

PRAYER MEETING
"THE MIND OF CHRIST"

Introduction

1. This is a joyful letter: 1:4 / 18 / 26 / 2:2...
2. Happy churches: the formula: 2:2-4f
3. At the root of it all is – to have "the mind of Christ".
DOCTRINE The Christian must seek to have the mind of Christ.

1. WHAT PAUL HERE MEANS BY "THE MIND OF CHRIST"

- 1) Preliminary remarks:
 - (i) unconverted persons are not exhorted to imitate Christ – this was a mediaeval error.
 - (ii) if we have grace we may strive to do so.
 - (iii) none is so worthy of imitation:
 - the only perfect man of history
 - the God-Man
 - his life is the complete fulfilling of the Ten Commandments
- 2) The "mind of Christ" here refers to:
 - (i) Christ's self-effacing modesty and humility
 - (ii) This is true of Christ from the cradle to the grave – all was humiliation.
 - (iii) Consider: his poor parents / his sinful ancestry / his birth / his place of residence – not Jerusalem but Nazareth / his lowly occupation / his total meekness:
ILLUSTRATION: Christ when struck on the face.
APPLICATION: Pride is always ugly – but especially so in a Christian.

2. HOW DOES PAUL PRESENT CHRIST'S HUMILITY?

- 1) By reminding us of who Christ is:

- (i) v.6: in the "form" of God (Μορφή (Morphe) in the Greek here = essential character with all the attributes of God in his possession);
- (ii) Not "robbery" to be equal with God – i.e. not a thing to be grasped at – Compare Adam.
DOCTRINE: Christ was in this world conscious of His Godhood. His miracles were to show to us that it is so.

2) But now, Look at Christ's humility:

This first degree of humbling is His incarnation:

- (i) made himself of no reputation. This literally is: "made himself nothing".
OBSERVE: He appeared to be no more than a man.
- (ii) "he took on him the form of a servant":
ILLUSTRATION: preaching / healing / foot-washing...
He said, "I am among you as one that serves".
APPLICATION: It is good to serve one another.
- (iii) "was made in the likeness of men"
Christ's human nature was in every way like ours apart from sin. He felt as we feel and suffered as we suffer.
APPLICATION: This is a great wonder!
ILLUSTRATION: imagine if we were to take on us the nature of a worm.
- (iv) "being found in fashion as a man"
"Fashion" here is SCHEMA, referring to His outward appearance.
OBSERVE: Christ was a true man but not a mere man. He is the God-Man.
APPLICATION: All these four statements show us how Christ humbled himself – they all refer to his incarnation. We might call this the first degree of his self-humbling.

3. There is now a second degree of Christ's humiliation: the mode of his death:

- 1) v.8: "he humbled himself...obedient":
We die because we must; he died because he chose to obey the

Father's will in making atonement for us as his people.

2) "because...even the death of the cross"

It was a profound humbling to be as a man; a further humbling to choose to die for us; a greater still to die the painful and accursed death of the cross.

OBSERVE: No self-abasement can or ever could compare with this - God dies in our nature. (Explain).

3. **THE FORCE OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION**

- 1) It is to impress on us how we too must abase ourselves.
- 2) God loves the humble and meek: "The Lord lifts us the meek..."
- 3) There are great blessings flowing from a church where there is deep humility:
 - (i) an atmosphere of heavenliness
 - (ii) the hope that God will bless us with rich blessings

CONCLUSION

This is surely implied in what happened to Christ: v.9-11.
Should we not then all strive after this humble attitude?

<p>PSALM</p> <p>146: 1 – 6</p> <p>147: 1 – 7</p> <p>113: 5 - 9</p>
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