

The Saviour's Mindset

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[0 : 00] The reading tonight is from Philippians 2 verses 5 to 11 and it's on page 1179 of the Bibles. In your relationships with one another have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, 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. 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, this is the word of the Lord. Can I have my word of welcome? I'm Martin Ayers, I'm the Senior Minister here at St Silas. It's great to see you here and if you could turn back in your Bibles to page 1179, we're just going to look at that passage together again that we had read for us. So Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 to 11, as we keep going in our series in Philippians.

You can find an outline inside the notice sheet, if you'd find that helpful, just to see where we're going as we look at this together. Let's pray, let's ask for God's help as we turn to his word.

Let's pray, let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Lord, let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray that you, by your Spirit, will give us ears to hear your voice in the Scriptures, heads that can understand, and hearts that are willing to change and follow you. For we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

[2 : 26] Great. Philippians chapter 2. So when I was at school, there was this certain type of person when you played football called a glory hunter.

I don't know, did you have this at school in Scotland? Glory hunters when you played football. I'm getting a couple of nods of the head. Because when you play football at school with jumpers for goalposts, there's no offside rule.

And so the glory hunter was the guy who stood up front right by the goalkeeper, the opposition goalkeeper. And the rest of you are grafting away, and you finally won the ball, and you made a chance, and you got forward.

And as the ball was shot, the guy who's glory hunting would sort of somehow contrive to get the last touch on the ball so they could say that they scored, even if it was going in anyway.

And so they could end the game having technically scored loads of goals and tell everyone how many they got. I remember one at school who kept a running tally of how many he'd scored in his whole life.

[3 : 23] How many goals? The glory hunter. So as adults, maybe we're much better at hiding our glory hunting than that. But it's something that we struggle to grow out of, this instinct, this longing for glory, that we'll be full to the brim with the glory.

So when we get chance, we want glory. And so if we have an opportunity, whether that's that we've got a skill that we can use to get praise for ourselves or popularity, or we just, we have popularity, we find we've got friends, or we have power, whether that's political power or power in a workplace, we find ourselves using that to pursue our own interests rather than the interests of others.

So it shouldn't really be a surprise to see that we also find that kind of problem in churches. Paul here was writing this letter to a church in Philippi, and in lots of ways it's a model church.

The occasion that caused Paul to get up and write this letter seems to have been that they sent him some support, which reflected, Paul's in prison as he writes the letter.

They didn't have a lot to gain from supporting Paul, from seeing way with Paul, but they were uniting with Paul in recognizing that the greatest endeavor going on in the world today, what God is doing in our world today, is he is advancing the gospel, the message about who Jesus is and what Jesus did.

[4 : 49] And the Philippians get that. They're the model church and they partner with Paul, supporting him in his mission. But then last week we saw Paul appeal for unity in this church as they strive together for the advance of the gospel.

So in chapter 2, verse 2, he says, make my joy complete, fill up my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

So how do they find that unity together as they partner in the gospel? He says the secret to gospel unity is that you value other people above yourself in humility.

So that's in verse 3. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves. Now that word there, vain conceit, it's a word that kind of means empty glory.

And so it's something like glory hunger, that we do something because we're hungry to fill ourselves up with glory. We're doing it in our own interest. It's as though we've got like an emptiness in ourselves and we want to fill it up with praise from other people, respect, knowing that other people think well of us.

[6 : 03] So we big ourselves up. We glory in achievements, status, and we want people to think of us as top draw. So it might be that we pick our achievements, our job, our braininess, our sportiness.

Or alternatively, sometimes we satisfy that or we have that glory hunger about our hardships.

So we share with other people not what we've achieved, but how difficult our lives are, how remarkable it is that we've been able to keep going because more than anyone else you could know, life has really given us a bad set of cards and things are really difficult.

So either way, whether it's boasting in the good stuff we've done or boasting in the hard stuff we face, the issue there is the spotlight is on me. It's about my interests and not the interests of others.

And it leads to division. But you can't stop glory hunger by just saying, come on, be humble, and kind of slapping yourself on the wrist.

[7 : 08] Saying, that wasn't humble, be humble. It's no use saying, right, what I'll do is I'll go and do something humble now. What can I do that's humble? You know, I'll go and Hoover the mess that other people have made in the lounge.

