

The Mind of Christ In the Christian – Part 2

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Being Christian*

1. This is Part 2 of a short series on the *Nature of Jesus*, and once more I want to say that I am deeply indebted to Gayle Erwin for the content of this series.
2. As we began last week, we saw that being a Christian means being “*like Christ*”
3. So the question is – what is Christ *like*?
4. Answering that is simple because the Bible is *filled* with descriptions of Jesus
 - a. not physical descriptions of His *appearance* but of His moral *character*
 - b. both the Old and the New Testaments give us many details about the character of Christ.
5. But as is typical, people have played with and messed up the Biblical picture of Jesus.
 - a. through the centuries we’ve developed many unfortunate traditions about Him.
 - b. Hollywood has contributed to the distortions
 - c. and the result is that today – people believe a lot of goofy stuff

B. *Silent Night?*

1. Take, for instance, the Christmas story.
2. One of the most endearing parts of Christmas is the carols we sing.
- But how accurate are they?
3. “*Silent Night, Holy Night*”
 - a. silent? *Really?*
 - b. tell me, why was Bethlehem jam packed with people?
 - c. Luke tells us – the Roman emperor wanted a census taken so they could levy a new tax.
 - d. *silent* night? No way! You can be sure the people were angry and complaining!
 - 1) their lives had been thrown into chaos as they had to travel from all over the nation of Israel back to their hometowns.
 - 2) every room was filled –

- 3) and the people, already deeply upset that their land was overrun with hated oppressors,
 - 4) were now facing another new burden in the form of a tax.
 - 5) no – it wasn't silent in Bethlehem!
 - e. but as you sing the Christmas carol and think back on that night – you get the impression a cosmic wave went through and everyone said, “Did you feel that? It must be a holy night.”
 - f. no – it was a profane night!
4. And *Mary* – we think she had no birth pains.
- a. you've seen the pictures of the nativity scene – with Mary holding the baby Jesus and Joseph standing over her, smiling down serenely.
 - b. I wish *my wife* looked like that after the birth of *our* children.
 - c. the crèches and songs lead us to believe Mary said, “Joseph, It's time,” and *blup*, there was the Messiah.
 - d. then some shepherds and passing Eastern royalty stopped by to say “Hi,” someone said, “Okay, everybody over there for a picture” and voila! The Nativity Scene!
5. The reality was very different!
6. In fact, it's the reality of the Birth and life of Jesus Christ that confront us with a startling truth – God does things very differently than we would expect!

C. *Philippians 2*

1. Last week, we took a look at vs. 5-8 of *Philippians 2*

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,

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.

2. By way of recap, we saw that Jesus, though He's Omnipotent,

- used no force on us!
3. We saw that instead of force, Jesus was gentle and humble, and the reason *why* is because, as it says here in v. 7, He *became a servant*.
 - a. Jesus didn't just come to do a servant's chores – He came to BE a servant –
 - b. and what He became in the incarnation – He is bound to for eternity.
 4. Paul begins by saying that that mindset is to be *ours*.
 - a. just as Jesus became a servant, we are to embrace *our* identity as servants.
 - b. we aren't just called to *serve* others;
 - c. being a Christian is more than that – it means becoming a servant;
 - d. it's the difference between *doing* and *being*.
 5. I know that for many of us this last week has been 7 days of continually coming face to face with the challenge of this truth.
 6. This morning, I want to take it even deeper, that we might see just how radical Jesus' nature is!

