

The Mind Of Christ In The Christian – Part 1

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Turn To Luke 9

Luke 9:23

23 Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

B. What Is A Christian?

1. Go to the Esplanade or Pacific View Mall with a clipboard and pen, walk up to several people, tell them you’re taking a survey and ask – “What is a Christian?”
2. You’ll get lots of different answers –
3. But probably the most common you’ll hear is: “A Christian is someone who *believes* in Jesus Christ.”
4. That’s true – a Christian IS someone who believes in Jesus.
5. But that belief constitutes far more than mere *agreement* with the facts of history.
 - a. lots of people believe Jesus was born and lived a life of surpassing moral excellence
 - b. they may even believe that He performed some dramatic miracles
 - c. but that doesn’t make them a Christian.
6. A Christian is someone who *trusts* in Christ and *depends* on Him for Life!
7. The word “Christian” was originally coined and used by *critics* of the Faith.
 - a. they gave the label “*Christian*” to believers who were *just like Jesus*.
 - b. they were “like-Christ” which is what the word “Christian” means!
8. Those early disciples knew that Jesus *didn’t just say* –
I have come to lay down certain basic moral principles that you should combine with all the other wisdom of the ages and sages, compile it into leather bound books, and develop a religion called

Christianity.

9. Look at the end of v. 23. He said, “*Follow Me!*”
 - a. He didn’t say “*Study Me*” nor “Hear My words”
 - b. He said, “*Follow Me!*”
10. When Jesus came to Peter and Andrew cleaning their fishing nets along the shore of Galilee, the invitation was – “Follow Me.”
11. When John approached Jesus, He turned to him and said, “Follow Me.”
12. When the Lord passed by Matthews’s tax-booth, His call was, “Follow Me!”

C. This Series

1. For the next few weeks we’re going to be taking a look at the *Nature of Jesus*.
2. Because being a Christian ought to mean *being like Christ*.
3. Therefore, we need to take a close look at what the Bible tells us Jesus was like.
4. We regularly print the vision for CCO on the back of the bulletin.
 - a. if you were to reduce that down to one phrase, it would be --
 - b. we are seeking to be conformed to the image of Christ.
 - c. our founding verse is Romans 8:29, which says that

[God] predestined [us] to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

5. So it’s vital we take a look at the nature of Jesus as revealed in the scriptures.

D. Disclaimer

1. I’ve been looking forward to this series because I’m convinced if we can just appropriate what the Lord has for us in all this, it will not only transform our lives, but this church and then this County!
2. But let me give this *disclaimer* – The bulk of what I’m sharing today and over the next few weeks is inspired by the ministry of Gayle Erwin who has an incredible gift of teaching on the Nature of Christ.

II. THE MIND OF CHRIST • PHILIPPIANS 2

A. V. 5

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

1. Let's stop right there
2. Does your mind ever fail you? Can't remember?
3. I really struggle with math.
 - a. science and history I love and grasp pretty quickly but put numbers in there and it go brain-dead!
 - b. I did pretty well in school, but barely squeaked by my math classes.
 - c. in college, I dropped out of Calculus 3 times!
 - d. I remember sitting there looking around the room at the other students and being so envious that they were getting it while I was totally lost.
 - e. oh how I wanted a math-mind! A transplant would have worked nicely.
4. Here Paul tells us we can have a *spiritual* transplant – we can have the mind of Christ.
5. Wouldn't that be great?
6. As we all know, the battleground of the Christian life is the *mind*.
 - a. this is why in Romans 12:2, we read,

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

- b. to *renew* mean to make something new *again* -
 - c. and here in Philippians 2:5, we see how to have a *new mind*;
 - d. we are to take to ourselves the mind of Christ.
 - e. it's a simple transfer.
7. But Paul doesn't stop there – because he has a specific *mind-set* in mind. So he goes on and says,

B. V. 6

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

1. The NIV, the *Nearly Inspired Version*, translates it this way -

**Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
Who, being in very nature God, did not consider
equality with God something to be grasped**

- a. what Paul means is that Jesus, who IS God, didn't hold on to His right to all the glory, majesty, honor, and praise that's due Him, with a *demanding grip*.
- b. if we paraphrased this in the simplest terms we might say

Let the mindset that marked Jesus, mark you. Though He is God, He did not tenaciously hold on to the rights and position that are rightfully His. He didn't use the force that He possesses as God to force us to honor and serve Him.

2. Think of it – God is omnipotent – He possesses All-Power. He spoke and a million-billion stars leapt into existence
3. But He doesn't use *force* on us!
 - a. He could have. He could have grabbed us by the throat, held a sword point to our throats and said
 - b. “Would you like to become a Christian?”
 - c. “Yes, I've been thinking about it for some time.”
4. Remarkable isn't it – how often the scriptures speak of Jesus' *gentleness*?
5. He didn't use force. He didn't assert Himself, but instead humbly made Himself a servant.
6. Lynn & I have been married for 21 years; held together by my animal magnetism.
 - a. 22 years ago, when I proposed to her, I was weak-kneed and scared, having no idea what her response would be
 - b. in fact, when I asked her, I immediately said – “Don't tell me now. Wait a week.”
 - c. what if, when I proposed to her, I showed her the engagement ring, and then pulled out a pistol and put it to her head, and said, “You WILL marry me.”
 - d. from then on, I would have been suspect of her devotion.
 - c. at every meal I would call over the dog and feed a little to him first to make sure it was safe.
 - d. why? because when we feel forced, when we're being *coerced* or *pressured* to do something, we tend to try to *sabotage* the

situation.