Or I'll go and sit with that guy who's hard work. And all the time, what we're really thinking is, even the fact that I'm stooping to do this shows how great I am.

Or we're thinking, I really hope somebody sees what I'm doing here because this is really impressive. Someone's gonna, I really hope someone sees that. So we long for recognition.

We long to be noticed. So we can't change just by kind of looking for a, telling ourselves to change. How do we change? The answer comes in chapter two, verse five of Philippians.

So this, what follows here, this section we're looking at today, there's all sorts of behavior that Paul wants to bring out in us and in that first church in Philippi that's kind of, you think of that as downstream.

[8 : 07] And verses five to 11 are what needs to happen in our minds upstream if we're gonna change and bear this kind of fruit, if I can change the metaphor. So verse five, he says, in your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

And that word mind that he uses there as translated mindset is a really key word for us in this letter, Philippians. So chapter one, verse 27, he said that he wants us to stand firm in the one spirit, striving together with one mind.

In chapter two, verse two, he says, make my joy complete by being like-minded, being one in spirit and of one mind. And now he says in verse five, what that mind needs to be, it's the mind of Christ.

Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. So what's gonna happen to us tonight if we get this right in terms of our interaction with God through, by his spirit, through his word, is the spiritual version of brain surgery.

It's mind surgery that God wants to do amongst us. Tonight, we're all going under the knife. Seven years ago, I had brain surgery. I had a brain tumor. That's why I've got these odd dents in my head.

[9 : 24] And I went to hospital one evening. The next morning, I was put to sleep. The surgeons, sorry if this is too much detail, but the surgeons cut me from ear to ear along the top here, rolled off my face, cut open a hole in my skull, got in there, got the tumor out, screwed the skull back together again, face back on, and then woke me up again.

Marvelous. Okay? Now that was to take out something that's, is everyone still with me? Okay. That was to take out something that shouldn't have been there. Okay? That element of brain surgery.

And when we had our pre-surgery appointment, I remember Kathy saying to the surgeon, there are some other things that Martin does that it would be quite useful to change while you're in there. But it, it doesn't work like that.

They can't just sort of, you know, make you more organized by pushing something in the brain. So it just got, got out this tumor. But in Philippians 2, that, that spiritual work is going to happen.

The, the, the skull's going to be cracked open and God's going to get to work. And it's important to realize when we hear the word mind, right, this isn't just something about our thoughts.

[10 : 31] So sometimes we distinguish, don't we? Our mind is just about our thinking. And then we think about our feelings as belonging to someplace else. So maybe we use the word heart to talk about what we love, our emotions.

And then our mind is something just to do with cognitive reasoning. Sometimes the New Testament makes that distinction, talks about loving God with all your heart, the idea that we love with our heart.

But actually the New Testament word mind here is a much more all-encompassing word. It's not just our reasoning, it's who we are on the inside. Will, emotions, the mind is who we are on the inside.

And when you think about it in terms of anatomy, that's actually right, isn't it? I mean, it's not actually that your heart has your emotions in it and your mind has your thinking in it. Your heart just pushes the blood around your body and the, the, the mind's got everything in it.

So, that, that's what we're talking about here. How do we get this spiritual brain surgery? How do we stop glory hunting? How do we stop the need to fill ourselves up with glory?

[11 : 36] The answer is by filling that emptiness with something else. And that's the setting for this really breathtaking passage. Just six verses here. Beginning, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

That's the ESV translation. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. The passage divides into two. We'll look at it in two points. First is, know how far he came for you.

Know how far he came for you. The verses are a hymn. That's why when you look at it, it's, it's set out differently, isn't it? The rest of the, the letter. As though Paul's written a hymn or he's quoting a hymn.

And, it starts in eternity past with this in verse six. 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. So there's no doubt here about Jesus being divine, is there?

[12 : 48] Jesus is fully God. He's the eternal son of God. God, preexistent, before anything is made. He was there. God the Father has always been a father and God the Son has always been a son.

And they've existed in perfect love together. And all the things that make God, he's God. He has. God the Father has always been a son of God.

But this is the character of God that with all of that power and status, he doesn't seek his own benefit. And instead, in verse seven, we begin this descent with him, his journey downwards.

The phrase there, he made himself nothing. Now, it's literally that he emptied himself. But it's important just to pause and understand that rightly, what that means.

