

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

MORE ABOUT JESUS LESSONS “The Mind of Christ”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). One of the important principles that we find in Paul’s writings is that we must follow “the mind of Christ,” and that we must possess Jesus’ teachings and lifestyle in our own lives. This is something that the apostle Peter taught as well, for he said in 1 Peter 2:21 that we are to “follow in the footsteps of Jesus.” Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me as I also imitate Christ.” What does it really mean to have “the mind of Christ”? We hear a lot about it, and we talk a lot about it. But what does it actually mean in the context of Philippians 2?

To help us understand this, it would be beneficial for us to think about the city of Philippi and the church to which Paul was writing. The city of Philippi was a city that would rather make a profit on a woman who was possessed by a demon than to see the demon cast out of her. Do you remember the story found in Acts 16? The woman moved around the city with Paul and Silas, claiming that they were servants of the Most High God. Paul was annoyed that the demon-possessed woman was doing this because he did not want Satan advertising the Gospel, and thus he cast out the demon. Were the people glad that she no longer had a demon? Absolutely not! This woman was making some of the people a great profit. As a result of what Paul and Silas did, they were cast into prison and were beaten. So, it was a very selfish city where people were more concerned about making a profit than about seeing a demon cast out of a woman.

The church in Philippi was a place where some were preaching the Gospel for selfish motives. In Philippians 1:15-16, Paul said that some were preaching from pretense. He, of course, was just happy to be preaching the Gospel at all. But some were preaching in order to do harm to Paul. They would go out and say, “We have a sermon just like the apostle Paul, and we want you to gather around and hear it.” When people heard it, who do you think they persecuted? They persecuted Paul. Some therefore had selfish motives for preaching the Gospel. It was a congregation where complaining and grumbling was evidently taking place. Paul said in Philippians 2:14-15 that they needed to “do all things without complaining and grumbling.” This was a church where there were even two women—Euodia and Syntyche—who were having some problems, some strife, and some division. Paul said, “I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord” (Phil. 4:2). Evidently these two women had some kind of strife and division between them (which, if you got right down to the heart and core of it, was probably due to selfishness). If there is one thing that the Bible clearly teaches, it is that we, as God’s people, ought not to have a selfish attitude. We ought to give preference to one another (Rom. 12:10; 15:2-3). We ought to be a people who love our neighbors as ourselves (Mk. 12:31). We ought to be the type of people who ought to want to do unto others as we would have them do unto us (Mt. 7:12). Thus, the context of Paul writing to the Christians in Philippi about selfishness and “having the mind of Christ” can be seen from the city and various problems that were occurring within the congregation.

But what does it really mean to possess the selfless mind of Jesus? “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). It means that Jesus was selfless in the sense that He is seen as the “Selfless Surgeon” (the One Who is seen as “the Great Physician”) Who came to give His life as a sacrifice for all mankind. Jesus is the Surgeon Who died for His patients. Have you ever known a doctor who was willing to die in place of his patients? Jesus did. He was such a Selfless Surgeon and a Selfless Sacrifice that He gave His life for His own patients. That is what it really means to be selfless. While we may never be able to take the sins of others into our own lives today, we can remove the stain of sin with the Lord’s Gospel. That is what helps people overcome sin. Hebrews 4:12 says that “the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” In Ephesians 6:17, the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. James said in James 5:19-20, “If anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.” By being the “Selfless Surgeon” and by giving His life for His patients and friends, Jesus was truly selfless. We can be the same today as we tell others about the Gospel. Jesus, as the “Selfless Sacrifice,” shows us what it really means to have a mind that is not focused on self, but on others. Hebrews 9 illustrates this idea for us. In verse 26 we are told that Jesus died for all mankind. He tasted of death for all men. We know that it is appointed unto man once to die (Heb. 9:27), but Jesus tasted of that death for all mankind. Hebrews 10:12 says, “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.” Hebrews 9:22 teaches us that we must give our lives to God. “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.” Jesus shed His blood for us, and we must be willing to sacrifice ourselves to the Cause of God.

