

The Mind of Christ in Evangelism

One of the most beautiful, touching summaries of the life and mission of our Lord Jesus is found in Philippians 2:5-11. Paul introduces it (verses 1-4) by establishing the kind of person a Christian should strive to be: a person of the same mind as Jesus. Sometimes this text is seen as too lofty and too distant. A goal to be admire, but never to be approached. Yet, by inspiration, Paul commanded, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus . . ." Clearly, this is exactly what Jesus wanted Paul to say to us. Those things which characterize Jesus are intended by Him to be the things which characterize His disciples.

No reasonable person can argue that Jesus was not successful in fulfilling His mission on earth. He believed that he did (Jn. 17:4). How did He do it, especially in the face of such harsh resistance? First, He succeeded by humbling Himself (Phil. 2:6-7). He did not see Himself as too good to company with sinners. He left security, safety and glory to minister to sinners, eat with them, counsel them, weep with them, be abused by them, and to be crucified between them. He is the ultimate example of "Go ye therefore . . ." He also said, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you (Jn. 20:21)." The apostles and the early church believed this commission applied to them and sacrificially carried it out through suffering (2 Cor. 11:23-28), displacement (Acts 8:4), and death (Acts 7:54-60; 12:2; Rev. 2:13). Second, He came in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7). His coming emphasizes the fact that He went where there was need. Thank God. He also said, "Follow Me (Mat. 9:9; Jn. 12:23-26)." This is what it means to have the mind of Christ. Third, His success was assured by His obedience (Phil. 2:8). With steadfast determination, ". . . when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51)." In spite of temptation (Mat. 4:1-11; discouragement (Jn. 6:66-67), opposition (Jn. 7:1), and anxiety (Lk. 22:44) He did what He knew it was His to do (Jn. 8:28-29). Peter said that this is our example to follow (1 Pet. 2:21).

Our evangelistic efforts will benefit greatly when we, like Jesus, humbly and obediently do that which is ours to do. "What wilt Thou, O Master? here am I send me."

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