The mind of Christ

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[0:00] Shall we turn now to our reading in the epistle to the Philippians, the second chapter, and looking again at that well-known passage, beginning at verse 5.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.
And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. To the glory of God the Father. When we read the epistles of the Philippians, it's become so very, very clear that Paul loved the Philippian church.
There was a very close bond of fellowship between him and them. It's obvious that it gave the apostle great joy to think about the believers in Philippi.
[1:22] It gave him great joy to think about them because he could remember their great faithfulness in the service of the gospel, from the very beginning. It gave him great joy to think about them because he could remember, and he had constant reminders of their great kindness toward him, their practical generosity, and their believing, prayerful remembrance of him.

But it's also obvious as we read this epistle that for all the joy the apostle had in thinking about the Philippians, for all he was able to testify about their faithfulness to the work of the gospel and their generosity towards him, for all that there was something that was lacking.
There was something that was causing him concern. There was something that kept his joy over them from being completely fooled.
And there's more than one indication throughout the epistle that that one thing was just this, that there was a certain lack of unity within the congregation itself.
There was a certain lack of oneness among the believers. Oh, he's not suggesting that there was any one of them who as an individual had the wrong attitude to the gospel.
[2:51] He wasn't suggesting that there was any one of them that had a wrong attitude towards him. The Philippian church wasn't like other churches where they were divided because some of them were listening to false reports about Paul.

It wasn't like the Corinthian church where there was division because there were some who were following false teachers who had come in, false apostles who had come in and were drawing some of the Corinthian believers away in a spirit of antagonism against Paul.
It wasn't that. They were all showing love to Paul. They were all quite enthusiastic in their service of the gospel.
But among themselves there was a certain lack of unity. So again and again Paul very forcefully and yet very tactfully makes the point.
And here he's making this appeal. If there be there for any consolation of Christ, if any comfort of our love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bows and mercies fulfill you my joy.
[4:01] He means there fill up to the full my joy. And do it by this. By being like-minded. Having the same love.

Being of one accord. Of one mind. He appeals for unity. And he goes on and he warns against the things that militate against unity.
He warns them against those things that would militate against unity. Those things that if they weren't watched for and guarded against and rooted out would make the disunity spread.

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So he says let nothing be done through strife for vain glory. He warns against the things that militate against unity.
Strife and vain glory. And he encourages them to pursue the attitudes that would promote unity. In lowliness of mind.
[5:07] Let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things. But every man also in the things of others. There is a peening for this humility that promotes unity.

This humility that leads to an unselfish concern for others. He says if you promote that.
If you work at that. If you seek to make sure that in yourself there is this by the grace of God. By the spirit of God. In answer to prayer that there's in yourself.
A humility. That shows a concern for others. Then the strife and the vain glory will be pushed out. And the unity will fly. And as the apostle here makes his appeal for this humble concern for others.
[6:16] He sets before them an example. And he doesn't hesitate to set before them the example of Jesus Christ himself.

He stops short of nothing less than this. Let this mind be in you. Which was also in Christ Jesus.
He says look at that spirit of unselfish concern for others. That was in Christ Jesus himself.
And keep looking at him. So that that same spirit is nourished in yourself. He points them to Jesus.
This matter of the right attitude among themselves was so important. That he didn't hesitate to set before them this example of Jesus. And he didn't hesitate to set it before them in terms of the most profound exposition of the truth about Jesus.
[7:29] His eternal Godhead. His amazing incarnation. His amazing obedience unto death.

He sets before them and he sets before us this mind that was in Christ Jesus. This mind that he wanted to see in themselves. This mind that God wants us to have among one another.
And as he sets that mind that was in Christ Jesus before us and before them. He shows us this mind of Christ. Even in the person of the eternal Son of God.
Before the incarnation. He sets before us that mind of Christ. As the eternal Son of God comes into the world.
And he sets before us that mind of Jesus Christ. As we see it demonstrated in the man Christ Jesus.
[8:32] He says let this mind be in you. Which was also in Christ Jesus. And at verse 6. He speaks of this Christ Jesus.

But he speaks of this Christ Jesus. Before he actually in historical reality. Became Christ Jesus. He says let this mind be in you.
Which was also in Christ Jesus. And he's saying to us in verse 6. Come with me. And see that mind. Demonstrated. Manifesting itself.
Even in the eternal Son of God. Before he comes into the world. He says this mind is in Christ Jesus.
And it was there in him. Who being in the form of God. Thought it not robbery. To be equal with God.
[9:30] Here in verse 6. We are pointed to the eternal Son of God. The one who was in the bosom of the Father. From all eternity.