There are some things in the New Testament that we as Christians are told to sacrifice for the Cause of Christ. Our own selves would be the first. In Romans 12:1, Paul said, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” Our lives ought to be a sacrifice to God. Paul knew this, for he said, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). We must be willing to sacrifice financially for the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, we are told to give on the first day of every week as we have been prospered. We are told to give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6-8). The Bible teaches us in Luke 6:38, “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom.” We see that we are to sacrifice for God so that we can live a faithful Christian life. We must make it our goal in life to help bring others to Jesus and to be servants. As Christians, there are certain things that we must sacrifice in this life. But notice what Philippians 2:6-7 states. Not only was Jesus selfless, but He also was willing to empty Himself on our behalf. Today, we, too, must be willing to empty ourselves. In Philippians 2:6-7, Paul said of Christ, “who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” The phrase, “who, being in the form of God,” describes Jesus. He had it all. He was in the very form of God, yet He gave that up so that we could have the salvation that He was bringing down to men.

The idea that Jesus gave up certain things does not mean that Jesus no longer had the privileges and abilities of Deity, but instead it means that He put Himself under the direction of the Father. He fully submitted Himself to God’s will. He gave up His identity—in the sense that He was no longer “only God,” but human as well. Colossians 2:9 says, con-

cerning Christ, that “in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” In Genesis 1:26, God said, “Let **us** make man in Our image...” Jesus was God, yet He gave up part of that. He gave up some of His equality with God so that He could come to this Earth and die. In John 10:30, Jesus said, “I and the Father are One,” yet He emptied Himself. He made Himself to be of no reputation, taking upon Himself the form of a servant. He came in the likeness of men. Jesus emptied Himself of many different things. He emptied Himself of the heavenly home that had always been His. Think of 2 Corinthians 8:9—“You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” We often sing the song, “Out of the ivory palaces....” Jesus truly did leave the halls of Heaven—with all the beauty, splendor, and grandeur that you can imagine—to come to Earth to live and die as a Man. Jesus took upon Himself the form of a human body, and the Creator became part of the creation in order to die for us. He never had many of the physical amenities of which we read in the Bible. He did not even have a place to call His own. He was often tired and hungry. He gave up everything so that we could have the hope of Heaven. This, then, teaches us that, just like Jesus, we must be willing to empty ourselves of certain things. We must empty ourselves of pride, arrogance, and anything else that might keep us from doing the will of God. Some people become prideful because of their status in life—whether they be a doctor or a professor. We need not be like that, and want things that affect our ability to empty ourselves and truly follow the will of God. Jesus taught us in Matthew 5:5 that it is the meek who are going to inherit the Earth. We need not allow our financial status to treat others in a bad way because they do not have as much money or because they are poor or downtrodden. God does not look at a man’s **wallet**; He looks at his **heart**. In James 2:1-4, James gives us an illustration of this

“My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there,’ or, ‘Sit here at my footstool,’ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?”

James said that this is not the way to treat others. We need to be willing to empty ourselves of any pride, of whatever financial status that we think we have in this life (which we probably do not have anyway), or of our social status, so that we can reach those who are lost and dying without the Gospel. Selfishness is something with which God has never been pleased. We never need to be too selfish to help those who are in need. Remember what James 1:27 says? “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” Selfishness keeps us from visiting those who are in need. It keeps us from helping widows and orphans who do not have anyone else to help them. We must not be too selfish to help our brethren. Galatians 6:10 says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Are we too selfish, sometimes, to help those in our own congregation who we know are hurting or people we know have physical needs that should be taken care of? What about a woman who has lost a husband and is not able to take care of herself financially? What about a family whose house has just burned down, or someone who has just lost a job? Do we do what is necessary to help them in their time of need, or does selfishness get in the way? Are we sometimes too selfish to help the lost by taking them the Gospel? Sometimes we seem to think, “I have so many other things to do,” or “I have to go do this” or “I have to go do that,” when what is really important is what we have been called to do—take the message of Jesus to the world. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.”

Another principle that comes from the selfless mind of Christ is that, like Jesus, we need to have a servant's attitude. Notice what the Bible says about the servant's attitude of Jesus. In Philippians 2:7, Paul shows us just how much of a Servant that our Lord and Savior was. Paul said, "But He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." A bondservant gives up his own life for the master's use. That is what Jesus did. He became a Bondservant Who was determined to do the will of God. This is the attitude that we as Christians need to have as well. In Philippians 1:21, Paul said, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, we are told that we have been bought at a price and that we are no longer our own, but that we are to give our bodies and spirits to God. Paul said, "The love of Christ compels us because we judge thus—that if one died for all, then all died" (2 Cor. 5:14). Truly, like Jesus, we must have a servant's attitude. A bondservant is one who is fully devoted to doing the master's will. Are we a bondservant in the sense that we are fully committed to doing God's will? We must be. In 1 Corinthians 15:31, Paul said that he was so committed that he died daily. Oh, no doubt there were probably desires and passion with which Paul struggled. But he said that he died daily and refused to give in to self. Instead, he died daily for Jesus. We must have the same servant's attitude today. Revelation 2:10 says that it is only when we have been "faithful unto death" that we will receive the crown of life. A bondservant is someone who is under the master's authority. He is not over the house. Rather, he is the one who listens to the master and who does exactly what he says. The same principle is true for us today. Colossians 3:17 says, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." As we think about being under the authority of Christ, we need to know that He truly is the Master. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." We have that authority today in the Bible. It is all truth (Jn. 16:13; 2 Pet. 1:3). A bondservant also is one who loves the master deeply. What made Jesus such a great Servant was His love for the Father. What will make us selfless servants today is our love for God. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14:15). Remember Mark 12:30 (quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4-5)—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." Jesus said, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (Jn. 15:14). We therefore think of Jesus as the Selfless Servant.

