

The Mind of Christ: The Answer for a Complaining Generation

I. THE PROBLEM: PHIL 2:14

¹⁴Do all things without complaining and disputing... (Phil 2:14)

- A. Complaining is a mindset that focuses on the short-term negative pressures in our life more than on the long-term positive blessings in our life.
- B. Complaining damages relationships—marriage, family, and friendships. Complaining is not a personality type, but a way of processing information. It is a mindset that anyone can change.
- C. Complaining is based on a feeling that we deserve to be treated better by God or people. It is based on idealism about how good our circumstances or relationships should be.
- D. Complaining gives expression to accusations against God and others (Rev. 12:10).
- E. Complaining emphasizes *what we do not have* rather than *what we have*—especially the *wealth that we have in Christ*.
- F. The language of complaint is often wrapped up in exaggerated language. "You always... you never... every time you... I'll never have"

II. THE PROMISED FRUIT: PHIL 2:15

14 Do all things without complaining or disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world... (Phil 2:14-15)

- A. Paul lays forth the roadmap for profound fruit to be displayed through the believing community. This roadmap is simple but challenging and the promised fruit is what the Lord wants to bring forth in His people.
- B. **Blameless:** To be above reproach. To live in such a way that shame, blame, criticism doesn't hold up.
- C. **Harmless:** Removing complaint can position us to avoid the fire of destruction so typically set by the tongue. (James 3:5)
- D. **Children of God without fault (in midst of wicked a perverse generation):** there are many issues that will set a body of believers apart from a wicked and perverse generation but at the top of the list is this issues of our speech.

- E. **Lights in the world:** in the Sermon on the mount Jesus says, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden..” A prerequisite for becoming the city set on a hill is the removal of complaint and grumbling from our lives.
- F. Complaint is a *mindset*. It’s a way of thinking and processing family, friends, and circumstances in our lives. Since complaint begins in the mind we must set out to have our minds changed and renewed into the mind of Christ. If we change our mind, change the way we think, it’s much easier to change our complaining tongue.
- G. It’s a two way road between what’s inside our hearts and what we express with our mouths. What is inside of us has a way of coming out of our mouths, “***Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks...***”(Mt 12:34) and according to James, what comes out of our mouths, overtime, directs what inside of us. “*Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. 4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desire.*” (James 3:3-4)
- H. What if we were a people that didn’t complain, not because we were mostly good at biting our tongue, but rather because we actually think and feel as though we have nothing to complain about.

III. THE PREMIER EXAMPLE: PHIL 2:1-11

1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my Joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also for the interest of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in the appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... (Phil 2:1-10)

- A. The language of this text is filled with phrases addressing the issue of the mind... the thought life. (“Like minded... being of one mind.. in lowliness of mind...” etc.)
- B. In verse 5 we see the phrase “*Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus...*” We are exhorted to think the way Christ Jesus thinks. It’s here in the passage we see the premier example of what to do with the mind. Jesus has a way of thinking. Jesus shows us what it looks like to walk out the exhortation in verse 1-4.

C. Three steps to the mind of Christ:

1. Being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God ("I know who I am and the strengths I bring to the table")
2. BUT made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men....he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death...("I'll use my strengths in the humble service and benefit of another")
3. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him... ("I'm motivated because I'm confident my father in heaven sees every act of love and rewards accordingly")

D. This thought process for you and me:

1. I know whom I am. I am a Son or Daughter of the King. I have all I need for life in Godliness. I have been fashioned and formed by my maker and knit together by Him in my mothers womb. He has given me a tailor made package to experience and express the knowledge of God.
2. I'll use my tailor made package and gifting to serve my neighbor. I'll consider their comfort and honor above my own.
3. I'm motivated to serve in the secret place because my father in heaven sees in secret and rewards those "cups of cold water" I give.

IV. THE PRAYER: PHIL 1:9-11

9 and this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil 1:9-11)

- A. In the prayer there are two areas for love to abound. The first area mentioned is, *love to abound in knowledge*. The second area prayed for is *love to abound in discernment*.
- B. **Knowledge:** *The way in which we think.* Love abounding in knowledge includes the knowledge of God abundant in us that leads to the way of love. Love abounding in knowledge includes the *way of love* abounding in our thought patterns. The thought patterns we have regarding ourselves, others and our circumstances. Patient thoughts, kind thoughts, enduring thoughts. Thoughts that bear all things, hopes all things, believes all things...

- C. Love abounding in knowledge is a way of thinking that leads to a perspective change so we are a grateful people instead of a complaining people. Much like complaint being a mindset, gratitude is also a mindset. Gratitude is a mindset based on seeing that Jesus has given us much more than what we deserve.
- D. **Discernment:** *The way in which we see and evaluate.* The gift of “discernment” is not really about being able to point out peoples weakness’ and faults, that’s easy, what takes the grace of God upon an individual is the ability to see someones “budding” strengths/virtues in the midst of their glaring weakness.

V. THE PRACTICE: PHIL 4:8-9

- A. Paul promised peace to any who will cultivate a spirit of gratitude in their life (Phil. 4:4-7).

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always...⁵Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:4-7)

1. ***Rejoice in the Lord always*** (4:4)—to call to mind or focus on seeing what God sees when He looks at our life. Rejoicing in the Lord, gratitude, and giving thanks to God exhibit the same mindset. Gratitude is foundational to Christian living. It is at the heart of worship.
2. ***The Lord is at hand*** (4:5)—the Lord’s eyes are on us and He intervenes in our life according to His way and timing. Gratitude releases the Lord’s presence in our life.
3. ***Be anxious for nothing*** (4:6)—we war against anxiety with gratitude. Satan, the accuser, cannot work effectively in the presence of gratitude.
4. ***By prayer, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*** (4:6)—those who cultivate a mindset of gratitude will pray with greater faith, consistency, and joy.
5. ***The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds*** (4:7)—there is a strong link between a mindset of gratitude and peace in our emotions.
6. ***Let your gentleness be known to all men*** (4:5)—we are called to express the same graciousness to others that we have received freely from the Lord.

- B. The setting of *the mind* to cultivate gratitude and war against complaint.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.