



The Sacrificial Mind of the Gospel

By

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- 8 Rules for Bible Study
- 40 Rules for Ministry
- The Heart of the Gospel
- Defending and Confirming the Gospel
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- The Affection of the Gospel
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- The Humility of the Gospel

The next aspect I'd like to share with you is the 'sacrificial mind' of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul continued his letter to the Christians in Philippi by writing:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:5-8

Paul wanted the Philippian Christians to have a 'mind' that was similar to that of Jesus Christ. What did he mean by that? The Greek words for 'Let this mind be' are *touto phroneite* and mean 'to exercise the mind, to think like, to be mentally disposed to.' The grammar is important to know here because the verb is in the 'imperative' mood, 'present' tense, and 'active' voice. That means it's a command that

indicates action that is to be ongoing. It is not a one-time event for a Christian. Paul wanted the Christians in Philippi to have a continual way of thinking that was similar to the way Jesus thinks – the way He ‘exercises’ His mind.

The example Paul gave was that Jesus, ‘being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.’ This is a favorite verse for Christian apologists because it demonstrates that Jesus Christ is equal with God. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is in the ‘form of God’ (*morphē Theou* – same shape, same nature, shared parts, an outward expression that contains the same inner substance). The idea is that Jesus Christ in His essence and nature is in complete harmony with the essence of God.

Paul wrote that Jesus did not think it was ‘robbery’ (*harpagmos* – thing to be grasped, thing to be seized, plunder, robbery) to be ‘equal’ (*isos* – equality, similar in amount and kind, having the same level or value, equal in substance or quality) with God.

These two statements are among the strongest declarations of the Eternal Deity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Jesus is in the 'form' of God and is 'equal' with God. Paul, who had seen many visions and revelations in Paradise (2 Corinthians 12) knew that Jesus Christ is God. This was not something someone else had told Paul. He knew the truth from his personal experience.

While this is important for the defense (*apologia*) of the doctrine (teaching) of Christ's Eternal Deity and equality with God the Father and God the Spirit, there is more to learn here. Paul used the truth of Christ's equality with God to demonstrate what I call the 'sacrificial mind.' Jesus Christ sits on the His Heavenly Throne worshipped by millions of angels and other Heavenly creatures. He owns the universe. that He created. He owns the great wealth of the universe. He is worthy of all worship in the universe. Yet, even with all the worship that He deserves, Jesus has a 'sacrificial mind.' Here's what Paul said the Son of God did for us:

- He made Himself of no reputation
- He took taking the form of a bondservant
- He left His glory in Heaven and came to Earth in the likeness of men
- And being found in appearance as a man, Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross

Wow! That's a 'sacrificial mind.' The Greek for 'made Himself on no reputation' is *heauton ekenōsen*. It means 'Himself emptied, made empty. to abase, make void, empty out, render void, without recognition.' The world should have recognized the Son of God for who He really is, but He emptied Himself and took on the 'form of a bondservant.' The Greek word is in Aorist Tense, Active Voice, Indicative Mood. The Son of God chose to empty Himself and come to Earth.

The word ‘bondservant’ is *doulos* and means in this context ‘a fully-devoted servant.’ The Creator became the Servant. That’s remarkable! Jesus, the Eternal Son of God, left Heaven’s glory and came to Earth in the ‘likeness’ (*homoíōma* – ‘likeness, form, similitude, made to look like) of men, and in the ‘appearance of a man’ (*heuretheis hōs anthrōpos* – ‘outward appearance, external condition, of a man”). Think about that mindset. The Creator came to Earth and became like the creatures He had created. Jesus Christ became the ‘God-Man.’

What would Jesus do in this new ‘form?’ He ‘humiliated Himself’ (*tapeinoó* – ‘abase, bring low, to humble’) and ‘became obedient’ (*ginomai hupékoos* – ‘to cause to be, be brought to pass, submissive, giving ear, obedient’) ‘to the point of death’ (*mechri thanatos* – ‘until, up to, as far as, death’), ‘even the death of the cross’ (*thanatos de stauros* – ‘death, even, the cross’).

It's one thing for the Eternal Son of God who is 'equal' with God to humble Himself and come to the world He created in the 'likeness' of the creature who He had created in His likeness (Genesis 1). It's quite another thing for the Son of God to die on a Roman cross for His creatures. That's a mindset that is unlike any other. Yet, it's a mindset that the Apostle Paul wanted the Philippian Christians to have ('Let this mind be in you').

God wants us to be 'like' Jesus Christ and have a 'sacrificial mind.'

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In Christ's Love and Grace,

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