

Press Toward

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:14

A Newsletter of Lewisville Primitive Baptist Church 1590 Glencairn Ln. Lewisville, Texas 75067

October 2009

From Your Pastor

Have the Mind of Christ

(Part II)

(Be Like minded)

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

After commanding the church members in Philippi to think like Christ and having provided them with an explanation of His condescension, the Apostle Paul provides three examples of people who applied the Christ mindset in serving the Lord. The examples are Timothy, Epaphroditus and himself, Paul. I believe Paul offers these experiences to illustrate how the Christ mindset applies to believers in every possible circumstance; that, in every challenge we face the mindset of willing condescension in obedience to God results in exalting approval from Him.

Jesus is the ultimate example, the perfect expression of faithfulness. In the Hebrew Letter he is described as the **"author and finisher of our faith;"** to whom we are to ever look, constantly study and recall, as the perfect example of faith. However, in some instances it can be difficult for followers of Christ to know how to specifically apply in their own lives the example of the Savior's condescension from the throne room of glory to Calvary and the grave. It can be a daunting challenge to relate the perfect faith and obedience of Christ in accomplishing atonement for the elect to daily struggles we face. We are not routinely called upon to obey God to the point of death. Neither do we regularly face the kind of open resistance and extreme hostility to our efforts to obey God as Jesus experienced everyday. In order to bring to light the principles of the thinking like Christ, of having the mindset of Christ in terms of the

daily struggles of believers Paul alluded to the experiences of himself, Epaphroditus and Timothy.

Timothy's condescension

Paul described Timothy as "like minded." According to the Apostle, Timothy thought like Paul. The basis of his assertion was Timothy's selfless devotion to the cause of Christ in contrast to others who pursued selfish endeavors. **"For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."** Paul also noted Timothy's personal support of Paul's ministry and the gospel. **"But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."**

How then, is Timothy's devotion to the saints at Philippi and support of Paul's ministry and the gospel reveal the Christ mindset of obedient condescension in doing God's will? Paul indicated Timothy was likeminded: He thought like the Apostle. They shared a common mindset in approaching their respective duties. Later in this epistle Paul specifically explains his own mindset, which he said Timothy also employed. Therefore, Paul's explanation of his own Christ mindset provides insight into the mindset of Timothy in serving the Lord. However, Timothy's condescension experience was not identical to Paul's. For instance, Paul suffered loss of status as a Pharisee among the Jews for serving Jesus. It is a fact that Timothy never had similar standing. Paul suffered numerous and imprisonments which were not experienced by Timothy. So how did Timothy experience condescension thru serving the Lord?

Paul was sending Timothy to Philippi. The Philippians would soon be meeting him. His presence there would provide the Philippians an opportunity to have a first hand experience of Timothy's devotion and sacrifice in the Lord's service. However, we know something of his ministry from other writings by Paul. For instance, we know from Paul's first letter to Timothy that the young preacher suffered from some form chronic illness, perhaps a digestive disorder. **"Drink no**

longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.” (I Timothy 5: 23). Timothy's ministry began when he was young, and it appears he was self-conscious about his age and could be bullied or intimidated. **“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (I Timothy 4:12)** The young preacher was of mixed ethnicity. His mother was a Jew and his father a Greek. This fact would have likely resulted in Timothy being treated with contempt by the Jews. He agreed to be circumcised by Paul even though circumcision was and is not a qualification for eternal salvation, or even church membership. It is probable Timothy submitted to circumcision in order to have credibility among the Jews concerning his testimony of Christ. Scripture indicates he was circumcised **“because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek”** Timothy served the Lord despite his physical infirmities, emotional uncertainties and social disadvantage. To do so it was necessary that he put self aside, lose whatever doubts he might have had about his own abilities and believe the Lord was able to elevate him above illnesses and misgivings to be a faithful, profitable servant. Furthermore he humbled himself in submitting to the Jewish ritual of circumcision in order to have credibility among the Jews. Timothy's condescension was in putting any away any self-invoked sense of inadequacy due to poor health, his age or lack of social standing that hindered his efforts to obey God's will, and suffering unnecessary and painful surgery in order to be tolerated by the Jews.

