

HAVE THE SAME MINDSET AS CHRIST JESUS

Philippians 2:1-30 (Key verse 5)

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

The Philippian ministry had many sincere believers and co-workersjust like today in our ministry. Most of the brothers and sisters along with the leaders stood in a personal relationship with Christ! Or as Paul puts it, were united with Christ. (2:1) It, therefore, comes as no surprise that the Philippian believers bore many beautiful spiritual fruits. In last week's passage, we saw that they formed a sincere partnership with Paul in preaching the gospel. Do you remember? Even when Paul was imprisoned and many believers abandoned him, the Philippian believers continued to support and pray for him in his time of need. Through this, we can indeed see that these Philippian believers were personally encouraged.....and comforted by Christ's love. That they enjoyed common sharing in the Spirit and that their hearts were filled with Christ Jesus' tenderness and compassion. (1)

Yet, despite their sincere faith in Jesus, a serious problem arose among them. It all began when two prominent women in the ministry, named Euodia and Syntyche had a sharp disagreement and, a serious fallout. (4:2) We do not know exactly what these two women argued so sharply about. But what we do know.... is that despite them being bible teachers and gospel preachers....perhaps even among the leaders.....these two women were so upset with one another that their relationship completely broke down. (4:3) It's quite sad to hear, right? What made things even worse, was the fact that their broken relationship negatively influenced the Philippian ministry.

Before Euodia and Syntyche's relationship broke down, the Philippian believers used to all fight together for the gospel of Jesus Christthey used to agree wholeheartedly with each other.....they loved one another.....and worked together with one mind and purpose. (2, 1:27 - NLT) Yet, because of the disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche, further divisions and arguments arose among leaders and members in their ministry. As people now began to choose sides. These relationship issues ruined the previously healthy spiritual environment in the Philippian ministry! We know that a united ministry is a strong ministry. But a divided ministry cannot stand!

Do you think that the same problem can arise in our ministry? Like the Philippian ministry, we are also a group of sincere believers, right? Believers who have soft hearts towards each other, filled with Jesus' tenderness and kindness. Therefore, we might think, this kind of division will never happen in our ministry!! However, if it happened in the Philippian ministry, it can most definitely happen in our ministry. Then what should we do to ensure we REMAIN a united and strong ministry.....with a healthy spiritual environment? In today's passage, we will learn that the secret lies **in the mindset** we have.....More specifically, the **mindset in our relationships with one another**. For in our relationships with one another there are two kinds of mindsets that we can have. Either we have a **"self-centered"** mindsetor alternatively we have an **"other-centered"** mindset. The **"self-centered"** mindset destroys relationships and the spiritual environment in our ministry. While the **"other-centered"** mindset builds intimate relationships and creates a spiritually healthy environment in our ministry. In today's passage, we will also learn that we all have to let go of our **"self-centered"** mindset to adopt an **"other-centered"** mindset. **And the way to do this is to accept the mindset of Christ Jesus in our relationships with one another.** I sincerely pray that through today's message the LORD will plant the mindset of Christ Jesus..... deeply in our hearts!

Then what mindset should Euodia and Syntyche have had towards each other? Look at verses 3-4. Their mindset was firstly one of selfish ambition. Selfish ambition can be understood as *"the motivation to elevate oneself above others or to put one's interests before another's."* Secondly, their mindset was also vainly conceited. This means they thought too highly of themselves and too little of others. Their mindset should have been the complete opposite of what it was. Instead of valuing themselves above others, they should have rather valued others above themselves. And instead of each looking only at their own interests, Euodia and Syntyche should rather have looked to the interests of others in the ministry.

The sad truth is, regardless of being sincere believers in Christ.....and regardless of being faithful gospel co-workers of Paul..... The **"self-centered"** mindset of fallen Adam and Eve was still deeply rooted in Euodia and Syntyche. We might think that we are different. And that in our ministry we always have a humble and caring attitude towards each other. However, we must know that we were all born with fundamentally selfish and proud mindsets as sinners. That is why regardless of whether we are acting inside or outside the ministry.....it is always all about myself: my life.....my future..... my opinion.....my interests..... my money..... my time..... my family..... my sleep.....and so on. The "self"

always....comes first!! Before anyone or anything - inside and outside the church of God.