II. TEXT

A. *No Reputation*

- 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,**
- 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.**
1. Interpreters and theologians love to take the phrase “made Himself of no reputation” and use it as a springboard for deep discussion and reflection.
 2. Literally, the words say that Jesus “emptied” Himself of position & prestige
 - a. The King James translation is a good one because it conveys the *idea* behind the words,
 - b. that when Jesus came, He didn't bring the influence and

- prestige His position as God rightfully deserves.
- c. even in His taking on humanity, He didn't pull rank and set Himself up as someone who stands *above* others.
 3. Probably the only way for us to grasp the incredible surprise this all is, is to think about how *we* would have arranged it if we had been part of the planning for the coming of the Messiah.
 4. There's God in heaven – and He looks down on the Earth and sees people.
 - a. He loves them and wants them to know just how much.
 - b. but there's an obstacle, a barrier that stand in the way – it's called sin.
 - c. sin distorts the way people have come to believe in God
 - d. so He decides to clear up the confusion and remove the problem of sin.
 - e. He says, "I will send My Son. He will be just like them, and just like Me."
 5. Okay – so that's the plan – how would we advise God to go about this?
 6. Well, we'd stage a *Premier*, just like they do in Hollywood.
 - a. we'd use those big searchlights and invite all the notable & important celebrities
 - b. they'd arrive in limos, the paparazzi would snap away, and the crowd of dignitaries would fill an expensive theater.
 - c. then the house lights would dim, a fantastic laser light show would start, and the curtain would rise to reveal – Jesus; a full grown man, who would proceed to give History's most inspiring speech.
 7. But God said, "No, My Son will be born, just like other people."
 8. "Okay," we say, "that opening has potential. Here's what we'll do . . ."
 - a. let's build a special hospital; we'll make it 20 stories high and faced with white marble & chrome to catch and reflect the rays of the sun
 - b. we'll staff it with the very best medical staff
 - c. and then there will be only one patient – one birth = the birth of Jesus
 - d. after that, we can arrange tours and people can file through and see where the Son of God was born.

- e. we can open a gift shop and people can buy mementos of their tour.
9. Again, God says, “No; My Son will be born in a barn.”
10. Have you ever stopped to think about what that was like?
- a. we’ve sanitized the scene with our modern Christmas plays but it was far from sanitary in that stable
 - b. Mary and Joseph had to watch where they stepped!
 - c. the stable had animals in it – so imagine the odor.
 - d. at best, the mattress Mary laid down on was a hay-bale
 - e. a stable is not a proper place for the birth of a baby, unless after it’s born it goes, “Moo.”
 - f. and where was the midwife? Did you ever stop to think about that?
 - 1) no mention is made of anyone there to help Mary deliver the baby
 - 2) just Joseph and as a young Jewish man he was far from competent at birthing babies!
11. Why such humble beginnings for the Son of God?
- a. because God wants His Son to be *approachable*
 - b. that “whosoever will,” may come to Him.
 - c. His birth was humble so that even those who are born into the depths of poverty can identify with Him and won’t be threatened or intimidated.
12. There’s another thing that reveals the humility of Christ – His *questionable parentage*.
- a. Bethlehem was Joseph’s *home town* – why didn’t any of his relatives welcome them?
 - b. there ought to have been a room for them with Joseph’s family – but they aren’t even mentioned.
 - c. probably because word had gotten out that Mary got pregnant *before* she and Joseph were wed.
 - d. this was a terrible scandal that the family didn’t approve of.
 - e. for the first 300 years of Church history, and even to this day, it’s the common opinion among the Jews that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary, and who knows who!
 - 1) do you remember the comment of the religious leaders when Jesus had backed them into a doctrinal corner?
 - 2) they said, “Well, at least we know who *our* father is!”

(John 8:39)

