was equal with God. He stepped down in that He did not grasp after the honor. He stepped down from that great reputation to having no reputation. Then He stepped down to the willingness to be a servant. Then He stepped down farther than that. He is not going to serve us as God serving man, but as man serving man. Now He takes another step downward in that He humbles Himself. Not only is He going to be a servant and a man, but He is going to humble Himself as a man. Once again we are to have this same mind. We are to humble ourselves. The word "humble" does not mean "to think of one's self as being little," but rather, it means, "not to think of one's self at all." He forgot His own appetites, His own needs, His own desires. He did not even think of Himself; He simply thought of others. May God give us a like mind.

VI. HE "BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH." Notice Philippians 2:8b, "and became obedient unto death." He continued stepping down. He now steps down all the way to being obedient unto death. Here is the One Who is the Life, the One Who calls Himself the Resurrection and the Life. Here is the Creator, the source of all life, being willing to die for us! Let us return to the original thought now. Our mind is to be like His. This means that we are to be willing to die for others.

VII. HE WAS WILLING TO DIE ON THE CROSS. Notice the words in Philippians 2:8c, "even the death of the cross." This is the last step downward for Him. He started off equal with God. He gave that up and was willing to become a servant and even become a man! He was willing to humble Himself, and then He was willing to die; but more than that, He was willing to die the worst death of all—the death of the cross, the death of a criminal. For us He was willing to die the death of a criminal. He had to do this in order that we might be saved, for He took upon Himself our sins and paid the penalty for us and our sins on Calvary!

CONCLUSION: Philippians 2:9 starts with the word, "Wherefore." This means because of Jesus' willingness to take these seven steps down, even to the pit of Hell itself, God highly exalted Him. What it means is that after all of the aforementioned seven steps downward, in one great step upward, God raised Him as high as He was in the first place. He went down slowly and gradually, but because He did, God with one big step raised Him to complete exaltation. Notice in verse 9 that God gave Him a name. God does this to us if we are willing not to have a name. Notice in verse 10 that every knee should bow before Him. God will give us authority and power if we are willing to lose ourselves. In verse 11 we find "that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is

Lord.” God will give us the reputation and fame He wants us to have if we will not exalt ourselves. May we step down as He stepped down and wait on Him to give us the name and the reputation that He wants us to have.