

THE PROPER MINDSET (Php.2:3-8)

- I. In these verses, Paul focuses on the attitude which:
- A. befits the saint.
 - B. matures the saint.
 - C. coheres the church.
 - D. best emulates Jesus Christ.
 1. God's election concentrates on making saints to be like Christ. Ro.8:29.
 2. The ministry of the word is to form Christ in us. Ga.4:19.
 3. The saint's plea ought ever to be, "He must increase, but I must decrease (Jn.3:30)."
 4. The characteristic of Christ which is emphasized here is condescension.
 - a. Condescend: "To come down voluntarily. 2. fig. To come or bend down, so far as a particular action is concerned, from one's position of dignity or pride; to stoop voluntarily and graciously; to deign: a. to do something."
 - b. Saints are to condescend to each other. Ro.12:16.
 - c. Christ is the supreme example of condescension. Nobody has ever stooped down as far as did He for the sake of brethren.
- II. Clearly, condescension requires humility (v.8), without which grace to live like Christ is withheld. Ja.4:6.
- III. Mark Christ's condescension and the lessons it teaches us. vs.6-8.
- A. He could have simply appeared as an adult. But instead, He Who made woman would Himself be made of a woman. Ga.4:4.
 1. As a child, He subjected Himself to parental authority. Lu.2:51.
 2. This shows us the need for subjection for Christ's sake. 1 Pe.5:5.
 - B. He came not as a Pharaoh or as a pope with all his papal retinue.
 1. Rather, He came into a poor family under lowly conditions and later held occupation as a carpenter.
 2. He identified especially with the poor and the common folk. Mt.9:11; Mk.12:37.
 3. When the time came for Him to enter Jerusalem, He did not come in on a regal camel train in pomp and splendor. Mt.21:5.
 4. This shows us that His kingdom is not after the manner of this world, but is built upon righteousness, love, joy and peace. Ro.12:10; 14:17.
 - C. He came not as a man of wealth (Mt.8:20; 2 Co.8:9). Saints must steer clear of false distinctions of wealth. 1 Ti.6:5; Ja.2:1-5.
 - D. He came not as a handsome Adonis (Is.53:2). Let us be ever mindful that true beauty is inner godliness. 2 Sa.14:25 ct/w 1 Sa.16:7.
 - E. He came not seeking men's praise as a man of letters, educated in the best schools of the day (Jn.7:15). Flattering titles were not His bag. Job 32:21-22.
 - F. He came not as a Korah, grasping for position and power (Nu.16:3), but was satisfied with God's commendation. He.5:5 c/w 2 Co.10:18.
 1. The church does not need the attitude of Diotrephes. 3 Jn.9.
 2. Diotrephes' attitude is the vainglory we are to shun (v.3), which only leads to provocations. Ga.5:26 c/w Ja.3:13.
 - G. He came not as a Rehoboam, ruling over His people without consideration of their plight (1 Ki.12:13-14), but with gentleness and meekness---an excellent pattern for all but especially for ministers. 2 Co.10:1; 2 Ti.2:24-25.
 - H. He came not to be served, but to serve.
 1. The path to true preeminence and greatness is serving brethren,

- not exalting one's self over them. Mt.20:25-28.
2. He never let His greatness stand in the way of His service to brethren, unlike the nobles of Ne.3:5. Note Jn.13:12-15.
 3. He placed the welfare of His brethren above His own, thus leaving us an example. Ro.15:1-3.
 - I. He came not to pursue His interests, but those of God's (Jn.6:38; 8:50, 54; Mt.3:15). So should we.
- IV. Christ's seven steps of condescension from glory turned to seven steps of exaltation to glory. Php.2:9-11.
- A. Humility before God and others is the staircase of exaltation. 1 Pe.5:5-6.
 - B. In cultivating the mind of Christ, we find rest. Mt.11:29.