

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-07-08—THE MIND OF CHRIST

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The Bible mentions the heart around 900 times. What is interesting is that I can find only one Scripture that talks about anyone seeking after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14, which is quoted in Acts 13:22). This is odd because, in the Bible, the heart symbolizes the core essence and character of a person—who they are. It is what God searches to prove a person. But instead of the heart of God, the Bible focuses on the mind of Christ:

1 CORINTHIANS 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But **we have the mind of Christ.**

The Bible uses *mind* to refer to thoughts, words, or emotions. This should be no surprise because it is evident in our common, modern phrases. We say, speak your mind. What is on your mind? Bear in mind. Mind what you say. Never mind. Are you out of your mind? Have you lost your mind? Have an open mind. Have peace of mind. Put your mind at ease. The word *mind* usually refers to a consciousness that is a perception of the world in terms of both thought and emotions.

The Bible has much to say about how Jesus thought and felt. So, have you ever considered what it means to have the mind of Christ? If the mind is both thoughts and emotions, then having the mind of our Lord expresses the notion that we are to BECOME like Him in every aspect. So, what are some characteristics of the mind of Christ? There are many examples, so I can mention only a few of them. An important one is suffering:

1 PETER 4:1 Forasmuch then as **Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh** ...

Obviously, Jesus Christ knew suffering. He suffered so that our sins can be cast into the grave and God the Father can forgive us. But for us to have the mind of Christ requires our own, personal suffering:

1 PETER 2:19-21 For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God **endure grief, suffering wrongfully.** 20 For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, **when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.** 21 For even **hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example,** that ye should follow his steps:

As strange as it may sound, Jesus Christ was an example of suffering because personal suffering is how WE put aside SIN! Really? That is what Scripture says:

1 PETER 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise **with the same mind:** for **he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;**

How does personal suffering cause us to cease from sin? Because “we are dead **to** sins!”
Read Romans 6:1-13 and 1 Peter 2:24.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:11 For **those of us who are living are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life [and mind] of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh.**

In the midst of suffering, it is hard to be tempted by the lusts of the flesh and of this world. This is what was said about Abraham:

HEBREWS 11:25 [*Abraham*] **Choosing rather to suffer affliction** with the people of God, **than to enjoy the pleasures of sin** for a season;

Suffering prompts us to seek God continually in our times of need with our petitions and supplications, both for ourselves AND others. Suffering is a reminder of our death through baptism. Read the next verse of 1 Peter 4:

1 PETER 4:1-2 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 That **he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men**, but to the will of God.

Regardless of age, suffering is for the purpose of removing temptations and avoiding sin because it reminds us to put to death the flesh. Life is only established by Jesus Christ living in us¹. Notice this powerful proclamation by Solomon:

PROVERBS 20:30 **The stripes that wound purge away evil, and yea, strokes cleanse the innermost parts of one’s being.**

Obviously, there is much suffering. While it is difficult to increase in agape love and the faith of Jesus Christ in the midst of physical suffering, that is exactly when we are closest to God. It is, in fact, **acceptable** to God when we suffer patiently (1 Pet. 2:20 above). Did you know *acceptable* is translated from the Greek *charis*, which is usually translated *grace*? All who endure suffering, **especially through no fault of their own**, RECEIVE FAVOR, MERCY, AND COMPASSION FROM GOD! When Jesus Christ suffered the death of the cross, He found favor with His Father:

ISAIAH 53:10 Yet **it pleased the LORD [God the Father]** to bruise Him [*Jesus Christ*]; He hath put *Him* to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His seed*, He shall prolong *His days*, and the pleasure *desire* of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.”

Did Jesus do anything to merit His suffering and death? NO!! Ten thousand times ‘no.’ How many brethren suffer innocently? Having the mind of Christ means we patiently endure our sufferings and, just as with Jesus Christ, it is pleasing to God the Father.

¹ Gal. 2:20.