- f. so, if you've ever been on the wrong side of family approval – Jesus has been there too.
 - g. we've become pretty comfortable with the doctrine of the virgin birth
 - 1) we may not understand the mystery of *how* God became man
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 - 2) but we accept the fact and defer understanding till the day we stand before God in glory
 - 3) but don't lose sight of how much *more* difficult this would have been for the people around Mary.
 - 4) let's say one of the teenage girls in the youth group suddenly starts enlarging
 - 5) it's clear she's pregnant – and we're shocked because she's one of the nicest and godliest young ladies of the bunch.
 - 6) finally, someone works up the nerve to ask her – “So, whose the father?”
 - 7) she smiles and sweetly says, “The Holy Spirit.”
 - 8) “Sure!”
 - a) not only do we now suspect her morality
 - b) but we also wonder if maybe she doesn't need to see a psychiatrist
 - h. if you've ever been the object of mean and vicious gossip, Jesus knows what that's like for He lived with it His *entire life*.
13. Now, if *we* were planning the Birth of the Son of God, would we really have picked this couple of Joseph and Mary as the parents? Probably not!
- a. we'd have picked some wealthy couple, someone who could have ensured Jesus got the best of everything.
 - b. but Joseph had no money
 - c. you know – Money Talks! Mostly to me it says “Goodbye!”
 - d. in this world, money talks – and if Joseph had had enough coin, the Innkeeper would have given Mary & Joseph *his* room!
 - e. so, if you've ever been on the wrong end of the financial ladder, Jesus has been there too.
14. What a claim to fame huh – “I was born in a barn!”
- a. this is what my mother used to ask me when my room was a mess

- b. “Where you born in a barn?”
 - c. I always thought that was an interesting question for *her* to ask me.
 - d. “Well, I don’t know – I thought YOU were there! Was I?”
15. “Okay,” we say to God – “Let’s at least give Him a *name* worthy of His identity as the Son of God. With all of these humble origins, He needs something to set Him apart. So let’s pick a regal sounding and totally unique name. Something that is difficult to pronounce.”
16. God says, “I was thinking of Yashua” which is how the name Jesus was actually pronounced by the Jews of that day.
- a. it’s the name Joshua, and was the very most common Jewish name of that day!
 - b. it was equivalent to our “John”
 - c. there were several Jesuses running around town.
17. So again, we bring our expertise to bear and we suggest to the Father that the birth announcement be *spectacular* – and it seems He likes the suggestion.
18. He says, “Yes – I was planning on using an angelic choir.” And we say, “Alright! Finally the Lord is doing something *I* suggest.”
19. Okay, we’re going to get a choir of angles to make the birth announcement.
- a. we start picturing the staging that’s going to be needed.
 - b. we need massive choral risers and history’s most powerful PA system.
 - c. the choir starts rehearsing 200 years in advance and when the night of the big event comes, the angels assemble
 - d. the curtain lifts – and there’s the expectant crowd – 6 shepherds!
 - e. okay, who was in charge of the posters?
20. Shepherds? Why not the Roman Senate or the Jewish Supreme Court.
- a. shepherds? You need to know something about shepherds –
 - b. they were out there in the fields outside Bethlehem for good reason;
 - c. no one trusted them. They were petty thieves.
 - d. when they brought their flocks by your house you took in the laundry and patio furniture.
 - e. they were dirty, disreputable, and smelled like, well, sheep!

- f. parents, who did you send the birth announcements for your children to?
 - 1) did you take them to the homeless shelter and hand them out there?
 - 2) did you mail them to the inmates of the County jail?
 - g. in effect, that's what God did with the birth announcement for His Son.
21. Okay, we seem to be striking out here in our counsel for God. How about this: Let Jesus grow up to be incredibly good looking! Beauty is attractive and will garner Him attention.
- a. but Jesus wasn't handsome
 - b. now wait a minute you say – I've seen His picture – I have His picture hanging on my wall; and He's the best looking blue-eyed Irishman I've ever seen!
 - c. the prophet Isaiah, speaking prophetically of the Messiah said, "He had no form or beauty that we should desire Him."
 - 1) in other words, neither His face or stature stood out.
 - 2) He wouldn't have won any beauty contests.
22. I think I know why God didn't make beauty part of Jesus' appearance.
- a. ladies, what happens when a really attractive woman enters a room you're in?
 - 1) How do you feel?
 - 2) Jealous? Threatened? Self-conscious?
 - b. gentlemen, what goes through your mind when some hunk with striking good looks walks in?
23. Most biographies spend some time describing their object's physical appearance; it's just part of telling a person's story.
- a. we have four biographies of Jesus; we call them the gospels.
 - b. isn't it remarkable that not one of them gives a physical description of Jesus?
 - c. were they giving Him a break – or was He so normal, so typical, that it never crossed their minds to describe His appearance because they wouldn't have known what to write?
24. So, if you've every felt that because of your appearance you're just part of the great mass of normal people and there's nothing about you that stands out as special – Jesus has been there.
- a. He knows what it's like to be *ordinary* in a world that's

