

## The Example Of Christ

*"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ, who existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man; and being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea the death of the cross ..."* (Phil. 2:5-8).

The apostle has made a passionate appeal for unity and humility in the first four verses of this chapter. Now comes the crowning glory of his appeal -- an appeal to manifest the "*spirit*" (mind) of Jesus Christ. "*Have this mind in you which was also in Christ,*" he wrote. The example of supreme humility is that of Christ. He existed in the form of God; He took on Himself the likeness of man. What a lowering of rank! But not just man -- a servant.

Jesus came "*not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*" (Matt. 20:28). And serve man He did! He fed the hungry (Matt. 14-15). He healed the lame and blind. He cast evil spirits from those they had possessed! He restored life to the dead. He was the Great Physician! At the last Supper when the disciples quarreled about which of them was the greatest, Jesus squelched their thoughts of vainglory by taking a basin of water and washing their feet (Luke 22:24, Jn. 13:7-11).

The physical ministrations of Jesus showed His humility, but His spiritual ministration was His greatest demonstration of it. Jesus came to give His life a ransom for many. He reminded His disciples, "*Greater love hath no man than this than that he lay down his life for his friends*" (Jn. 15:13). Jesus warned of savage wolves who sought to destroy the sheep, then He contrasted Himself with others who had not the care He had. "*He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them and scattereth them ... I am the good shepherd ... and I lay down my life for the sheep*" (Jn. 10:12-15).

What benefit Jesus rendered for man! By His blood I can be rid of my sins. By His blood I can approach the Father's throne and make ardent petitions for my needs and power to overcome my weaknesses. Where would I be had Jesus not taken my place? The prospects of my fate would have been terrifying!

Would I have done the same for Him had we exchanged places? Heart searching in response to such a question is painful. How likely is it that had I

been called to give my life for Him as He gave His life for me that I would have done so? And yet, there is such a call to all who have been redeemed by His blood. Paul wrote, *"I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I that live but Christ that liveth in me. And that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me"* (Gal. 2:20). Paul enjoins, *"Have the same mind in you, which was also in Christ."* Do we? Brethren, I see flaws and weaknesses all around me, but the only flaws and weaknesses I can really correct are my own. What a better world this would be if every inhabitant in it would set himself to correct his faults, not earning justification, but because he has been cleansed by Christ's blood, seeks to cleanse himself *"from all defilements of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (2 Cor. 7:1f).

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