

“Thy Kingdom Come”
Lesson 5. The Peace of the Kingdom
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Introduction: A citizen of the kingdom will pay attention when God describes Himself!

- A. We have already learned that in the kingdom our goal is to become like the king.
 - 1. Are you being conformed to His image? (**Rom 8:29**)
 - 2. Do you “know the Lord?” (**Heb 8:11-12**)
 - B. God has chosen to often describe Himself as “the God of peace.”
 - 1. This is found six times in the New Testament. (**Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20**)
 - 2. Consider how Jesus is described as “the Lord of peace.” What does He want for our lives? (**2 Thess 3:16**)
- 2 Thessalonians 3:16 (NKJV)** ¹⁶Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.
- 3. To be like God is to be a “child of God.” Remember how Jesus described the citizen of the kingdom? (**Mt 5:9**)
- C. The kingdom of God is characterized by peace! (**Isa 11:1-2, 6-10**)
 - 1. That statement may come as a surprise to you.
 - 2. This king and His kingdom will be very different from any kingdom that ever existed. Consider the prophecies and announcements surrounding His birth. (**Lk 1:79; 2:14**)
 - 2. Peace is the great work of all who have yielded to the reign of God.
 - 3. What does peace mean?

I. True peace begins with God.

- A. What is peace?
 - 1. εἰρήνη eirene □ AV - peace 89, one 1, rest 1, quietness 1; 92 □ 1) a state of national tranquillity 1a) exemption from the rage and havoc of war 2) peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord 3) security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous).
 - 2. Who we seek peace with will make all the difference in our service to God.
- B. There is only one way to have peace with God. (**Rom 5:1**)
 - 1. A living faith will lead us to this peace.
 - 2. Peace can only come through the blood of Jesus Christ. (**Col 1:20**)
 - 3. This peace with God will lead us into the one body with those we hated while in the world. (**Eph 2:14-15**)
- C. When we choose peace with God we will find ourselves at war with the world!
 - 1. We must always ask ourselves the question: “Whose peace do we want?” (**Jam 4:4-6**)
 - 2. We will even find the war coming within the church against those who wish to please men. (**Gal 1:10**)
 - 3. Some who cry for peace the loudest want peace with the world! (**Jer 6:14-15**)

II. We must fight for peace with the citizens of the kingdom

- A. The Lord makes it clear that finding peace with other Christians is not easy.
 - 1. We must seek and pursue it. A casual profession is not enough. **(1 Pt 3:10-11)**
 - 2. As we flee sin we must pursue peace. **(2 Tim 2:22)**
 - 3. If we do not pursue peace we will not see the Lord. **(Heb 12:15)**
- B. Why is peace with our brethren difficult?
 - 1. Because we tend to look out for our interests and not our brethren. **(Rom 15:1)**
 - 2. Because we stay too busy to be involved with “unpredictable” people.
 - 3. Because we do not have a love for the things of the Lord (which are the people of the Lord!)
 - 4. Because of the pressure of the world to accept their standards.
- C. We must keep learning how to be at peace with one another. **(Gal 5:22-23)**
 - 1. I have a sermon called “Some Lessons that Do not Stay Learned.” This is especially true of our relationship with each other.
 - 2. Our relationship with God depends on our seeking peace with one another. **(2 Cor 13:11)**
 - 3. One of the worst things that could happen to a church is for the membership to become overconfident and lazy. Satan will take advantage of this.
 - 4. What kind of kingdom has its followers fight each other?