But we also think about Jesus because of His humble, selfless nature. Jesus was very humble, which is what made Jesus a person Who could do the will of God. What made Jesus such a selfless individual was His humility. Notice what Philippians 2:8 says about Christ's humility: "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." Paul portrayed the humility of Christ by His obedience. According to John 6:38, Jesus came to do the will of the Father. This is why, when Christ was distressed and was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to His crucifixion, He said, "Not as I will, but as You will" (Mt. 26:39). Humility is seen in Christ's ability to be obedient to God and to His will. But it also is seen in Jesus in that He was obedient even to the point of death on the cross. Sometimes, I think that we do not understand the full impact of Christ's death on the cross. Jesus died as a criminal in a world of lawbreakers, yet He had done nothing wrong. Deuteronomy 21:22-23 and Galatians 3:13 speak of "the curse of the cross." Jesus was cursed for us, and underwent the curse of the cross because "Cursed is everyone who is hanged upon a tree." Not only did Jesus die for each of us, but He also humbled Himself and became obedient to the most humiliating death that we could ever imagine—the death of the cross. Jesus gave up everything, emptying Himself completely of everything that He might have wanted to retain—just so **we** could go to Heaven. This applies directly to congregations like

the one in Philippi. Wherever there are problems, struggles, strife, and envy, people have yet to empty themselves and fully take upon themselves the mind of Christ. When someone has to have **his** way, or where people are pushing for certain things, or where people are not getting along together, someone has not emptied himself of pride, has not become a servant, and does not possess the humility that Jesus wants him to possess. We could do away with many of the problems that plague the church if we just realized everything that Jesus gave up, and if we were willing to give up those things ourselves for the Cause of Christ. The Bible demands that Christians be humble in nature. The only way that we can please God is by being humble and by being obedient to God in every way. Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed are those who do His commandments." James 1:22 says that we need to be not only **hearers** of the Word, but **doers** of the Word. Samuel told Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22, "Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice." So, like Christ, we need to be willing to obey God, no matter what it costs us in this life and no matter what we may have to give up. If we are willing to empty ourselves and have a true nature of humility, we can please the Father.

But notice, too, that because Jesus was willing to give up so much, He eventually was glorified. We see the glorious name that Christ was given because He was willing to humble Himself and become a Servant. Notice Philippians 2:9-11—

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 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, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

As we think about Jesus and all that He gave up, we see that although He gave up much in this life, He was greatly exalted because of His sacrifices. Because of Christ's humility, He was exalted. If we have this same kind of humility, we will be exalted in the next life—in eternity. Jesus was given a place of exaltation at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3). In Psalm 110:1, Christ is seen as sitting at the right hand of God. In the Book of Revelation, He is at the very throne of God. Jesus was exalted to a high place because He was willing to humble Himself. This same principle applies to us. Jesus was given the glorious names of Savior, Son of God, and Messiah. There was a recognition of these names when Peter preached the Gospel in Acts 2:36—"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." That is the great confession that each and every person will one day have to make. Did you know that, on the other side of this life (in eternity), there will be no atheists, agnostics, critics, or doubters. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Christ, to the glory of God. One day, all people everywhere are going to bow down at the feet of Jesus and confess that He is the Son of God (Phil. 2:9-10). He is truly the Savior and the Messiah. If that is the case, why not make that confession **now**—before it is too late? Some people are going to have to make that confession "after the fact." Some people are going to have to make that confession, but it will not do them any good because their chance to make things right will have passed. This life is our only opportunity to live with God for all eternity. To truly have the mind of Christ, we need to obey God in the here and now. Jesus was obedient right up to the point of death. Are we being obedient to God? Do we truly possess the mind of Christ? Paul mentioned some things in the Book of Philippians that were intended to encourage the Christians in Philippi to be selfless. He told them not to be complaining and grumbling (Phil. 2:14). He told them to look for "the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). He taught them that it was not of themselves that their power came. In Philippians 4:13, he said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