There's a powerful movement in the church today, the Word of Faith movement or the Prosperity Gospel, that wants to claim that we, well it does claim, that if you become a Christian, you can have the power from God to do anything and everything that Jesus did.

[13 : 55] As long as you believe, you can claim anything and everything Jesus did. And then, it spins the lie, the Word of Faith movement, that God has promised us today health and wealth.

We just need to claim those promises. Now, one of the planks in the foundation of that movement, which is strong across the world, especially in Africa, prevalent in North America, but you find it all over the UK as well in places.

One of the big planks that is a foundation is that they look at this verse and they say that when the eternal son emptied himself, he actually stopped being divine and was, so when you see Jesus in the Gospels doing the things that he did, he wasn't doing them as God, he was doing them as a man with the Spirit.

And we as Christians have the Spirit, so anything that he did as a man with the Spirit, we can do with the Spirit. We just have to believe. But folks, that just can't be right.

What Paul means when he talks about Jesus emptying himself in verse 7 is exactly what he goes on to explain that the son did. He empties himself not of his divinity but of his status, that he's not grasping on, using his equality with God to his own advantage, but rather, in humility, valuing others above himself.

[15 : 23] So, a good way to think of it is not that the eternal son lost something when he became a man, but rather that something was added on to him.

He took on a human nature without stopping being God. So, he didn't lose his divinity, he took on humanity. And it was this act of magnificent, selfless service.

So, this is what causes the worldview revolution in us, the transformation in our own minds from glory hunting to other persons serving, is that we worship a God who chose to condescend to become a man.

The creator and sustainer of galaxies and nebula took on a human nature, born in a backwater town that didn't even have room for him.

That's why when we look at the person of Jesus, God incarnate, we see glimpses of that divine power as though they burst out of him, particularly at times of great compassion.

[16 : 26] when he sees a widow's only son, the funeral for a widow's only son coming out of the town of Nain and as he sees the funeral procession, he heads to the bier and he raises the boy with a word.

As he raises Lazarus from the tomb, shouting, Lazarus, come out and he emerges, life given to the dead. But the descent continues in verse 8.

It's as though the son empties himself twice, once in becoming a man, but then the lowest of men, verse 8, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

The most ghastly form of execution the Roman Empire ever conceived of, strung upon a wooden beam in public humiliation to die.

And in verse 7 there, Paul uses that language of a servant, taking the very nature of a servant. Quite possibly, he's got in mind the servant songs, which were these prophecies in 700 BC by the prophet Isaiah that describe a servant from God who takes God's wrath away by bearing it.

[17 : 41] God's wrath at the sin of the people. He takes it away. Let me read to you Isaiah 53, verse 3, about this servant who's coming. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised. And we held him in low esteem. So folks, know how far he came for you, that he would leave the adoration of angels to be despised and rejected like the sort of person you'd hide your face from because you were so reluctant to look at them.

He came to be God incarnate on a rescue mission knowing that he'd have to die, be rejected. He knew those prophecies. Being in very nature God, even death on a cross.

I've got here, do you realize how glorious the eternal son of God is? But of course, we don't, do we? We have no idea how glorious the eternal son of God is.

There's that day when he let Peter, James and John up the mountain with him and his appearance was transfigured before them and it was blindingly white and it was as though just for a glimpse for them, the curtain on his glory was drawn back and they can barely see.

[19 : 10] They're blinded by the light. But he sees you and me like sheep without a shepherd that have wandered and strayed away from God and he comes to find us, to serve us and he dies for us.

I did this all-age service looking at this passage a couple of years ago and while I was giving the talk with the children in, my phone kept ringing. You know, it was just a soundtrack on the sound system and I kept answering and the queen was speaking to me and she came round to the house and I said, oh, I'm a bit busy, I'm at church and then a bit later the queen rang and I said, oh, Annie Gemma was at the back being the queen and the queen said to me, oh, while I was at your house, just while I'm waiting, just, you know, I've started doing some cleaning, it's a bit of a mess, you know, to try and show the, but, you know, when you read Philippians 2, the queen cleaning your toilet doesn't come close to this, doesn't come anywhere near it.

Donald Trump coming round to clear your drains just doesn't come anywhere near this. Being in very nature God, even death on a cross.

Paul says, in your relationships with one another have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. So instead of feeling empty of glory, I want to fill myself up with glory, with praise.