On top of this, our natural mindset is also one of pride! We tend to think we are better than others. We know better..... we work better..... we serve better. Consequently, regardless of whether we are acting inside or outside the ministry, we naturally look down on those around us. If this was the mindset that Euodia and Syntyche had in their relationships with others, should we be really surprised that they were unable to settle their disagreements? Or that they destroyed the spiritual environment in the Philippian ministry?

Here we learn an important lesson from Euodia and Syntyche. Being a believer and having a personal relationship with Christ, does not mean that we will have the right mindset in our relationship with one another. Neither does it mean we will automatically create a spiritually healthy environment in our ministry. For this to happen, we first need to CHANGE our mindset *in our relationships with one another.* Because our MINDSET determines how we treat those around us. And unless we change our fundamentally selfish and proud mindset, our behavior towards others will always cause friction and division; just as it was with Euodia and Syntyche. If it happened with them, it can most definitely also happen with us.

I am certain that none of us wants to be the cause of division in our ministry, right!? Also none of us wants to destroy the spiritual environment in our ministry! So here we need to ask an important question: how can we let go of our naturally “**self-centered**” mindset in order to adopt an “**other-centered**” mindset? Let’s look at our key verse (verse 5) to find the answer. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. The only way to let go of our naturally “**self-centered**” mindset in order to adopt an “**other-centered**” mindset Is to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. But what exactly does this mean? Let’s gradually unpack this statement: have the same mindset as Christ Jesus

Before we do so, it is important to remember that just like Euodia and Syntyche had a relationship with one another, so Christ Jesus also has a relationship with each one of us. Now we already know that both these women had a selfish and proud mindset.....or put differently.....a “self-centered” mindset. But what about Christ Jesus? What was His mindset towards us?

To answer this question, it is worth pointing out that unlike Euodia and Syntyche, Christ Jesus was in very nature God. (6a) Listen how Paul described the Godly nature of Christ in Colossians 1:15-17 (NLT). He says, Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Christ and for Christ. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

It is almost inconceivable to imagine that the mighty One who holds all creation together can ever have a relationship with weak, small and helpless creatures like you and me, right? We are simply too lowly in ability and too weak in our nature to ever match up with the Supremacy of Christ. But still, Christ wanted to have a relationship with you and me. So He did something unthinkable... Look again at verse 6. Jesus did not consider equality with God as something to be used to his own advantage, rather, he made himself nothing. This is absolutely mind-blowing..... Have you ever heard of any god who made himself nothing? I could never ever imagine this in my wildest dreams. Yet, that is exactly what our Christ Jesus.....did! He gave up His supremacy over all creations.....He gave away all His Godly powers and privileges.....and became a weak and helpless mortal man, just like you and me. Now at first this does not seem like a big deal. But think about how far Christ had to lower Himself to become like you and me! It is similar to us having to give up our human privileges to walk around on the earth as an ant! It’s crazy right!!? But that is exactly what Christ did. He made himself nothing. All because, He wanted to establish a relationship with you and me.

Then, while He was in human likeness, Christ lowered Himself to a position, even lower than us.....to that of a servant!! It’s like us who first lower ourselves to become like an ant, and then once we are an ant we become the ant that serves all ants! It’s unthinkable. But that is exactly what Christ did! He became our servant!! Why would Christ do this? Because, this was the only way for Him to establish a sincere and personal relationship with you and me. If He came to us in His original form as Almighty God, we could never ever stand in His presence! Neither could we ever meet His high standards. Think about it, as a human being can you ever have a relationship with an ant? Absolutely not! So, Christ Jesus lowered himself and became the servant of sinful human beings. **This is exactly what the mindset of Christ Jesus was all about. About humility and servanthship. Christ Jesus could connect with you and me because of His humility! For He did not consider equality with God something to Lord Himself over us. Instead, he adopted a modest and low view of His own importance.**

Then how did He actually gain our trust? How did He win our hearts? Yes, He served us!! And not just a little bit.....but all the way to the point of death.