III. How is peace found in the kingdom of God?

- A. We must preach the gospel of peace without compromise. **(Acts 10:36; Rom 10:15)**
 - 1. Some will find peace while many will go to war against you! **(Mt 10:34-39)**
 - 2. Please remember where true peace comes. Without a biblical faith there will never be peace.
- B. In conversion Christ must come to reign with our hearts. **(Rom 14:17-21)**
 - 1. We now only want that which is “acceptable to God.”
 - 2. As we mature we put others above ourselves because we view our brethren as Christ does. **(1 Cor 8:11-13)**
 - 3. This is the calling of all that find salvation. **(Col 3:15)**
- C. Am I growing in my service to God?
 - 1. Am I increasingly displaying the “mind of Christ?” **(Phil 2:1-5)**
 - 2. Do I view my life’s purpose as pursuing peace with my brethren? **(Eph 4:1-3)**
 - 3. Does the words of my mouth reflect a spiritual wisdom that builds peace with others? **(Rom 8:6)**
 - 4. Do you really want to be in the kingdom of God? There are some lions who would rather eat the lambs!
- D. Which wisdom do you have? **(Jas 3:13-17)**
 - 1. Make a list of the characteristics of the wisdom of God and the wisdom of Satan.
 - 2. Why is it easier to use Satan’s wisdom and call it God’s?

Conclusion: Am I really involved in seeking the peace of God?

- A. Are you that approachable person that another could trust with their problems?
- B. Are you one who would defend “the faith” when others would water down the

gospel to “please men?” (Gal 1:10)

Questions for Lesson 5
The Peace of the Kingdom

1. Why does God describe Himself as “the God of peace?”
2. What is the message conveyed about God’s kingdom in Isaiah 11:6-10?
3. What is peace? How can man find peace with God?
4. Can we be at peace with everyone? Explain your answer.
5. Why is it difficult to find peace with our brethren?
6. How can pride cause us to lose peace among Christians?
7. Are those who defend the faith responsible in destroying peace among brethren?
8. How will I know if I am growing in my service to God?
9. From James 3:13-17 list things that are characteristic of the wisdom of Satan
10. From James 3:13-17 list things that are characteristic of the wisdom of God.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

Clinton D. Hamilton

One of the most challenging injunctions in the New Testament is this one: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Certainly seeking to obey it should exhilarate one. Ideals are essential to all noble endeavors and this ideal presents to one's mind the loftiest concept possible: aspire to be like the Lord! Appealing to the very best that one can possibly be is exactly what this commandment does. Evoking from one the conduct that would be Christ-like is the purpose of the injunction. Realizing the conduct called for can be the most exciting and rewarding adventure a human being could attempt.

Presuppositions of the Injunction

The instruction to have the mind of Christ is preceded by several conditional statements or propositions which form the undergirding of the injunction. Given these presuppositions as true, the apostle calls on the brethren to fulfill his joy, to be likeminded, to have the same love, to be of one accord, and to be of one mind (Phil. 2:2).

The first condition on which his command is based is whether there is any exhortation in Christ (Phil. 2: 1). *Exhortation* is translated from *paraklesis*, which is also translated by *consolation* and *comfort*. It is compounded from *para*, beside, and *kaleo*, to call. Literally, then, the word means to call to one's side. Originally the **word was used in a legal sense** when one called an **advocate to his side** in the court room before the judge to guide one's fortunes in that circumstance. Evidently the context in Philippians 2:1 would lead one to the meaning of encouragement as the precise sense of the term. In Christ there is certainly encouragement. Admitting that encouragement is in Christ lays a logical foundation for the commands later given, to which commands our attention will be directed later at the proper time.

Whether there is consolation of love is the second condition on which Paul's command to have the mind of Christ is predicated. Translated from *paramuthion*, the word *consolation* (in the American Standard Version) means comfort or persuasion. Compounded from *para*, beside or near, and *muthos*, speech, *paramuthion* means a speaking closely to one, and in the context we are studying the idea is that love uses such an instrument. The idea appears to be the persuasiveness of love's appeal. There is persuasion in love for that is love's instrument. We love because God first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19). This presupposition is true.