Here we have the mind of Christ. The Son of God. He's spoken to us as the one who existed. In the form of God.
He existed in the form of God. He existed in the form of God. Just because he was God. When it says that he existed in the form of God.
The apostle is not talking here about any outward visible form. He's not talking about any bodily form or anything like that. Although he uses the terminology, the form of God.
He can't be speaking about any visible outward manifestation. Because he's speaking about the eternal Son of God. The one who is very God.
[10:31] And we know from scripture that God and his essential being is spirit. The Father is spirit. The Son is spirit.

The third person of the Trinity whom we usually refer to as the Holy Spirit is spirit. But God in the Trinity is spirit. And it's the eternal Son of God in his place in the Trinity.
That we're reading about in verse 6. And when it says he existed in the form of God. He's not talking there about something physical.

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Something manifest. Some outward manifestation. But he is telling us that this eternal Son of God lived.
He existed in all the manner appropriate for God. He lived in all the circumstances and all the situation that was appropriate for the eternal, all-glorious, almighty God.
[11:38] He existed as God because he was God. All the glory, all the dignity, all that was appropriate for the eternal, all-glorious God surrounded him and was his and was the manner of his existence.

And for the eternal Son of God existing in this way, there came to him, there was put to him, the will of the Godhead.
That he, the Son, should come into the world as man. That he, the Son, should come into the world and take to himself a human nature.
That he should come into the world and take the place of the servant of the Godhead. And give his life and ransom for his people.
This eternal, saving, gracious will of the Godhead is put to the Son as he exists in the form of God, as the text puts it. As he exists in that manner of existence that was altogether appropriate to him as the eternal Son of God.
[12:56] This will of God, this will of God, which was the only way in which God could save his people from their sin. This will of God that meant for the Son, his coming into the world, his being made man, his taking the place of a servant.

This will of God is put to him. It's put to him in his existence, in all his glory. And it's told us that this will of God being put to him, as he existed in the form of God, his reaction was that he thought it not robbery to be equal with God.
He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. That's the way our old English translation puts it. The word robbery here is an attempt to translate a Greek expression, which is this idea that he thought that this being equal with God, this continuing to live in the manner of existence that was appropriate for God, he thought that that continuing to exist was not something that must be grasped and held firm and never let go for any consideration, for any reason, whatever.
The translation robbery has no doubt come into our language because the word that's translated here sometimes had a connection with robbery. Along these lines that what was the object of a thief's practice, what was the object of the robber's attempt to get it by robbery, was something that he counted very valuable, something that he wanted to have and that he wanted to hold and that he wanted to possess, and that he wouldn't let go once he got it.
But our text is just saying this, that the eternal Son of God, faced with the will of the Godhead, thought that this continuing to exist as he existed, with all the glory and all the dignity and all that went with being the eternal Son of God, he thought that continuing to exist in this way was not something that shouldn't ever under any circumstances be let go.
[15:32] And his reaction was this. His reaction was this because of the mind that was in him.

The mind of unselfish concern for others. Of course, from the point of view of the Father, there was sacrifice involved too.
Elsewhere in Scripture we're reminded that just as the Son willingly came, the Father willingly gave, and there's an element of costliness for the Father. But here it is the second person that our attention is concentrated on.
It's the Son and his willingness to let go. His willingness to give up. His willingness because his attitude was not one of thinking only of himself, but an attitude of unselfish concern for others.
If his mind had been different, if he had been only thinking about himself, then our text wouldn't exist. The Gospel wouldn't exist.
[16:45] We wouldn't have had the Word of God as the Word of Grace. But it was because this was his attitude. Because this was his attitude of thinking of others.

That there is a Gospel. And he didn't react to the purpose and the plan of salvation by saying, Oh, I can't under any circumstances let my manner of existence go.
I must grasp it. I must hold on to it. That wasn't his attitude.
Who, being in the form of God, thought that being equal with God was not something that he had to grasp, but rather, in the contrary, he emptied himself.
He emptied himself. Our translation says he made himself of no reputation. The word literally emptied. That's what it means. He emptied himself.

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[17:49] But what does it mean that he emptied himself? It doesn't mean that he ceased to be God.