- preoccupied with beauty -
- b. that falls all over itself in clamoring to give attention to those who stand out because of the attractiveness of their bodies.
25. Then consider this – Jesus grew up in a bad neighborhood, the wrong side of the tracks, if you will.
- a. after the birth in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary returned to their home in the north – Nazareth.
 - b. Nazareth was a poor little village; little more than a work-camp for the construction projects going on at the Roman regional capital of Sepphoris a few miles away.
 - c. Nazareth had a bad reputation.
 - d. we see it in Nathaniel’s reaction when told Jesus was from there –
 - e. he said, “Oh, can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46)
 - f. if you had the Hope Diamond, would you carry it around in your pocket?
 - 1) take it out and show it to your friends and people in line at WalMart?
 - 2) of course not – you put it in the safest and securest place possible
 - 3) you might even loan it to the Smithsonian where it can be honored and admired and kept safe.
 - g. Mary & Joseph were given the greatest treasure of all time, a precious jewel
 - h. and they took it to Nazareth!
26. If you’re background is humble and you come from less than remarkable origins – Jesus has been there.
27. The way up in the world is to acquire things.
- a. you make a name for yourself by owning property and large estates.
 - b. drive a big car and wear the latest fashions by the most notable designers
 - c. but Jesus owned next to nothing.
 - d. He said, [Luke 9:58]

“Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.”

28. You know, the problem with owning a lot of things is that it takes time and energy to maintain them.
- a. if you have *enough* things, then it takes *all* your time and energy.
 - b. Jesus came to serve *people*, not things.
 - c. so He kept His touch with this world extremely light.
29. Think of some of the other ways that Jesus made Himself of no reputation and went against conventional wisdom.
- a. He had a *strange advance man* – John the Baptist – the original hippie!
 - 1) we'd pick some slick marketer who could polish our image and spin-doctor our platform into 30 second sound bites
 - 2) we'd pick someone with connections, who had an open door with the movers and shakers
 - 3) John the Baptist spent his time in the wilderness, telling people to repent, dunking them in water, eating organic foods and wearing funny clothing!
 - b. Jesus' original followers were a *motley crew*
 - 1) we'd have gone to the best theological university and selected 3 or 4 of the best professors.
 - 2) then we'd go to Hollywood and pick an image consultant
 - 3) next we'd stop at Wall Street and pick up some millionaires
 - 4) and last, we'd go to Muscle beach and select a handful of bodyguards
 - 5) Jesus went to the streets and the lakeside and picked up some guys who were just average Joes
 - a) some had the strong smell of fish on them
 - b) most of them, coming from the region of Galilee, had what were considered *Hillbilly* accents
 - 6) what's surprising is the combinations!
 - a) Jesus asked both a Jewish Revolutionary and a man who collected taxes for the hated Romans to follow Him.
 - b) this is equivalent to Osama bin Laden and President Bush walking together.
 - 7) if Jesus could work with *them* and make *them one*, He can work with us and forge a unity from us that can carry on the work they began.
 - c. lastly – Jesus died a *bad death* – at least as it was seen in *that*

