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A Walk Through Philippians

Part 2: This Mind of Mine

Text: Philippians 2:1-11

Philippians is one of the four so-called *prison epistles.* Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon were all written while Paul was under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16-30, especially 16 and 30).

In the first part of this series, I suggested that in Philippians chapter one, Paul is espousing a philosophy of life. He lays out a way of going at life.

Paul writes about living an “I cannot lose” kind of life.

1:20b:

*...now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.*

1:21:

*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

Paul is chained to a Roman guard and yet he writes *with* and *of* such outrageous joy. Chuck Swindoll says that if you're having sadness or depression, one prescription is to read a chapter of Philippians every day... for the rest of your life.

In what we know as chapter two, Paul is now pushing his argument further and suggesting that we can live very intentionally and that we set our *minds* on it. In 2:2 and 2:5, Paul uses the terms *like-minded* and *mind.* The Greek word translated *mind* is *phroneo* (fron-eh´-o). It is used in eight verses in this short book. [1:7 (think) 2:2(like-minded) 2:5(mind), 3:15 (minded), 3:16 (mind), 3:19 (mind), 4:2 (mind), 4:10 (care, careful)].

Paul writes to these people whom he loves and likes and tells them that the success of their spiritual journey is at least partly determined by what goes on in their minds. In verse 2, “fulfill my joy by being like-**minded**”, “being of one accord, of one **mind”.** In verse 3, “...in lowliness of **mind** let each esteem others better then him/her self”.

There follows, the famed kenotic passage. The greek word, *kenoo* means “to empty”. In verse 5-11, Paul describes how Christ emptied himself and the consequences of that emptying.

Again, Paul speaks of the **mind**. This time, he says that the Christ was marked by a certain kind of thinking and we ought to imitate Christ’s

mind (v.5).

Paul wants to say that in the ideal spiritual world, we won’t think our own thoughts and possibly- no surely- go astray. In the ideal world, we will think like Christ!

We think differently about:

1. Status- Jesus was God incarnate. Christ had every divine power that God has, as Christ walked the earth. He was **equal** with God. Christ was essentially equal and voluntarily emptied. That is, Christ was one with God is essence, in every way. He gave some of His divine prerogative up, that He might relate to you and to me. He did count his divinity a thing to be grasped. Other renderings of that thought in verse 6:

**Amplified Bible:** who, although He existed in the form *and* unchanging essence of God [as One with Him, possessing the fullness of all the divine attributes—the entire nature of deity], did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped *or* asserted [as if He did not already possess it, or was afraid of losing it];

**J.B. Phillips New Testament:**

For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God’s equal...

**The Message:**

He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all.

Jesus thought differently about status. With this mind of mine, I need to do likewise. Maybe the things after which I’ve chased are not worthy. Maybe that to which I’ve clung, is not worthy of my clinging.

With this mind of mine I might think differently about status. Secondly, I might think about

2. The way I ascend

How do believers get ahead, progress, achieve, climb up?

It’s a legitimate question that has been on the minds of believers since the earliest days of the Church. In Matthew 20:20-21 we read,

*Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, “What do you wish?”. She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”*

That’s the kind of request someone in Atlanta in 2020 might make. My daughter, my son, my niece, my nephew graduated from Morehouse, Spelman, Clark Atlanta, Georgia Tech. Surely, they will climb up to the highest levels of ministry and Christian faith and leadership. “Jesus, how do we make sure they get up there?”

Jesus’ path to exaltation was paved with humiliation. He humbled Himself, to the point of death. Then, God highly exalted Him. Don’t miss that sequence. Let this mind be in us. Christ hands in His status card and seeks humility and then, God exalts Him. He who was equal with God, lowers Himself and then God raises Him. God gives Him THE name (not *a* name) that is above every name.

Sometimes I just want to say His name. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!

With this mind of mine, I could **boast**. I’d be better if I’d **bow**.

With this mind of mine, I need to stop trying to make *my* name great. Rather, let me take to myself the mind, the name and the mindset of Jesus. That name is so exalted that even those who don’t love that name will still have to bow to it. Verse 10 is not a Pauline statement of universalism. Paul isn't saying that there will come a time when everybody on the planet will become believers. That’s heresy. No, verse 10 says that there will come a day when God will have so raised up Christ, that everyone- believer or not- will have to at least acknowledge, admit and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Verse 10 refers us to Isaiah 45:23 (quoted also in Romans 14:11). Every knee will bow.

* The knee of every resident in heaven
* The knee of every resident on earth
* The knee of every Satanic imp and host
* Every lost person
* Every saved person
* The knee of the agnostic
* The knee of the skeptic
* The knee of the atheist
* The knee of the hotel housekeeper
* The knee of the owner of the hotel
* The knee of the CEO
* The knee of the person in the basement sorting a corporation’s mail
* The knee of the person who cleans up stables
* The knee of the person who owns the million-dollar horse *in* the stable
* The Black knee
* The White knee
* The Latina knee
* The Asian knee
* The knee of the poor
* The knee of the wealthy

Every knee will bow!!!

As these believers in Philippi navigate life and faith, Paul wants them to have joy. For that, they have a model. The writer of Hebrews 12:2 urges us:

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.

Let me get *that* embedded in this mind of mine.

Amen