That was impossible. The eternal Son of God couldn't cease to be God. The eternal Trinity can't change. He's the unchanging God. It doesn't mean, when it says that he made himself of no reputation, or if you translate it, that he emptied himself, that he ceased to be God, but it means that he gave up that manner of existence which was his by right.
And he made himself of no reputation. He had changed that manner of existence for the place of humiliation, for the place of becoming a servant, the almighty God, the second person of the Trinity, exchanged his manner of existence for the existence of a servant.
the human being a servant. And the uncreated God took on a human nature. the attitude that was there when in the eternal counsels of God, the plan of salvation was put to the Son.
that attitude that was there in the mind of the eternal Son of God, when that plan of salvation was put to him, was in the fullness of time. Was it the incarnation put into practice?
[19:35] And he emptied himself and he took the form of a servant. And he was made in the likeness of man.

When we listen carefully to the language that the apostle is using, we find that the very language itself is so unique because he's talking about something that was so unique.
You see, he's talking about, literally he's talking about Jesus, the eternal Son of God, emptying himself. But when he goes on to explain what that emptying was, he talks in terms of taking.
He emptied himself by taking to himself the form of a servant and the nature of a human being.
It's the incarnation that's spoken about here, that amazing demonstration of that mind that the apostle is drawing us to, is drawing our attention to.
[20:51] That most amazing thing that has ever happened, that the eternal Son of God took upon himself that human nature.

And it was done in love. It was done because that mind was in him. There was a mind of selfless, unselfish concern for others.
At verse 6, as we were seeing, the apostle had brought us right back to the realms of eternity and spoke to us of the pre-incarnate Son of God. At verse 7, he's taken us to that amazing point in history where the incarnation took place.
And he who existed in the form of God gave it up. And he took upon himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man. And he was found in fashion as a man.
Here now, we're face to face with the incarnate Son of God. From verse 7 into verse 8, we are brought face to face with the reality of the incarnate Son of God.
[22:19] We're brought face to face with the man Christ Jesus. What's now going to happen in the man Christ Jesus?

Is that mind that was demonstrating itself in these councils of eternity into which we were given a glimpse at verse 6 still going to show itself?
Is that mind that was manifesting itself when he came down as a babe to Bethlehem? Is that mind still going to manifest itself in the man Christ Jesus?
That's what verse 8 is telling us. Yes, indeed, that mind is still there. That mind is still manifesting itself in the mature Christ Jesus.
In this human being as he grew up, this unique human being who was God and man in one person. In this unique human being that mind that was in the eternal Son of God is still there and that attitude is being reaffirmed in the person of Jesus of Nessus and being found in fashion as a man when men came face to face with him, when men met him, when men watched him, when men listened to him, when men saw him pursuing his course through life.
[23:55] What they saw was the reaffirmation of what had been in the mind of the eternal Son of God and he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Here in verse 8 we have what is really a summary of the life of the man Christ Jesus. We have brought together in just one verse a summary of the whole gospel story as recorded by the evangelists when again and again the human Jesus was faced with the Father's will.
We see it from his earliest days, we see it there when we have a glimpse of him, just the one glimpse that we have of him in the gospel story when he is a child and remember he stayed behind in Jerusalem and his parents go on in the journey and then when they see he's not there they go back and after two days they find him and he's talking in the temple and he's speaking with the

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learned men there and he's talking with them about the scriptures and in answer to the rebuke of his parents he said did you not know that I must be about my father's business?
there the child was being prepared and he was preparing himself for his obedience and we see it again and again we see it as he throughout his earthly ministry is with determination making his way to Jerusalem and all that awaited him there his own mind is being prepared for it his own understanding is growing you see there's this mystery in the person of Jesus that as the eternal son of God he knows everything but he's a human being and as a human being he learns and the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews makes that point when he tells us obedience that though he was the son he learned obedience by the things that he suffered and that doesn't mean that he learned how to obey but he learned what was involved in his obedience and as he learned again and again he reconfirmed his obedience he reaffirmed that attitude of not thinking of himself but thinking about us as he explains what's waiting in
Jerusalem as he explains to his disciples why he has come and what lies ahead of him we find that his own disciples through their spokesman Peter are saying to him put such thoughts away from you these things shall never be and remember how forcibly Jesus answers that sort of language and he says to Peter get you behind be Satan for you don't savour the things of God but the things of man he saw there the challenge of Satan he saw there the temptation of Satan to divert him from the pathway of obedience but being found in fashion as a man he became obedient obedient right up to the death of the cross the obedience which was the manifestation of this mind which was in him from all eternity we see that obedience reaffirmed we see it in a very amazing way in the record of the garden of
[27:50] Gethsemane he became obedient unto death even the death of the cross when it brought before him so very very clearly clearly more clearly than ever it had been brought before him before that this is the father's will and it is a matter not just of enduring the hatred of men but enduring the wrath of God against him he doesn't hold back but he says not my will but thine be done Jesus of Nazareth the incarnate Jesus of Nazareth reaffirms the attitude the mind of the eternal son of God here we have all the wonderful theology of the gospel brought before us in these amazing verses and let us remember they're brought before us as an example let us remember that