7. Have you ever heard someone ask the question, “Can I do this or that and still be a Christian?”
 - a. that’s a sign they feel *forced* – and as a result their testing the edges.
 - b. that’s like a wife asking her husband, “Can I go out with some of the men from the neighborhood and still be your wife?”
8. Force denies choice. And love, which is what God desires from us, is a choice – it cannot be forced.
9. In Revelation 3:20 we find the humble invitation of the Lord –

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

- a. it’s not

Open up in the Name of the Law. I stand at the door with a battering ram and give you to the count of 5 and then I’m coming in whether you want Me or not!

10. We see the gentleness and humility of Jesus over and over in the gospels.
 - a. the third year of Jesus’ earthly ministry is called the *Year of Opposition*.
 - b. the first Year is the *Year of Obscurity*, the second, the *Year of Popularity*,
 - c. but by the third and final year, the religious leaders had made it clear that anyone who paid attention to Jesus would be rejected from Jewish social life.
 - d. as support dwindled and Jesus seemed to be losing popularity, the apostles became increasingly concerned.
 - e. no doubt they began thinking there might be some *Apostolic layoffs* coming.
 - f. so they became restless.
 - g. Jesus saw their dis-ease and asked them, “Will you leave Me also?”
 - h. He didn’t say, “Okay fellas, I know you’re concerned about where all this is headed. I know you’re wondering what’s going on but let Me warn you, if you leave Me now I will make sure your soul burns in the hottest part of hell forever!”

- i. let's be honest, if we were in Jesus' place, that's what we would say
 - j. but He asked a simple question; "Will you leave Me as well?"
 - k. really, He opened the door to choice and didn't seek to manipulate or force them.
11. In Matthew 12 we find this –

15 Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, ¹⁶warning them not to tell who he was. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

19 He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,

- a. Matthew quotes from Isaiah 42 about how the Messiah would come in *gentleness* and *humility*, not with *force* or *pressure*
- b. He wouldn't quarrel or cry out.
 - 1) have you ever stopped to think about how humble Jesus was when he spoke?
 - 2) as the very Word of God incarnate, He possessed all wisdom & understanding
 - 3) yet He spoke in the common language of the day and sought to reason with people right where they were at
 - 4) when His opponents came to harass Him, He could very easily have opened His mouth and laid bare the secrets of their sin-sick souls, shaming them in front of all the people – but He didn't
 - 5) in Revelation, when John hears the voice of God in heaven, he describes it as the sound of a mighty waterfall – if you've very been to Niagara Falls, you know something of what this means – the ground shakes and the air pulses with the sound waves – a person standing right next to you, shouting

at the top of their lungs can't be heard for the roar of the water

- 6) but when Jesus came – His voice was moderate and normal – He didn't shout down his enemies – or boom out a trumpet call for people to bow before Him.
- c. “a bruised reed he will not break,”
- 1) that means Jesus wouldn't kick a man when he was down
 - 2) on the contrary – Jesus sought out the downcast and downtrodden and gently restored them.
 - 3) the world loves to kick a man when he's down, in fact, the world loves to *watch* a man fall – because when he does we don't feel so bad about our own failures.
 - 4) it's the way of the world to get to the top by climbing over others.
 - 5) but this isn't the way of Jesus.
 - 6) when He sees a broken reed, the stalk of a plant that's been damaged by the wind or the careless passage of someone through the field, He stops to straighten it, and to tie a support to it and restore it to health.
 - 7) as the Psalm says – He's the lifter of my head.
- d. “and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,”
- 1) oh friends – think of how tender and forbearing Jesus was with the disciples.
 - 2) He saw hope in the slightest hint of faith and encouraged it.
 - 3) He was careful and tender and sought to fan into flame the tiniest spark.
 - 4) being God, and being worthy of the total obedience and faith of the people, He could have so easily mocked and berated them all for the halting and imperfect way they trusted Him.
 - 5) I think of the time the disciples were crossing Galilee and a storm threatened to sink their boat.
 - a) they went to Jesus who was asleep in the bow and woke Him, pleading that He *do* something.
 - b) He gently rebuked their lack of a more perfect faith, but He didn't put them down and make them feel like abject failures - He didn't ridicule them or call them idiots.
 - c) they *did* possess a measure of faith in Him in that they woke Him and asked Him to save them!