time. That's why Paul says in v. 8 –

He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

- 1) like His birth, we've sanitized and romanticized the Crucifixion
- 2) but execution on a Roman cross was the height of humiliation and shame.
- 3) the condemned was stripped, whipped with a vicious cat of nine tails until the back was left in strips of raw flesh
- 4) then they were hauled out to the place of crucifixion and were nailed in place, exposed to the gaze of the leering crowds who would come to mock them.
- 5) the first disciples faced an incredibly difficult task in preaching Christ because everyone knew how he'd been executed, and in their eyes, it was a shameful thing to be a partaker of.
- 6) this is why in 1 Cor. 1, Paul says that the preaching of the cross is *foolishness* to those who are perishing!
- 7) today, the Cross is used in jewelry; it's placed on signs and decorates church walls; some even make neon crosses that revolve slowly in the night.
- 8) let's update the image for a moment; we don't crucify people anymore
 - a) we use the gas chamber, electrocution, and lethal injection
 - b) maybe we should use these images to get back to the real meaning of the cross
 - c) you could hang a little gold syringe around your neck
 - d) we could make a stylized electric chair and use that instead of these seats
 - e) someone could make a neon noose and use that as a church sign.
- 9) of course, a lot of our songs would have to change
 - a) at the electric chair, at the electric chair, where I first saw the light
 - b) and I'll cherish the old rugged – gas chamber
 - c) there's room in the noose for you

- 10) our evangelism would take on a whole new flavor as well
- 1) imagine telling someone – “My best friend died for you!”
 - 2) “He was arrested as a dangerous subversive and was executed in the electric chair for you.”
 - 3) “If you will just trust Him, take up your electric chair and follow him, you’ll be saved.”
 - 4) how do you think that would go over with the people around you?
 - 5) now we see why Paul says Jesus was a stumbling block, and why the gospel was a scandal.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Don't Miss The Point*

1. Jesus made Himself of no reputation. He emptied Himself. Why?
2. So that no one would feel intimidated or alienated from Him.
3. He purposely took the lowest place so that no one would feel disqualified in approaching Him.
4. He made Himself a servant; Even more, He made Himself THE servant of ALL, of every human being who has ever lived.
5. No one can look at Jesus and say – He can't relate to me and my situation.
6. Oh yes He can!
7. Look at what Paul says in 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.

- a. Jesus became a man, just like us!
- b. Paul couldn't put it in any more specific or intense terms.
- c. Jesus didn't just play act as a man or don a mask for deity to hide behind
- d. Jesus was flesh and bone.
- e. in fact, in Romans 8:3, he says that God sent the Son in the “likeness of *sinful* flesh,”
- f. not that Jesus sinned, but that his flesh was subject to all the

temptations our flesh is.

g. this is why in Hebrews we read He was in all points tempted just as we are.

8. Have you ever been tempted and said to yourself, “Surely this is the first time anyone has had this thought.”
9. Not so – Jesus was tempted in the same ways we are.
10. Don’t let the devil tell you God can’t relate to you and your struggle.
11. The whole point of the incarnation was to identify with us – with each and every one of us.
12. And God arranged the incarnation in such a way that no human being who has ever lived would feel threatened or intimidated in coming to Christ.

B. Reputation

1. Reputation is very important to us.
2. In fact, we spend a good part of our lives angling to improve and increase our reputation.
3. For the world, reputation is all about status and position.
 - a. it’s all about ambition and success
 - b. it’s concerned with fame and prestige, wealth and power
4. But Jesus emptied Himself and made Himself of *no* reputation.
5. He didn’t climb on the world’s ladder to success and fame.
6. He instead chose to be a servant.
7. But look at how this all ends . . .

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

10 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,

11 and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

8. The Son took the lowest place – and as a result, the Father elevated Him to the highest place.
9. By making himself a nobody in the eyes of the world, He attains the Name above all names.

10. By going to the very depths in the selflessness of His service, He is elevated to an eternal glorious throne, before which every knee shall bow in confession of His surpassing excellence.
11. The hinge that links all this is the first 2 words of v. 9 = THEREFORE, GOD.
12. When we forsake of the world's way of living and obediently follow God's, then He inserts Himself into our lives and ensures that the outcome is glory!
13. Very simply, we can live with an eye to our own glory, or we can let God give us His.
 - a. we have a choice of defining our lives by the glory this world heaps on those who play by it's rules
 - b. or we can quit the world's game and follow Jesus.
 - c. if we choose to follow Christ, then across our lives will be written what we find here –
 - d. “Therefore, God . . .”

C. This Mind

1. Paul begins all this by saying – “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”
2. May God give us the mind of Christ!