Look at verse 8. (Follow with me) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Jesus humbled himself so much that He willingly served you and me by **even giving up His life.....for our benefit.** Yes, Jesus did not die for something that He did wrong.....but for the very sins that we committed against Him. Yet instead of punishing us for these sins, He serves us by dying in your and my places. And the death He suffered was not a glorious or painless death. But a shameful and excruciatingly painful death, as he was nailed on a cross to hang like a cursed criminal between heaven and earth! Why would Christ do this? Because, this was the only way for Him to establish a sincere and personal relationship with you and me. Whatever it took, Jesus was willing to do it or give it. **This also is exactly what the mindset of Christ Jesus was all about. Yes, as we saw it was firstly about humility and servanthip. Secondly, Jesus' mindset is about doing whatever it takes.....or giving up whatever is necessary..... to save one lost soul.**

Christ Jesus' mindset is truly amazing, right?! This is the mindset Paul wanted Euodia and Syntyche to have. Because with this mindset they would surely have been able to settle their disagreements. With this mindset, they would have been exemplary examples for everyone in the Philippian ministry; and definitely ensured upholding a healthy spiritual environment in their ministry. Then what about you and me? I am sure, at this point of the message we are all willing to let go of our "self-centered" mindset and have the mindset of Christ. Right?.....But practically, how can we do this? Should we just pray non-stop for a week until our selfishness and pride disappears? Not at all. Instead, in our relationships with one another, **we should constantly and actively remember** Christ Jesus' humility..... servanthip..... and determination to do whatever it takes and give up whatever is required to save one lost soul. **When we actively do this, our fundamentally "self-centered" mindset will be transformed into the mindset of Christ Jesus. Can you imagine what a beautiful community of believers we can be!!! To the praise of Christ Jesus!**

It is quite natural when we want to adopt the mindset of Jesus, that we fear we will lose everything and be trampled on! That nothing good will come from it. But that is simply not true. Look at what happened to Christ Jesus, in verses 9-11, after He humbled Himself. (Follow with me) Therefore.....God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..... in heaven..... and on earth..... and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Indeed, when Jesus humbled Himself, it seemed that He lost everything!! I mean, He made Himself nothing.....He even gave up His life to serve you and me on the cross. Did God ignore Jesus' sacrifice? Not at all!! God was greatly pleased with Jesus. So much so that as much as Jesus humbled himself.....that much God exalted Him again.....and as much as Jesus sacrificed to serve us.....that much God return to Jesus what He gave up....AND MORE.....for, God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name. In this way God greatly honoured Jesus!! This is the rule that God has established, also for you and me. God exalts those who humble themselves before others. **God exalts those who serve others to establish beautiful relationships in the LORD. Lastly, God exalts those who do whatever it takes and give up whatever is required to save one lost soul.** Therefore, we do not for one moment have to hesitate to adopt the mindset of Christ Jesus.

In conclusion: The aim of our ministry is to raise disciples of Jesus through 1-1 bible studies. I am sure that many of you will agree that preparing bible study notes and actually teaching the bible is the easy part. The hardest part is dealing with selfish and proud co-workers and bible students, right? Then what can we learn from Jesus' mindset in how He raised you and me, as His disciples? Firstly, **Christ Jesus could connect with you and me because of His humility! Likewise, we need to grow in humility to connect with students and co-workers. Secondly, Jesus gained our trust.....He won our hearts..... by serving us sacrificially. Likewise, we should never insist or demand the hearts of our co-workers of bible students. Rather, we should earn their hearts by serving them with much love and patience. Lastly, Jesus was willing to do whatever it takes.....or give up whatever is necessary.....to save our souls. Likewise, we must do whatever it takes to bring one lost soul to Jesus to be saved. To do these three things, is to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.**

I sincerely pray that in our relationships with one another, we may all adopt this mindset of Christ Jesus! May God continue to work in us.....to will and to act according to His good purpose!.Amen!