

THE MIND OF CHRIST (2)
Philippians 2:12-30

Introduction:

1. The theme of Paul's letter to the church at Philippi is joy in Christ.
2. Fifteen times, joy, rejoice, or rejoicing are mentioned.
3. The way to have joy in Christ is to be of one mind.
4. The way to be of one mind is to be humble as Christ was.
5. After giving the example of how Christ humbled Himself by taking on humanity and dying for our sins, Paul makes practical application.
 - a. We must apply the teaching of Christ.
 - b. Timothy and Epaphroditus are examples of humble service.

Discussion:

- I. WE MUST APPLY THE TEACHING OF CHRIST (vv. 12-18).
 - A. Having humbled ourselves before God, we must obey Him.
 1. Just as the Philippians had been obedient when Paul was with them, so they needed to obey in his absence.
 2. They must "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - a. We must "take heed lest we fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).
 - b. We "must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest we drift away" (Hebrews 2:1).
 3. God works in us "to will and to do for His good pleasure."
 - a. One must obey out of his own free will.
 - b. God works in us to bring about our obedience.
 4. The two statements are not contradictory.

- a. Each of us bears responsibility for doing God's will.
- b. God supplies the motives for our obedience.

B. We are to obey "without complaining and disputing."

- 1. We will be "blameless and harmless."
- 2. We will "shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Matthew 5:16).
 - a. The church is to be a light shining in a dark world.
 - b. Every Christian must be a "light reflector" reflecting the influence of Christ in his life.
- 3. We must "hold forth the Word of life."
 - a. This is preeminently the work of the church and its members (Matt. 28:19; 1 Tim. 3:14,15; 2 Tim. 2:2).
 - b. We must teach at every opportunity (Matt. 28:19).
- 4. If the saints at Philippi are faithful, Paul will have reason to rejoice because his labor has not been in vain.
- 5. He speaks of his blood as the drink offering poured out upon the sacrifice of the faith of the Philippian church.

II. TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS ARE EXAMPLES OF HUMBLE SERVICE (vv. 19-30).

A. Timothy and Paul had a "father-son" relationship (1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2).

B. Paul paid Timothy two great compliments:

- 1. "I have no one likeminded who will sincerely care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things of Christ."
 - a. No one among all Paul's co-workers could measure up to Timothy.
 - b. He had a genuine concern for the needs of others.

- c. No one among Paul's co-workers were as willing to sacrifice as Timothy was.
- 2. "You know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the Gospel."
 - a. Many Gospel preachers have sons who also preach the Gospel.
 - b. I suspect more preachers' sons follow in their father's footsteps than those of other occupations, except maybe farming.
 - c. Timothy had proven himself in the service of Christ.
 - d. There is no better training for Gospel preachers than "in-service training."
 - e. Paul planned to send Timothy to Philippi as soon as he learned the verdict of his hearing before Caesar.
 - f. He is optimistic for he trusted in the Lord that he himself would come also.

C. Epaphroditus is "an unsung hero of the faith."

- 1. Few students of the Bible remember the name of this humble servant of the Lord.
- 2. We know very little about Epaphroditus' personal life.
 - a. His name means "charming, handsome, or lovely."
 - b. Some say he is the same as Epaphras, {a shortened form of Epaphroditus}, but this is unlikely.
 - 1) Epaphroditus was from Philippi (Phil. 2:25ff).
 - 2) Epaphras was from Colossae (Col. 4:12).
- 3. Paul identified Epaphroditus by five descriptions.
 - a. "My brother:" This is not a title to be worn by preachers, for all Christians are "brethren" and members of God's family by means of the new birth (Matt. 23:8-12; John 3:3-5).

- b. My “fellow worker:” We are “laborers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:9), so we must be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding...”(1 Cor. 15:58).
 - c. My “fellow soldier:” We enlist in the Lord’s army when we obey the Gospel; we put on “the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:10-18); we are “appointed for the defense of the Gospel” (Phil. 1:17); we must “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3).
 - d. “Your messenger:” Epaphroditus was the messenger of the church in Philippi to Paul. He brought their gift to him (4:10-18) and likely carried Paul’s letter back to them.
 - e. He was their “minister to Paul’s need:” The word for minister is not “doulos” which means “slave,” nor “diaknonos” the general word for servant, but “leitourgon,” a public spirited citizen who served his country at his own expense. His service to the church at Philippi and to Paul was voluntary.
4. Epaphroditus had become seriously ill (“sick almost unto death”).
- a. He was distressed because the Philippians were distressed upon hearing of his illness.
 - b. He longed to see his brethren at Philippi again.
 - c. Therefore, Paul was sending him back home.
 - d. Epaphroditus had “hazarded his life” to provide service to Paul, the prisoner.

Conclusion:

1. Timothy and Epaphroditus were humble servants of the Lord who had “the mind of Christ.”
2. Thousands of such unknown and unrecognized servants will be highly commended by our Lord on Judgment Day (Matt. 25:34).
3. All spiritual blessings are only in Christ (Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:26,27).

