

CHRIST'S MIND IN THE BELIEVER

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: Challenge the believers to have the mind of Christ in caring for the welfare of others.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson and insert the questions and answers given below for class discussion or for specific application.

Introduction: The church at Philippi was a good church, but there was some disunity among its members. In particular, Euodia and Syntyche needed to be reconciled to each other (4:2). Their differences destroyed the harmony of the church, which was a concern to Paul (1:27; 2:1-4, 14). To solve the problem, he exhorted them to have the mind of Christ (2:5). This was illustrated by Christ's humble willingness to leave Heaven and take the necessary steps to finally die on the cross for the sins of everyone (2:6-8). A person who has the mind of Christ is both humble and helpful (2:3-4). So we must heed Paul's exhortation, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (2:5).

How is unity produced in a church? 2:1-4

Paul gives the four-fold basis for unity in a church: encouragement in Christ; comfort in love; fellowship in the Spirit; and love and care for each other (2:1). Then he gives them four commands to produce unity: be likeminded; have the same love; agree on the same issues; and concur on God's will (2:2). The strongest encouragement for unity is the example of Christ (2:1). His example produces a gracious spirit of love and a strong bond among believers that is generated by the Spirit. His example encourages us to esteem others above ourselves (2:3) and to satisfy their needs before ours (2:4). **We need to humble ourselves so we can help others and bring harmony in the church.**

What did Christ do to humble Himself? 2:5-8

In an unusually clear statement on the incarnation and humiliation of Christ, Paul sets forth the doctrine concerning the mind of Christ. In heaven, Jesus Christ had the form of God — He shared the glory of His Father (2:6). When He prepared to leave heaven, He laid aside His glory so that He would not have the outward appearance of God (2:6). He also emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives and took the form of a bondservant (2:7; Mk. 10:45). He was made in the likeness of men, that is, He was like them in every way, except in their sin (2:7). Being a man, He took on their "fashion" so that He dressed and lived like the men of His country (2:8). He left His riches behind and became poor for our sakes. Then He was willing to die as an act of obedience to His Father, even to die on the cruel cross of a criminal (2:8). **We need to humble ourselves like Christ to become bondservants of God.**

What was the result for Christ when He had a humble mind? 2:9-11

The humble mind of Christ brought the highest honors to Him (2:9). His humble obedience to His Father gave Him a name above every name (2:9). Every knee will bend before Him (2:10), and every tongue will confess that He is the Lord God (2:6, 11). **God will exalt us when we humble ourselves.**

What will believers do that have the mind of Christ? 2:12-16

They will seriously work to develop their Christian life (2:12). God will work in them so they will please Him (2:13). They will learn not to complain or argue so they will be blameless, shining as lights in a dark world, holding out the Word of Life to a spiritually starving world (2:14-16).

What does the mind of Christ look like in the lives of believers? 2:17-30

Three men showed that they had the mind of Christ. **Paul showed it by his sacrifice in spirit.** He sent his companions to other believers so they might be helped in their faith (2:17-18). **Timothy showed it by his sacrifice in service.** He served with Paul in preaching the Gospel and did whatever Paul asked him to do (2:19-24). **Epaphroditus showed it by his sacrifice in sickness.** He served Paul in prison and became so sick that he almost died. He put the welfare of Paul before his own well being (2:25-30). God will help us have the mind of Christ.