Epaphroditus' Condescension

“Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.” (Philippians 2:25) This text indicates Epaphroditus shared Paul's commitment to serve God no matter what hardship or sacrifice he might be called upon to make. He was a leader in the church at Philippi, likely their pastor. Yet despite his position of authority as God's under shepherd and a leader of this flock he consented to become a servant as their messenger to Paul. He was assigned the task of making the journey to Rome to take supply to Paul who was imprisoned there. He did so in peril of his own life. **“For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow,” (Philippians 2:27).** Furthermore, when Epaphroditus learned of the sorrow of the Philippians when they received word of his illness he became sorrowful because of their suffering for his condition. This indicates he had greater concern for the emotional wellbeing of those the Lord had called him to serve than

for his own physical condition. Epaphroditus' obedience to serve in whatever capacity the Lord required, whether as under shepherd or messenger, his example of putting the wellbeing of others ahead of self no matter the personal price he would pay demonstrates a mindset that conformed to the pattern of condescension revealed in Christ.

Paul's Condescension

The Apostle Paul details his own case, of which the Philippians would have been most familiar, as an example of how followers of Christ can exercise the Christ mindset in all the affairs of their lives. Having identified them as like himself in their commitment to God's service, referring to Timothy as “likeminded” and Epaphroditus as a “companion in labor and fellow soldier,” Paul proceeds in chapter 3 to explain how having the Christ mindset, worked in his own case and presumably theirs also:

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Philippians 3:3-11)

No Confidence in the flesh: The first point of Paul's explanation is true worship excludes confidence in the flesh, purely human self-confidence and abilities. He explains that if mere human abilities and worldly status could have any influence on one's ability to **“worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus”** he, Paul, certainly had the credentials; and recites his previous status of high standing and achievements among the Jews. **(Philippians 3:4-6)**

Counted loss for Christ: Next, he asserts true, spiritual worship is accomplished by writing off,

consciously losing, attitudes of self-confidence by freely counting all purely human abilities and all worldly status as expendable in order to gain superior fellowship with God through Christ. This is to say in order to know more of what is knowable about God one must forget, or lose one's self, one's sense of self in terms of whatever abilities and standing by which he is known according to worldly standards. This includes whatever acclaim, high rank or achievements that are highly prized values of society. (In Paul's case this was his status as a Jew with high standing as a zealous Pharisee) It also includes self-perceptions that promote self-pity and self-loathing, or even actual low standing or status in society that causes others to look upon you with reproach, fear or scorn. (From the perspective of Christian standing Paul's persecution of the church was not a positive qualification and initially caused him to be feared. See Acts 9:13-14). Things relating to one's physical and mental abilities, one's accomplishments or lack thereof, all things pertaining to worldly status, whether one is seen as abounding or abased, must be counted loss, must be written off as expendable if one is to gain the **"excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus."**

Suffered the loss of all things: The next principle of having the mindset of Christ demonstrates how God providentially intervenes to insure those who seek **"excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus"** can experience higher knowledge of Him through spiritual insight. To do so requires the actual loss of any thing that inhibits fellowship with the Lord. Obedience to God's will insures the necessary loss will in fact occur. By God's grace and mercy Paul lost all the influence of his previous status and accomplishments among the Jews; which would deter his ability to achieve higher, or superior knowledge that is gained by fellowship of the sufferings and power of the resurrection of Christ as a consequence of being made conformable to his death. **"Being made conformable unto his death"** is a description of the impact of having counted all things loss and then losing all things. Christ's actual death on Calvary was a result of Him counting His status as God, **"equal with God"** as expendable in order to do the will of the Father; and then actually losing His life in order to carry out God's will. Paul became spiritually conformed to the to the spirit of Christ's death when he counted his status among the Jews as expendable and, in consequence of following Christ, lost all positive standing among them, suffering many persecutions and afflictions at their hands for Christ's sake, as the result of obeying God's will.

To be continued...

Elder Mike Ivey

Prayer and Praise

Sister Carol & Elder Mark Rowell were blessed to welcome their new son Graham Jacob Thomas Rowell

Elder Otis Lynch, a Primitive Baptist elder from Louisiana, had a heart attack and died while in services in OK on Saturday. Please be in prayer for his family, the church he served and the people in attendance at the meeting.