Instead, be filled by knowing that the one who made you didn't grasp onto his status as God, but went on this unimaginable descent to rescue you from sin.

[20 : 56] But of course, it's not a story that ends in tragedy. I was watching the movie Gladiator recently, and again, and I sat down to watch it, and my wife Kathy said, I'm not watching this.

It's got, I said, why not? She said, it's got a sad ending. The ending's too sad. I said, the other hasn't got a sad ending, Gladiator. It's got a happy ending. It depends how you look at it. You see in Gladiator, at the end of the movie, Maximus has taken down the Roman Empire.

That seems like good news to me. He's taken down the corrupt emperor. The Roman Empire's going to be handed back to the senators. In the story of the movie, that's what you wanted to happen, but to make it happen, Maximus gives his life.

You know, he gets unfairly stabbed on the way out to fight the emperor, and Maximus wins the objective, but his life drains away. So, happy, really sad.

You watch the film, and you think, it's such a shame that he had to die at the end. If only he could have survived. Well, maybe that feels agonizing when we watch that, because the real story of redemptive history, the story we were made for, doesn't end like that.

[22 : 04] So, our first point, know how far he came for you, but our second point is this, see what God has done for him. Let's read on verse nine. Verse nine, 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.

We've heard where he was, and where he went, now we hear where he is now, and where he will be. The highest place is where he is now, and that is such good news, isn't it?

When you think of all the arrogance of people around us, I think of people I've met who are just so arrogant. Think of people I met at university who are so arrogant.

Or you think of people who've abused their power and hurt other people. You know, Robert McGabbee's funeral yesterday, only a quarter of the stadium full, because the people in Zimbabwe have realized the damage that he did to them just to cling on to power.

What great news to know Jesus is high above everyone else. He's been given the name above every name, the name Lord, God's name. And if Paul has in mind in verses 5 to 8 Isaiah's suffering servant promise, in 9 to 11 here, I'm sure he's echoing for us another promise from Isaiah.

[23 : 42] It's Isaiah chapter 45, and it's one of the clearest passages in the Old Testament to say there is only one God. Every other God anyone is worshiping is an idol.

There is one God. And it's God speaking, saying I'm God and there is no other. There is none like me. And in verse 23 of Isaiah 45, he says this.

Listen out for the echo of Philippians 2 here. This is Yahweh, the Lord, the God of the Bible, speaking through Isaiah in Isaiah 45. He says this, By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked.

Before me, every knee will bow. By me, every tongue will swear. He has no one else to swear by, and every knee will bow to him.

So this is the glory of our God on display as Trinity here, that Paul can take this passage from Isaiah 45 that's unambiguously saying there is one God, and every knee will bow to him.

[24 : 51] And without contradiction, Paul can use that and say it's actually now about Jesus because God has exalted him and he is the Lord.

And he's not saying here that everyone will do it willingly, that everyone will be saved and gladly celebrate Jesus as Lord. Rather, what he's saying is the victory will belong to Jesus.

Jesus, already he's had victory over our great enemies of sin and death by rising again from the grave, but everyone will one day bow their knee and acknowledge that he is the Lord.

And we will do that whether it's in terror and defeat because we wouldn't accept him today, or it's in joy and relief and love because we've been waiting for him, because we've put our trust in him.

So I remember asking a friend if he would read the Bible with me. It was with the new resource, the word one-to-one. And I said to this guy, a friend of mine, would you like to read the Bible with me?

[25 : 55] We just meet at once, we look at this together. If you don't want to do it again, it's fine. And he said no and nothing else happened. It was fine. But he said, no, I don't think so. It's just not my thing.

It's just not my thing. Well, look, Philippians 2 says, following Jesus needs to be everyone's thing. It's not really, it's not really good enough to think it's not my thing.

Trusting him, accepting his offer of forgiveness has to be our thing because he's the king. And one day, we'll all have to acknowledge that he's the king. And he offers us that we can do that with relief and joy by trusting him today.

He sits in the highest place. And God the Father is absolutely delighted with him, thrilled with him. You notice that? Verse 9, therefore, God exalted him.

That's God the Father. Not some distant father who was dragged along into the son's great salvation plan. God the Father and God the Son acted and worked together in conceiving of the plan to save us.

[27 : 04] And it's because Jesus did the perfect job of his rescue mission that God the Father has highly exalted him. I've got this really good illustration of that right, but it's a bit annoying if you're Scottish.