The third condition of the injunction to have the mind of Christ is whether there is any fellowship of the Spirit. *Fellowship* is rendered from *koinonia*, which means a sharing in common, a joint participation, or communion. Is there a sharing of the Spirit? To all those who obey Him God has given the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32). Christians are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13) and God's love is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us (Rom. 5:5). God has given the Holy Spirit to us, Paul affirms (1 Thess. 4:8). Other passages to the same point could be cited but these abundantly demonstrate the proposition that there is fellowship of the Spirit. This presupposition must be admitted as true.

Whether there are tender mercies and compassions is the fourth condition laid down as a presupposition for the command to have the mind of Christ. *Mercies* comes from *oiktirmoi*, which means pities or compassions for the misfortunes of others. God is the father of mercies, *oiktirmon* (11 Cor. 1:3). *Compassions* translates the word *splanchna*, which originally denoted the physical organs, the intestines, and for this reason is translated bowels in the King James Version. Vine points out in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* that by the term the Greeks meant the seat of the violent passions and the Hebrews, the tender affections. Probably the notion arose from the sensation one feels in the alimentary canal when angry, frightened, or overwhelmed with tender feelings as when one thinks one is in love. The testimony of God's word about His grace and the love of Christ, as well as the testimony of human experience in relation to one another, is that there are such emotions as mercies and tender affections. This presupposition, then, is likewise true.

Given these postulates, Paul then moves logically to exhortations and commands that flow from them. Brethren are obligated to behave consistently with these presuppositions. All of them had experienced the

encouragement of Christ, the persuasion of love, the **fellowship** of the Spirit, and the tender mercies and compassions from God and one another. All of these, then, should logically compel them to the behavior which he enjoins in Philippians 2:2-8.

The Injunction

Behavior is based on conviction and thus grows out of rational considerations. Evidently Paul longed to see the Philippians come to that unanimity which should characterize those in Christ. With the presuppositions set forth as the logical basis for this unity, he proceeds to enjoin it in most beautiful language.

He calls on them to fulfill his joy. He already had joy in them but he wanted it to be made full or complete upon seeing that unity attained of which they were capable were they to have the mind of Christ. Joy, from *charan*, which means delight, conveys the notion of a spirit buoyed with happiness. The Philippians can reach this state if they are likeminded, of the same love, and of one accord, one mind. Alford suggests that *likeminded*, from *auto phronete*, is probably the more general term and that being of *one mind*, from *en phronoutes*, is more specific. Both convey the idea of thinking the one, or same thing. "Having the same love" is from *auten agapen*, which means to have the same active interest in the welfare of each other. "Being of one accord" is from *echontes sumpsochoi*, being of one soul. The meaning is having a union of soul or being unanimous, mind the one thing, Alford affirms. Bound together within the truth set forth in the presuppositions, the Philippians should be united in their minds in seeking the same thing for each other.

This would mean that nothing should be done through faction or vainglory. *Faction* translates the term *eritheian*, which means strife or contention as an expression of enmity. It means to court distinction or to have a desire to put one's self first. It is to have a partisan spirit. It also carries the idea of selfishness, selfish ambition. It was used of selfish intriguing for office. Saints needs to be aware of its devastating effects and of its great hindrance to one's having the mind of Christ. To act from a spirit to aid one's own clique against another is to act in such a way as to bring separation among brethren, not unity. Splitting into groups opposed to one another violates the injunction given and is contradictory to the presuppositions on which it rests. Therefore the apostle enjoins them to do nothing through faction of self-seeking rivalry, the result of which would be to create warring parties within the body of Christ. Neither should one act from vainglory, *kenodoxian*, which means empty glory. It is a compounding of *kenos*, empty, and *doxa*, glory. One should not act out of a desire to gain some glory or exaltation which is vain or empty. One who so acts thinks too highly of one's self; such a person is conceited without ground for it. To act out of conceit brings confusion and chaos into a group; it is opposed to the well-being of one's fellows.

Set over against acting through faction and vainglory is the conduct commanded which is for one in lowliness of mind to count the other person better than one's self. *Lowliness of mind* is translated from *tapeinophrosune*, humbleness. This is opposed to the idea of being conceited. Rather one sees one's self as being of low estate. There is no boosting of one's self to an unjustified high estate. *Count*, translated from *hegeomai*, means to lead. It then came to mean to consider or to esteem. *Huperechontas*, from which *better* is translated, means literally to hold above or to be superior to.

