

# **The Mind that was in Christ**

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## Philippians ii. 5-11.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Has God Himself become our example? Yes! It is traced out for us in the following verses.

“In the form of God.” Divine attributes were His. He made the worlds. He was the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of His Person. No one who was not God could be in the form of God. He could say, “I proceeded forth, and came from God.” “Before Abraham was, I am.” The form means all that belonged to God. All that is true of God is true of Christ. He was with God. Without Him was not anything made that was made. “In Him was life.” Omnipotence and omniscience belong equally to Him.

This being so, it was no object of rapine to Him to be on an equality with God. He could not be more than He was, He could not raise Himself. This is in contrast to Adam, and even to Satan. Satan aspired to something above what God had made him, and he fell. Then he procured man’s fall by the same means. But with Christ there was nothing above *Him*. He who was in the form of God could not go higher, He could only go lower. This He did; “He emptied Himself.” He laid aside the *form*, the outward glory, that which was too bright for mortal eye, and all that He was—for He never could be less than He was — lay hid under a servant’s *form*. He could not cease to be God, however low He came; but all that would have amazed and dazzled us He doffed, He kept in the beams of His effulgence, so that one might look upon His face, and learn to know Him. This was the wondrous sign given to those simple, untaught shepherds, “Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” And yet He was Emmanuel. Does not this awaken sensibilities in our hearts nothing else could? — that One who was in the form of God should be willing to take the form of a servant? As He could say, “I am among you as He that serveth.” Angels had been *His* ministers and servants. And He comes now not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He was “seen of angels.” What must they have felt as they witnessed that One so infinitely above them made a little lower than they? The highest taking the lowest place. He would say to a poor sinner, “Give Me to drink.” The call of a blind beggar would arrest Him. “Jesus stood,” and the question immediately comes, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?” He would wash His disciples’ feet. And yet He was the One who had measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and before whom all nations are as nothing, and counted to Him less than nothing and vanity.

And then we read He “was made in the likeness of men.” He would serve as a man. Angels had been, and are, servants, but the Lord Jesus would come lower than they. It would have been an immeasurable descent from the form of God to the very highest created being; but He passed by the shining ranks of angels and of seraphs, and descended lower still, even to man’s estate. Formerly it had been said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”; now *God* comes in the likeness of men. Only there is this difference between Genesis i. and Philippians ii., the first word spoken there in connection with man is “dominion,” here it is “He humbled Himself.”

In taking man’s place He took all that it involved, sin apart. Therefore we read, “He humbled Himself.” This was true, even at His birth. Though Lord of all, He claimed nothing. No costly canopy was spread over that head. No royal dainties fell to His lot. A wayside inn and a

manger received Him into the world His hands had made. And yet to announce the great fact all heaven was jubilant, and heaven-sent messengers made lowly ones on earth acquainted with the joyful news of a Saviour's birth. But a manger was His place, and shepherds His attendants, as far as earth was concerned. "He humbled Himself." And this was in keeping with His entire life. His parents were poor, His home at Nazareth. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" told how He had humbled Himself. And later the enquiry of John the Baptist seemed to tell the same tale, "Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?" At His baptism we see the same thing. "I have need to be baptized of Thee," says John, "and comest Thou to me?" And the answer the humbled One makes is, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." On the Mount of Transfiguration, when His title to the glory, as man, was fully owned, He does not enter it, for He would not enter it alone; He descends, and from that point He has "the death of the cross" before Him. Similarly, on the occasion of the Samaritans refusing to make ready for Him, when the cities where most of His mighty works were done rejected Him, and, finally, in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross of Calvary, we see the same humbling of Himself.

But more, He became obedient unto death." He never could have tasted death except in the way of obedience. This tells us who He was. No other man could be *obedient* unto death, for all were *subject* to death, through disobedience. Death had no claim upon Him. Notice how scripture puts it: "He by the *grace* of God should taste death for everything." It was grace, it was obedience; in no other way could death come in His path. He was obedient *unto death*. Who can tell what death must have been to Him? The garden of Gethsemane discloses to us something of what it was, where, in prospect of it, He sweat as it were great drops of blood, and three times over said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." But it was not possible, and so He drank it. And when His disciples sought to rescue Him from it, He says, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He "became obedient unto death."

And this death was "even the death of the cross." We should not pass lightly over a statement like this. In scripture there is no redundancy of language, and an emphatic statement of this kind is to be carefully noticed. It was a shameful death. He became a curse, His death was with the wicked, "He was numbered with the transgressors." This shows the wonderful effect of His demeanour upon the centurion, to lead him to exclaim of One who was *crucified*, "*Certainly* this was a righteous man."

Thus His pathway was ever downward till it touched the lowest point; and all the result of obedience. It is important to observe this. It was not a self-appointed path; it was in subjection to the will of Another. As He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." We can think of it therefore as what it was to the heart of God. And immediately in the next verse we get God's answer to it, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." Here we have two things — He went to the lowest depth — He has been placed in the glory's highest height; having humbled *Himself*, God has exalted *Him*. This shows what God thought of that pathway which, to man's eye, went ever downward. It is the divine answer to all the mournings, the revilings, and the scorn endured at the hands of man. Here we have One whom God could exalt. If we did not know this, however lovely the life of Jesus, all would be incomplete, like a broken arch. But, thanks be to God, we know that Jesus has won the meed and crown. And having followed Him to the lowest point, where death intervenes, we are not perforce obliged to stop there, we

can dwell with enraptured hearts upon the “wherefore” that follows. “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, of 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.”

We are not told what the name is (if indeed it is another name than Jesus), which is above every name. But we do not need to enquire, for we are informed amply of its significance. It is enough for our hearts that He who was despised and rejected of men is now supreme; -and made so by God. And as it was written upon His cross, “This is Jesus,” so at that very name, every knee is to bow, and every tongue confess.

And this will be to the glory of God the Father. When on earth He ever declared Himself to be sent of God; His rejection was therefore a dishonour to the One who had sent Him, and consequently the homage paid to Him is “to the glory of God the Father.” How blessed to follow Jesus into such a place, and see where His pathway leads. His lowliness moves the heart, His glory satisfies it. And thus the deepest longings awakened by the Spirit in us are met, in seeing all that is of God, consummated in the emptying and the humbling, the obedience unto death and the exaltation of Jesus.

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