So, you're just going to have to forgive me because it's such a good illustration. I'm going to use it anyway. I wish it was about Andy Murray or something, but it's not. Okay, so it's the Rugby World Cup about to start. And in 2003, England won the World Cup.

I don't know whether anyone English has ever mentioned that to you. But anyway, the hero for England was our fly half, Johnny Wilkinson. And the final against Australia came right down to extra time and the scores were level and the ball was spun out to Johnny Wilkinson and he scored a drop goal to win the World Cup right at the end of the game.

Now, I was working as a lawyer at the time in London and in London, in the law firms, there are lots of Aussies, okay, there's lots of Australians working there. And there was a guy in one of the offices in London who, one of his ways of celebrating the next week what happened was he took the footage from the TV of Johnny Wilkinson scoring that drop goal and he made it his screensaver in his open plan office on loop, okay, so that wherever he was, he just wandering off, going out for lunch, anyone who walked past his screen would just see the drop goal on repeat.

So you see what he was saying to his colleagues was, what he's saying was, look at that, look at him, isn't he magnificent? Look what he's done. Look again.

[28 : 35] Look at it again. Folks, that's what God the Father has done in exalting Jesus. That having seen him execute his rescue mission plan to perfection, having seen him deal with the agony in the garden looking ahead of what he faced at the cross and knowing it required of him a mind that was totally, ruthlessly focused on the interests of others and not himself, a mind that emptied himself of all his status, all his glory, so that he could share eternity with others.

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place. He says, look at him. Look at my son. He's magnificent. He's done it. And he gives him the name Lord so that he'll reign forever.

He'll reign over nations and peoples and tribes. He'll reign over angels. He'll reign over all things, visible and invisible forever. So this mindset, valuing others above yourself, laying down your life for the interests of others, it's the mindset that God vindicates in the last analysis.

He glorifies it. He says, that's what I want. We were talking about this this week as a staff team just last week and it was referred to in a book as the J curve.

You know a J. Once you've worked out, if you think about the letter J, once you've worked out what direction it goes in, which wasn't clear to everyone on our staff team it turned out, Robbie. But it basically, if you draw a J, a letter J, it starts high, doesn't it?

[30 : 09] And then it goes low but then it ends up higher than it was before. That's what happens to the letter J, the J curve. And the J curve is the pathway of Christ's life. It starts with the status of the glory of God in heaven and then he descends to take on a human nature and then he descends to the humiliation of the cross and then God exalts him.

But God exalts him even higher than he was before because in the new creation he'll not just be glorified as God, though he is God, he's exalted as the Lamb who was slain, who is now standing on the throne.

It's in Revelation 5, you are worthy because you were slain and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. He's higher than he was before for what he has done.

And that means that the humble one is now crowned with majesty and our faith unites us with him, we'll see that in chapter 3 of Philippians, so that we're called to respond in the same J curve with our lives.

We have that same mindset for our lives that knowing there is glory to come for the humble, we set ourselves after the interests of others above our own.

[31 : 28] So back to us and our glory hunting. You know, one thing I've noticed in our house lately with my family, with my three girls, is that lots of things get criticized now as weird. That's the word that's in.

So I'll do something that's clearly very funny and intentionally and one of my girls will just look at me deadpan and say, Dad, that's weird. Okay?

Or they'll say it to each other, don't do that. It's weird. It's weird. Okay? Well, maybe we could summarize the mindsets of Philippians 2 a bit like this, right? But if you can see where Christ was and where Christ went and where Christ is now, if you can see that and you think there is anybody, anywhere in your church or anywhere in this city or anywhere in the world who is below you, that's really weird.

And if you can see Christ and then think there is any task you could be asked to do that is beneath you, that's really weird.

That's the brain surgery. Have this mind among yourselves. We try and fill our hearts with self-glory.

[32 : 44] Here's the alternative. Know how far he came for you. Let that fill your heart. See what God has done for him. Let that fill your heart.

Shall we pray? Let's pray together. Almighty God and loving Heavenly Father, we praise you for the Lord Jesus Christ, for the mindset that drove him to take the very nature of a servant, to empty himself, obedience to death on a cross.

We praise you that you exalted him to the highest place for your glory. Father, may our understanding, our grasp of these truths deepen that we would have the mind of Christ among ourselves.

In Jesus' name, Amen.