

**DISABILITY AND THE MIND OF CHRIST**

I'd like to take you to a text in the Bible that will give you *solid footing* and *purpose* and *endurance* as you care for those with disabilities (physical, cognitive, social).

Philippians 2:3-11 are well-known verses because they contribute much to our understanding about the Person of Christ - how Jesus was both man and God.

However, the point of these verses is really how we treat each other. And the fundamental, most needed attitude for putting others before ourselves is the MIND OF CHRIST.

Let's begin with **Philippians 2:3-5**:

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

I know these verses don't directly address disabilities but they're *comprehensive for all of life*, and I want to highlight how having the "**mind of Christ**" empowers us to care for someone with a disability.

By "**this mind**" Paul means a *mindset* (a set of the sails, decidedly aiming your life) at humbly putting others before ourselves. In v.5 we are:

- told to "**Have this mind**," and
- told that is already ours "**in Christ Jesus**" - which means that this kind of humility is knowable because we belong to Christ

This truth makes the children of the living God uniquely ready to love and serve those with disabilities!

How can we do that? How can we love and serve the disabled with the mind of Christ? Those who can not or will not love us back / thank us / not even comprehend that they are being loved?

We see the mind of Christ revealed in these verses through 3 Key Words:

EMPTIED
HUMBLED
EXALTED

1. EMPTIED (6-7)

Christ Jesus, ⁶...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

The phrases "**form of God**" / "**equality with God**" mean that Jesus knew / shared all of the glory and privileges of God as God. Jesus, as the Son of God, was God himself.

Jesus **did not count** this "equality with God" as a **thing to be grasped**.

- "**grasped**" is a word that means "exploited for self-advantage"
- In other words, Jesus did not count his divine rights / his glory and position as things to be *exploited for his own advantage*
- He counted them as *expendable*

Instead he **emptied himself** - Jesus gave up his entitlements / he set aside his status. (How?)

- **By taking the form of a servant** - he took upon himself the role of a slave with all of a slave's status. (How?)
- **By being born in the likeness of men** - he became a man and was subjected to all the pain / sorrow / and loss we experience as human beings

But Jesus' emptying went even farther.

2. HUMBLING (8)

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus emptied himself for the purpose of dying.

Jesus did not set aside his glorious status for wealth and status on earth as a man.

Jesus set aside entitlements and glory for suffering and ultimately death in obedience to God the Father.

And not just death (in general) - but **even death on a cross** - violent / horrific / unjust / shameful.

That is the extent of *Jesus'* humility.

This is the mind of Christ.

3. EXALTED (9-11)

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

You will notice that in v. 7 Jesus emptied *himself!* And in v. 8 he humbled *himself!* But in v. 9 it is God who **has highly exalted him!** And given **him the name that is above every name.**

You see - because he emptied himself (and became human) and humbled himself (and died on the cross) - God the Father raised him from the dead and exalted him to a position of glory and power and worship.

And one day, every person who has ever lived / is alive now / or will ever live in the future - will acknowledge Jesus' rightful lordship and glory. In other words - God had glorious purpose in Jesus' humiliation and suffering. And he was faithful to vindicate and exalt Jesus.

God has glorious purpose in giving to you that special someone with a disability. And he will accomplish that glorious purpose in your life - and will be faithful to exalt you accordingly.

Will you empty yourself as Jesus did?
Will you humble yourself as Jesus did?
Will you have the mind of Christ?

WOULD YOU TRADE YOUR STATUS AS...

a normal, non-disabled person –your satisfying career / your independence / the respect you have from others / the ability to laugh and learn / and clean yourself and feed yourself and achieve

FOR...

blindness / a breathing tube / a catheter / a wheelchair / endless medication / sensory dis-integration / terror / violent seizures / and the scorn, awkward stares, and rejection that come with it?

Would you make that trade?

That's what Jesus did. He traded his status to take on our humiliation / limits / pain / sorrow / and shame. Let me tell you – it was a bigger gap...than between us and the disabled.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.