Paul is not saying that each of us has to think the same thing about every aspect of life. We can disagree about the color of the building or the carpet and such matters. But in relation to the concern we have for one another we should think the same thing. What is this?

The Mind of Christ

We can think the same thing when each of us has the mind of Christ. But what is the mind of Christ? This Paul explains in Philippians 2:5-8.

Although existing in the form of God, Jesus counted not being on an equality with God a thing to be retained or held to. Rather He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant and being found in the likeness of men,. . . He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death." A careful analysis of this language will aid in grasping what the mind of Christ is.

Existing is from *huparchon*, which is compounded from *hupo*, under and *arche*, a beginning. The sense is that He existed prior to the condition under consideration and continues after it. Therefore He existed in the form of God before and after His incarnation. His being from eternity is involved. Prior to His incarnation, what was His condition of existence? He was in the form of God. The word *morphe* is translated *form*. From it we have such words as *metamorphis* and *morphology*. The idea is that of the essential nature or character or essence. Jesus Christ actually subsisted as Deity prior to and after He came to earth. His is that character or essence from which He cannot be separated because it is His by being who He is. Truly and really in every particular and detail of essential nature and character Jesus Christ is Deity.

Being Deity in every particular, He was on an equality with God. *Isos*, from which *equality* is rendered, carries the sense of being the same in quality or of whatever essence is under consideration. In every respect that God is what He is, Jesus Christ is equal. However God existed, so did the Lord; there is no difference whatsoever. Mention anything about or any characteristic of God, Jesus Christ has it. State any condition or exaltation of God, Jesus Christ possessed it.

Because of His concern for the welfare of man, Jesus was willing to surrender His prerogatives and to take up on Himself the form, *morphe*, of a servant and be found in fashion as a man. Jesus did not view His being on an equality with God, having the same prerogatives and honors, something to be held to or retained. Rather He was willing to empty Himself. *Grasped* is translated from *harpagmos*, which means a thing to be held as a prize. *Robbery* is the term used in the King James Version but one should not by it be led erroneously to believe that equality was to be seized. His being in the form of God already made Him to be on an equality with God. Neither should one conclude that when He emptied Himself His Deity is involved. His subsisting as Deity was no less the case after incarnation than it was the case prior to it. He emptied Himself of His glory and prerogatives belonging to Deity when He became in essential character and nature a servant. He surrendered His prerogative in becoming a servant in human flesh. *Servant* translates *doulon*, which signifies a slave in relation to a master. He was truly a slave as He was really Deity. He was both. Therefore He did not empty Himself to His Deity.

As a servant found in the likeness and fashion of men, He became obedient to the will of God, even to dying on the cross. In this supreme sacrifice He redeemed men. Truly, He looked not to His own things but to the things of others. Certainly He did not act out of faction or conceit. In Christ's conduct one observes the very opposite or contrast of *erithian*, faction. Such humble submission to the will of God in seeking the welfare of others is our example. If each of us has this mind, it will be impossible for there to be disunity or disharmony among us. He loved us and gave Himself for us. By having this same interest in the welfare of others, we have the mind of Christ. This is the sense in which we can be of the same mind, of one accord, and of the same love.

Conclusion

Sometimes when the command to be of the same mind and of one accord is examined, the cynics comment that it is not possible, for they say that would destroy individuality. This is not the case. We can appreciate different people, events, building designs, manner or ways of doing things, and have a multitude of other differences. But in having and holding these differences if we are really and truly concerned about the interest and welfare of others above our own selfish interests and conceits, we have the mind of Christ and, therefore, can be of the same mind, of the same judgment, and of one accord. Every congregation of God's people needs to learn the meaning of this expression and endeavor with every strength possible to attain it.