- d) so Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves – and by doing so, affirmed the smoldering wick of faith they’d invested in Him.
- 6) how often the world mocks and belittles us
- 7) how often the world says, “Is that the best you can do? Why if that’s all you’ve got you’re just wasting your time.”
- 8) this reminds me of the tricky task of trying to start a campfire when you’re backpacking in the Sierra.
 - a) you make a little ring of stones, find some dry twigs and kindling, and then set a match to it.
 - b) because of the elevation, there’s so little oxygen, it’s often difficult for the kindling to catch.
 - c) a tiny flame will start, and then you have to sit there, hunched over on the ground and blow onto it to keep it going.
 - d) no one strikes a match and once the first few flames catch, stands up, looks at the tiny little fire and says, “Well, is that the best you can do!?” and stamps it out.
- 9) how easy it would have been for Jesus to become discouraged with the imperfect faith of His followers and to resort to mocking them and putting them down.
- 10) but He didn’t – instead He LOOKED for the tiniest evidence of faith and tenderly blew on it to fan it into a roaring fire.
- e. when Jesus found us, we were bruised reeds and smoking wicks
 - 1) oh to go round this room and have each person tell us their story of how Jesus healed and restored them when they were down and nearly out
 - 2) the world was kicking us, but He didn’t come and say, “You’ve not been kicked till you’ve had a divine kick.”
 - 3) the world was saying, “Is that the best you can do? With all the opportunity you’ve had and look at you!”
 - 4) but He came and with the utmost tenderness lifted us and blew life into us.
- 12. Jesus used no force on us because He wanted us to make a genuine choice.
- 13. WHY He used no force is made even clearer in vs. 7 & 8.

C. Vs. 7-8

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.

8 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.

1. Jesus didn't use force because He came as a *servant*.
2. At first reading, what Paul writes here is a bit difficult to sort out, so let me bypass a lot of technical interpretation and simply give another paraphrase of verses 5-8

Let the mindset that marked Jesus, mark you. Though He is God, He did not tenaciously hold on to the rights and position that are rightfully His. He didn't use the force that He possesses as God to force us to honor and serve Him.

Instead, He willingly laid aside the rights of His position as God, and became a perpetual servant. In order to maximize His effectiveness as a servant, He became a man. Then, once a man, He didn't live as a man above other men. On the contrary, He went the other direction and humbled Himself to the point of being placed on a Roman cross.

3. Remember how Paul begins this section – with the words, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”
 - a. the point here is that you & I are to *adopt this mindset*
 - b. we are to see ourselves just as Jesus saw Himself
 - c. and though He was God, He didn't hang on to all the rights that belong to God.
 - d. instead, He laid them aside and became a servant!
 - e. He didn't just come and do a servant's chores.
 - f. He didn't come and live for 33 years as a man and *playact* as a servant.
 - g. He **BECAME** a servant.
4. Actually, Paul calls Him a *bondservant* – meaning someone who gives up all rights to freedom and makes a vow of perpetual

servitude.

5. Jesus didn't just serve – He **BECAME** A SERVANT.
 - a. it's the difference between doing, & being.
 - b. it's one thing for Him to lay aside His glory for a time and become a man so that he could do certain acts of service
 - c. but it's all altogether different thing to *become a servant*.
 - d. Jesus said to the disciples – “As the Father sent Me, so I send you!”

III. CONCLUSION

A. The Call to Be A Servant

1. We know we're to serve others, so on occasion we will.
 - a. but if our service isn't recognized and appreciated, we tend to get upset.
 - b. frustration is often a sign we're not getting the kudos and praise we think we deserve for being selfless.
2. But wait a minute – a person who IS a servant, as opposed to just *doing* service, knows he or she has a job, and that's to serve!
 - a. of course, the servant *likes* to hear words of thanks and commendation but his/her service isn't *conditioned* on it.
 - b. a servant knows he/she has a duty – and does one thing – faithfully seeks to perform it, regardless of the outcome.
3. When we grumble and complain because no one sees what we're doing or seems to appreciate us, it's a sign we don't really have the mind of Christ.
 - a. we don't see ourselves as *servants*.
 - b. we're clinging to our rights as human beings who *deserve* some dignity and honor.
 - c. and if it isn't forthcoming, we feel cheated and will set about to make sure people *do* recognize and honor us.

B. He Didn't Cling

1. Jesus didn't cling to His rights as God.
 - a. He emptied Himself and became a man.
 - b. and becoming a man, He didn't seek to take some station among men that was marked by honor and prestige.
 - c. He didn't appear in Rome and demand Augustus give Him his

- throne.
- d. He didn't even claim the position of the High Priest of Israel.
 - e. instead – He made Himself of no reputation.
 - f. we'll be taking a closer look at what *that* means next week.
 - g. but for now understand that Jesus **BECAME A SERVANT**.
 - h. He didn't just serve – He was a servant
2. And this is the mind we are to have – that *we are servants!*
 - a. not just that it's a nice or good thing to serve whenever it's convenient.
 - b. we are to **BE** servants!
 - c. it's the difference between *doing & being*

C. The Way Of The World

1. Dawson Trautman, the founder of the Navigators once said, “You can tell if a person really sees himself as a servant by how he responds when he's treated like one.”
2. The way of the world is the way of power & position.
 - a. people are in a never ending competition to be #1
 - b. prestige and praise are everything!
3. The way of the Kingdom is to be a servant.
4. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus!
5. Stay with us over the next few weeks as we take this deeper and farther.