If you have never become a follower of Christ, why not become one today? Why not become a Christian—nothing more and nothing less? This is the name that God has given us in the age in which we live. In Acts 11:26, the Bible says, “The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” In Acts 26:28, Agrippa said, “Almost you persuade me to become a Christian.” Peter said in 1 Peter 4:16, “If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.” The name “Christian” is what gives God the glory. Are **you** a Christian? Have you obeyed the Gospel? You can do so very simply by hearing the Word of God, and once you have heard that Jesus is God’s Son and that He is the Savior of the world and its only hope, by believing in Him as the Messiah. You must believe that God sent Christ into the world to die for our sins, and that He truly is God’s Son Who died for us. In John 3:16 the Bible says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Yes, belief is essential, but belief is not **all** that a person has to do to be saved. In fact, the only time that the phrase “belief only” occurs in the Bible, God says the opposite of what men say today. Many say that all a person has to do to be saved is “just believe.” But James 2:24 says the opposite. “You see then that a man is justified by works, and **not by faith only.**” The only time that the phrase “faith only” appears in the Bible, it says that we are **not** saved “by faith only.” I am not saying that you can earn or merit your salvation. However, there are conditions that God has set forth and that must be met if a person is to enjoy salvation.

We must hear and we must believe. But we also must repent of our past sins. We are told in Acts 2:38, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” One also must be willing to confess Jesus as Savior. Jesus said in Matthew 10:32-33, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” And yes, the Scriptures do teach that baptism is something that is essential to salvation. We live in a world where many people do not think that baptism is important. They believe that it is something that a person should do after he or she has been saved—maybe two weeks or a month later. Many suggest that salvation itself occurs at the point of belief. That is not what the Bible says about baptism and its relationship to salvation. Listen to what Ananias told Saul in Acts 22:16—“Now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” We call on the name of the Lord in a proper fashion, and thereby wash away our sins, by doing what God says—being baptized. Jesus said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:16). In John 3:5, Jesus said, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Paul likened our death to sin and our burial in water to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is at baptism that we contact the blood of Christ. I am reminded of Galatians 3:27—“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Have you been obedient to God by obeying the Gospel? Do you truly possess the selfless mind of Christ? If you do possess the mind of Christ, then there is nothing that could hinder you from obeying God in baptism. Truly, we need to be people who do not think too highly of ourselves, but rather who give the glory to God. May God help us each and every day to truly possess the selfless mind of Christ.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE MIND OF CHRIST”

1. What does 1 Peter 2:21 command Christians to do?
2. What does 1 Corinthians 11:1 command Christians to do?
3. What does Philippians 2:5 command Christians to do?
4. In Philippians 2:14-15, what did Paul command the Christians in Philippi to do?
5. What did Paul mean when he wrote, “I implore Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord” (Phil. 4:2)?
6. What does Romans 12:10 command Christians to do?
7. What does Mark 12:31 command Christians to do?
8. What does Matthew 7:12 command Christians to do?
9. According to Hebrews 4:12, how powerful is the Word of God?
10. According to Ephesians 6:17, what is “the sword of the Spirit”?
11. What, according to Hebrews 9:26, did Jesus sacrifice?
12. According to Philippians 2:6-7, what did Jesus do on our behalf?
13. What did Paul mean in 2 Corinthians 8:9 when he said that Christ “was rich, yet for your sakes became poor”?
14. According to James 1:27, what is “pure and undefiled religion”?
15. According to 2 Corinthians 5:14, what “compels us”?
16. According to Revelation 2:10, what could be the ultimate test regarding whether or not we have “the mind of Christ”?
17. Who, according to John’s statement in Revelation 22:14, will end up being “blessed”?
18. According to John 15:14, who are Christ’s friends?
19. James 1:22 tells us that we **are** to be something, and that we **are not** to be something. What are those two “somethings”?
20. What did Peter have to say in 1 Peter 4:16 about the fact that we might have to suffer on Christ’s account?
21. In Philippians 3:14, what did Paul urge us to do?
22. According to Paul’s comment in Philippians 4:13, what can Christians do?