Paul was saying to the Philippians and he's saying to us let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus now when Paul does that when Paul sets Christ before us as an example he's not for a moment saying that all we need is the example he's not for a moment detracting from the uniqueness of the person of Christ therefore for the uniqueness of the mind of Christ and he's not detracting from the uniqueness of the work of Christ Christ is such as no one ever has been or can be he's unique in his person his mind is unique the harmony of the eternal son of God and the pure son of man his work is unique when he gave himself in obedience unto the cross he was doing something that no one else could do and he was laying down his life as sacrifice for others in a way that no one else could do with an effectiveness that only he could give it
Paul as he sets Christ before us as an example is not saying we only need the example and Christ is nothing more than an example he's not detracting from the uniqueness of Christ and the uniqueness of his finished work and yet when we say that we dare not allow ourselves to forget that Christ is being set before us as an example and when Paul appeals for that humble selfless concern for others he doesn't allow us to think in terms of a standard any less than the standard of Christ and he's speaking to those who are professing to have come to understand what Christ's self-giving was all about he's speaking to those of us who profess to look to Christ as our Savior as those who have come to know what we owe to his self-giving oh we always need to be humbled we always need to find that grace to lay aside the selfishness that prevents that humble concern for the good of others that we ought to have and that humble concern for others that promotes true unity and as we need to be humbled and as we need to go on to be humbled and as we need to go on finding grace to have that concern for others
Paul can find no other source to point us to no other source of that humility that we need and no other source of that grace that we need and he says to us let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus and he goes on to explain in the fullest terms just what that mind was and what it led to the costly self-sacrifice oh to have the mind of Christ will always be costly we can't follow this example except at cost but Paul having spoken about the costly example of Christ had gone on to speak about his being highly exalted the one who was saying I am willing to let go the one who was refusing to take the attitude of saying

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I must grasp this living equal with God and never let it go the one who was refusing to say that and the one who was prepared for all the humiliation and self-giving that we read about here is the one whom God has highly exalted and given a name that is above every name and we can be sure too that there's no costly self-giving that God is calling us to in Christ that God himself will overlook that God will ignore for as we are assured elsewhere in the scripture if we suffer with him we will reign with him if we listen to this call now for this mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus however costly it is we can be sure that if we are in
[33:57] Christ and Christ's mind is in us now then in God's good time we will be with Christ where he is Paul has set before us this costly example this infinite standard and he sets it before us not because he thinks we can attain it by our own grace but just because what Christ with his attitude of self concern for others has done is to make available to us by his own sacrifice by his own resurrection by his own triumph that power of his own spirit that can transform us into his own likeness he's setting before us the mind of Christ and what it led him to and he's setting it before us as an example for those of us who profess to be

Christ but as he sets before us this example as he sets before us this mind of Christ and what it led him to he's reminding us again that there is salvation in no other Christ undertook all this because there was no other way in which he could save his people from their sin and oh can we read and hear these words again can any of us read and hear these words again and go on looking for salvation in any other way there's no salvation for any of us except through this costly self-giving of the Son of God for us oh may we all know what it is to embrace him as our Saviour and to commit ourselves to him as our
Lord that this mind may be in us which was also in Christ Jesus Amen let us pray Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen O Lord our God again we thank thee for that gospel which sets before us things that couldn't have entered into the heart of man to imagine we thank thee and you for the amazing truth that the eternal Son of God was made flesh and that he was made flesh with a purpose and a purpose that was fulfilled we thank thee O Lord that he himself was able to say it is finished and we thank that he is now in glory and we pray O Lord that we may know the power of his own spirit drawing us as sinners to trust in himself as Saviour and renewing us as his own to his own image for his own glory and our good and the good of his church even now
Amen

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