Sister Lura Ivey had her heart fibrillater replaced and is doing well.

Brother Dan and Sister Caitlin have moved into their new house.

Elder Ed Kirkpatrick is having problems with his pancreas and is need of prayer.

Sis. Shanna Faries, the daughter of Sis. Val and Elder Gail Faries, was in a serious auto accident and thankfully escaped with only bruises and soreness.

Oct. Calendar

(and upcoming meetings)

October	2nd	Annual Meeting / Abilene Primitive Baptist Church	Abilene, Texas
October	2nd	Ordination of Bro. James Reed to the Ministry / Spring Grove PBC	Tomball, Texas
October	3rd	Ordination of Bro. Ken Wilhelm to the office of Deacon / Muleshoe, TX	Muleshoe, Texas
October	3rd	Annual Meeting / Dixie Primitive Baptist Church	Whitesboro, Texas
October	4th	Annual Meeting / Fellowship PB Church	Madisonville, Texas
October	4th	Annual Meeting / Reveille Primitive Baptist Church	Magazine, Arkansas
October	4th	Annual Singing / Midland Primitive Baptist Church	Midland, Texas

Electronic version of “Press Toward” available

Elder Martin Onyoni’s Appointments

Lord willing, Elder Martin Onyoni, pastor of First Primitive Baptist Church of Kisii, Kenya will preach for us on Saturday November 7, 2009. We will have supper at 5:30PM and begin worship service at 7:00PM. Please make attending this special meeting a top priority. I encourage you to invite your neighbors and friends to join us to hear the gospel preached and witness how the Lord is revealing the truths of salvation by grace alone in distant lands.

Schedule of Elder Onyoni’s preaching appointments:

10/22/09 P.M.	Zion’s Rest PBC, Jasper, AL
10/25/09 A.M	Bethlehem PBC, Tuscaloosa, AL
10/25/09 P.M.	Five Mile PBC, Akron, AL
10/26/09 P.M.	Flint River PBC, Huntsville, AL
10/27/09 P.M.	Union PBC, Woodville, AL
10/28/09 P.M.	Grace PBC, Macon GA
10/29/09 P.M.	Augusta Old Line PBC, Augusta, GA
10/31/09 A.M.	New Antioch PBC, TN,
11/01/09 A.M.	Vestavia PBC, Birmingham, AL
P.M.	Vestavia PBC, Birmingham, AL
11/02/09 P.M.	Ideal PBC, Hattiesburg, MS
11/04/09 P.M.	Mt Gilead PBC, Smithdale, MS
11/05/09 P.M.	W. Monroe New Prospect PBC, W. Monroe, LA
11/06/09 P.M.	Bethany PBC, San Antonio, TX
11/07/09 P.M.	Lewisville PBC, Lewisville, TX
11/08/09 A.M.	Denton PBC, Denton, TX
11/09/09 P.M.	Borger PBC, Borger, TX
11/12/09 P.M.	New Bethel PBC, Los Angeles, CA
11/13/09 P.M.	Bethel PBC, Lindsay, CA
11/15/09A.M.	Golden Gate PBC, Fremont, CA
11/15/09 P.M.	Glorious Kingdom PBC, Oakland, CA

If you currently receive a hard copy of the newsletter either at Church or through the U.S. mail and would prefer to have an electronic copy instead, please visit www.lewisvillepbc.org , as we have recently begun posting issues there.

Ministering Servants

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⁵ The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. ⁶ The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. ⁷ All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. ⁸ All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. ⁹ The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. ¹⁰ Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. ¹¹ There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

Ecclesiastes 1:5-11

Important Dates to Remember

Quarterly Conference – 2nd Sunday in Jan, April, July, and Oct
Annual Meeting – **Friday before 4th Sunday in March**
Communion – **2nd Sunday in March** & 4th Sunday in Sept
Call for Pastor, Assistant Pastor & Clerk – 2nd Sunday in Jan
Read Articles of Faith / Church Covenant – 1st Sunday in Feb