Another form of suffering comes as we strive to obey God, which is at odds with almost everything in this world. It is not easy to keep the Law, Sabbaths, Passover, and Holydays. This can mean becoming a target at work and losing family, friendships, neighbors, etc. Patiently suffering these things is another example of the mind of Christ:

ROMANS 15:2-7 Accordingly, let each one of us please *his* neighbor for good, unto edification; 3 For even **Christ did not please Himself**; rather, as it is written, **“The reproaches of those who are reproaching You [God the Father] have fallen upon Me [Jesus Christ].” (Psa. 69:9)** 4 For all the things that were written before were written for our instruction, so that through **patient endurance** and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God of patience and encouragement **grant you to be likeminded toward one another** according to Christ Jesus, 6 So that **with one accord and one mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 7 Therefore, **receive one another, according as Christ has also received us, to the glory of God.**

Did you know that the “reproaches” (contemptuous ridicule or mockery) of God the Father were borne by Christ? Jesus took it upon Himself to patiently endure everything that has ever been said or done against the Father as well being personally mocked during His passion (Matt. 27:29, 31, 41). He also bore temptations, especially those from Satan². But He also had to deal with the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees who were constantly trying to cause Him to sin³:

MATTHEW 16:1 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came to *Him [Jesus Christ]*, **tempting Him** and asking Him to show them a sign from heaven.

We are to be “likeminded” as Jesus Christ and patiently endure reproach, mockery, and derision. In so doing, we also GLORIFY God the Father (Romans 15:6 above). Was that not the PURPOSE of Jesus’ life—to glorify the Father?

JOHN 13:31-32 When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now has the Son of man been glorified, and **God has been glorified in Him.** 32 If **God has been glorified in Him**, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall immediately glorify Him.

Even the sacrifice of Jesus Christ glorified God the Father—“Now He [*Jesus Christ*] said this to signify by what death **He would glorify God.**” (John 21:19).

Having the mind of Christ also pertains to our relationship with our brethren:

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and **that there be no divisions among you; rather, that you be knit together in the same mind and in the same judgment [purpose].**

² Matt. 4:1-11.

³ Also Matt. 19:3; 22:35.

This is one of the major issues among the *ekklesia*. Having the mind of Christ means reconciling divisions among us because we all have the same **purpose**. (The Greek word is *gnome* meaning *purpose*. If *judgment* was intended, the word would have been *krino*.) What is that PURPOSE? Your first thought may be that you are resurrected into the Kingdom of God. But is it also our purpose—not just *desire*, but **purpose**—that ALL those begotten by God the Father **also** enter into the Kingdom? That is the mind of Christ because He died for ALL! How can we fulfill our purpose for others to be in the Kingdom if we are separated by divisions among us? Divisions are contrary to unity:

PHILIPPIANS 2:2-8 Fulfill ye my joy, that **ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.** 3 *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but **in lowliness** of mind let each **esteem other[s]** better than themselves.* 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man **[[look] also on the things of others.** 5 **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:** 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made Himself of no reputation, and **took upon him the form of a servant,** and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, **He humbled himself,** and became **obedient unto death,** even the death of the cross.

Verse 1 is not implying we are to have the same mind as *each other*, but that we are to have the same mind as *Christ* exactly as it says in Romans:

ROMANS 15:5 Now may the God of patience and encouragement grant you to **be likeminded toward one another according to Christ Jesus,**

This requires having the SAME agape love and the SAME heart (the meaning behind “being of one accord” in Phil. 2:2). We esteem others better than ourselves because that is exactly what Jesus did! Philippians 4:6-8 says that Jesus Christ esteemed us by humbling Himself and taking on the form of a lowly servant to die for our sins! Do we see other brethren in the same way? What about the people of this world? Do we esteem ALL in this world such that we would die for them? That is also the mind of Christ!

Having the mind of Christ means BECOMING like He is. It means producing the heart and mind—the character, thoughts, and emotions—of God Himself. This physical life is meant to make us like God the Father and Jesus Christ in every way. As you suffer, struggle, and are faced with temptations, “bear in mind” that you are being made into a god—a child of the God Most High by putting on the mind of His first Son, Jesus Christ!

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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