

Title	The Mind of Christ
Text	Philippians 2:5-11
Date	31 January 2021



The questions below are designed to be used by OCC LIFEGroups as they meet during the week following the Sunday morning message. The intent is not for groups to answer every question, but for leaders to use the questions as a guide as they tailor the discussion to the unique needs of their group.

The Sunday message and these questions can be found each week at occweb.org/sermons.

OVERVIEW

Jesus set aside his rights and privileges as the Son of God, taking on the nature of a servant.

TEXT

NIV	The Message	Good News Translation
<p>In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:</p> <p>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.</p> <p>He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.</p> <p>Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.</p>	<p>The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:</p> <p>He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant. He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross.</p> <p>For this reason God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name. And so, in honor of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</p>

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Introduction – connect with your group

There are some things that can perhaps only be said in poetry. Think, for example, of Amanda Gorman's inauguration poem "*The Hill We Climb*".

- What is a piece of poetry that resonates with you?
- What does it mean to be "humble?"
- How do you know humility when you see it?

While some translations don't lay out this passage as poetry, it is clearly a powerful poetic presentation of some central Christian truth.

Looking at the Text

- Read Philippians 2:1-11
- Are there words, phrases or ideas that pastor Mike used that you didn't understand?
- What is one thing that stuck out to you from the message?
- In the opening verses of Philippians 2 we are told to look to the interests of others, not ourselves, not "number one." Now in v5-11 Paul quotes this hymn that describes Jesus' descent and heaven to earth and then his return. Why do you think Paul quotes this?

There are 3 parts to the passage

Introduction (5)

Humbling (6-8)

Exaltation (9-11)

- In what ways did Jesus humble himself?
- How is Jesus now exalted?
- What is the connection between these two parts?
Why should the Jesus who did what verses 6-8 say he did be honoured or exalted in this way?
- Compare the attitude of Christ in this passage with the attitude of many leaders.
- How does your perspective on the world change when you consider that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord (vv. 10-11)?
- How does this poem fit with and emphasize what Paul said in the first part of Philippians 2?
- What the Bible does perfectly is to point us to Jesus. The Bible is not an end in itself—Jesus is the Alpha and Omega. The Bible cannot save us—Jesus alone is the savior of the world. We are not called to follow the Bible—we are called to follow Jesus.

The campaign ***What Would Jesus Do?*** has been around for years, challenging Christians to think about what Christ might actually do in any given situation. But before we can do that, we need to know ***what Jesus actually did***. His life of humility and self-sacrifice is Paul's illustration to exhort the church to live in the Jesus way. One way we can see this is by looking at 3 characteristics of Jesus in this passage:

His Divinity

- Jesus Christ is God incarnate: "being in very nature God" (v6a). Some translations use "form" which is inaccurate.
- The Greek word for form is *morphé*. Paul is referring to Jesus' essential nature; it never changes. Jesus possesses the unchangeable, essential nature of God.
- The word being is in present active tense. This means that Jesus has always been, continues to be, and will always be God.
- Jesus claimed to be God. In many texts, including Luke 5, John 5, 8, and 10, He either stated his deity or was understood by others to claim his deity.
- Why does it matter that Jesus was 100% God? What would change in your life if Jesus was NOT fully God? (cf Hebrews 1:3)

- Paul says that Christians are to think of themselves the way Jesus thought of himself. Based on Philippians 2, how did Jesus think of himself? How can you think of yourself the same way this week?
- How does this idea help OCC help more people be more like Jesus?
- Why is it important for Christians to understand that Jesus was God incarnate?

His Humility

- “he made himself nothing” (v7a) is latterly “emptied himself”. The idea is that Jesus chose not to hold on to the privileges of His deity so He could come to earth and fulfill His mission.
- Jesus didn’t need anything; He had all the glory and praise of heaven. But His attitude was one of unselfish love and concern for others. He laid down His rights in order to serve others.
- Jesus emptied Himself of His rights as deity, temporarily giving up His glory (cf John 17:5).
- He also emptied Himself of independent authority, submitting to the will of the Father (cf John 5:19, 30).
- Jesus’ humble attitude is the opposite of Satan’s attitude:
 - Satan had a subversive mind; Jesus had a submissive mind.
 - Jesus as the Creator chose to become a creature; Satan as a creature wanted to be the creator.
- Why does it matter that Jesus was 100% man? What would change in your life if Jesus was NOT fully man? (cf Hebrews 4:14-16)
- In John 13, Jesus performed the duty of a slave when he knelt down and washed his disciples’ feet. The creator served his creation. Talk about a time when you, or someone else, intentionally laid aside rights and privileges to put the needs of others before your / their own.

His Humanity

- Through Jesus, God stooped from heaven to earth, from deity to humanity, from life to death.
- When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he took on a physical body, from which there is no escape. Jesus died physically, rose physically, ascended into heaven physically, and will return physically. It’s the ultimate cross-cultural experience.
- “taking the very nature of a servant” (v7b). Jesus took the nature of a slave, not merely an outward expression, but an inward reality to serve and save others.
- The question “what has Jesus done?” can be answered:
 - Being equal with God, He emptied Himself of privilege and position.
 - He left heaven, took on human nature, and served people.
- Throughout Christian history, various statements of faith (known as creeds) have stressed Christ’s divinity and humanity. The earliest Christian creeds have stated that Jesus is 100 percent God and 100 percent human. Why is this divine human nature important for Christians to understand?

PRAY WITH EACH OTHER

Pray that your group will be a caring community that humbly puts the needs of others before your own.

THIS WEEK

Read the letter/book of Philippians – it’s only 4 chapters.

- **Connect Up:** There is an interrelationship within the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). In theology, the relationship is known as the *perichoresis*, a mutual exchange of love within the Godhead. Scientist and theologian Alister McGrath said perichoresis “allows the individuality of the persons to be maintained, while insisting that each person shares in the life of the other two.” Though we can’t fully comprehend the perfect unity of the Godhead, it is not a contradiction. In the Trinity there is an outward expression of love toward the other.

- **Connect In:** Augustine said, “It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels.” How do you respond to this quote?
What are some ways the church can show humility in the world today, reflecting Jesus in word and action?
In what ways can the church be Christ’s hands and heart to a hurting world—both those who are part of the church and those who are not yet part of the kingdom? How is the church to reflect Christ’s humility and humanity?
- **Connect Out:** How can Christ’s divinity and humanity serve as a talking point for nonbelievers, particularly those from different faiths?
How would you defend this from those who claim Christ wasn’t divine?

Related passages

- *“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus”*
Ephesians 2:6
- *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. **Colossians 1:15-20***
- *“Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.” **Colossians 3:1***
- *“For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” **Galatians 2:19-20***
- *For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. **1 Corinthians 1:21-25, 30***