

The Mind of Christ

Looking at the Cross

Part Three

INTRODUCTION:

- I. For the past two weeks, we've been focusing our attention on the cross of Christ.
 - A. More specifically, we've taken a close look at the CHARACTER of Jesus as He hung on the cross of Calvary, and we've explored how Jesus actually VIEWED the cross.
 1. We learned that Jesus WILLINGLY went to the cross because He saw it as an ABSOLUTE NECESSITY.
 - a. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was NO ACCIDENT – it was FORETOLD by the prophets, and it was UNQUESTIONABLY according to the *"determined purpose and foreknowledge of God."* **(Acts 2:23)**
 - b. God the Son came to earth, coming in the likeness of man, to WILLINGLY shed His own blood on the cross as ATONEMENT for our sins.

- c. In doing so, Jesus fulfilled the ETERNAL PURPOSE (eternal PLAN) of God to provide mankind with a way to obtain COMPLETE and PERMANENT remission of our sins.
- B. But there's a great deal MORE we can learn about the cross and all that was ACCOMPLISHED there in our Lord's sacrifice.
1. So, let's continue by taking our journey back in time some two thousand years, and ONCE AGAIN stand at the foot of the cross.
 2. By reflecting on what HAPPENED there, we SHOULD be able to begin putting together all the pieces of the puzzle, and have a deeper UNDERSTANDING and APPRECIATION for what Jesus did for you and me.

BODY:

- I. As we stand looking at the cross, we eventually come to realize that Jesus died to be our EXAMPLE.
 - A. **1 Peter 2:21** – *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*
 1. The word "EXAMPLE" in this verse comes from the word "*hupogrammon*," which is actually a combination of TWO Greek words.
 - a. The first is "*hupo*," which means, "below, or under."

- b. The second is "*grammos*," which means, "words, or writing."
 2. Translated literally, the word "*hupogrammon*" refers to the line of handwriting that a CHILD was to reproduce from a perfect sample of handwriting that appeared at the top of the child's writing exercise book.
 - a. The idea was for the child to use the line of writing at the top of the page as an EXAMPLE of what he was to reproduce below.
 - b. Thus, the CHILD'S writing became the "*hupogrammon*" – the EXACT COPY or REPRODUCTION of what appeared above.
 - c. We still use this technique of teaching handwriting today – a technique of learning to write that has been in practice for thousands of years.
 3. In **1 Peter 2:21**, Peter says Jesus is the "*hupogrammon*" – the EXACT COPY or REPRODUCTION of something that appears ABOVE.
 4. Or, to put it another way, Jesus is the EXACT COPY or REPRODUCTION of all the CHARACTER and ATTRIBUTES of GOD HIMSELF.

5. Furthermore, just as JESUS is the *"hupogrammon"* of God the FATHER, WE are to become the *"hupogrammon"* of JESUS CHRIST.
 - a. WE are to faithfully reproduce in our OWN lives the same character and attributes we see in the life of JESUS.
- B. What SPECIFICALLY does Peter say we need to reproduce? The answer is found in the verses following.
 1. **1 Peter 2:22-23** – Speaking of Jesus, Peter says, *"Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth;" Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously...*
 2. There are five specific things mentioned here that we need to reproduce in our own lives.
 - a. First, we need to reproduce OBEDIENCE TO GOD – *"Who committed no sin..." (v. 22a)*
 - (1). Sin has ALWAYS been the result of willful DISOBEDIENCE.
 - (2). Therefore, when we TRULY have a desire to FAITHFULLY SERVE and OBEY God, we will ABSTAIN from sin.

- b. Second, we need to reproduce TRUTHFULNESS – *"Nor was deceit found in His mouth."* (v. 22b)
- (1). Jesus was ALWAYS TRUTHFUL – there was NEVER any DECEIT nor was there every any HIDDEN AGENDA in His life. Jesus ALWAYS TRAFFICED IN TRUTH.
 - (2). Therefore, we LIKEWISE need to be completely TRUTHFUL, having no desire to hide the TRUTH about our lives. There should NEVER be any DUPLICITY in our lives.
- c. Third, we need to reproduce CONTROL OF THE TONGUE – *"Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return."* (v. 23a)
- (1). The word *"revile"* means, "to rail against, lash out, to scold, berate, malign, defame, slander, backbite."
 - (2). Although OTHERS did all these things to JESUS, He REFUSED to do the same in RETURN.
 - (3). We LIKEWISE need to control OUR tongue, and refrain from STRIKING BACK at someone with our WORDS.
- d. Fourth, we need to also reproduce CONTROL OF OUR ACTIONS – *"when He suffered, He did not threaten."* (v. 23b)

- (1). Even though Jesus COULD HAVE retaliated – even though Jesus COULD HAVE stuck back at those who had nailed Him to the cross – He DIDN'T!
 - (2). Jesus had LEGIONS of angels at His disposal, but He REFUSED to seek revenge.
 - (3). We, LIKEWISE, need to reproduce the control of OUR actions.
 - (4). When someone has wronged US, our NATURAL reaction is to RETALIATE. But to reproduce the same qualities and characteristics of Jesus in our OWN lives, we need to LIKEWISE refuse to SEEK REVENGE.
- e. And finally, Peter says we need to reproduce TRUST IN GOD – because Jesus, *"committed Himself to Him [God] Who judges righteously."* (v. 23c)
- (1). Rather than SEEK REVENGE, Jesus put the matter in the hands of God – trusting GOD to bring about a JUST PUNISHMENT based on an IMPARTIAL JUDGMENT.
 - (2). We LIKEWISE need to learn to reproduce TRUST IN GOD in our OWN LIVES – learning to trust God to FAIRLY and RIGHTLY judge those who seek to harm US.

C. Therefore, Jesus left us an example of the DIVINE CHARACTER and ATTRIBUTES we need to DUPLICATE in our OWN lives.

1. This is why Peter says we, "*should follow His steps.*" (v. 21)

a. This phrase literally means, "*to follow close behind, or to track the footsteps of another.*"

b. It's just another way of saying, we need to follow footprints of Jesus – to follow the SAME PATH our Savior has taken of COMPLETE TRUST AND OBEDIENCE to the God of heaven.

II. Another thing we see in the death of Christ on the cross is that EVERYTHING WE LOST in ADAM, we REGAINED in Jesus Christ.

A. Simply put, the life and death of Jesus provided US with a means by which WE can escape the CONSEQUENCES of Adam's sin.

1. What do we mean by this? We mean that through HIS perfect life and obedience Jesus was able to CANCEL our sins – all our FAILURES, REBELLIONS and DISOBEDIENCE – as if it had NEVER HAPPENED.

2. In DOING that, we are no longer the same CONDEMNATION as ADAM was – we are no longer separated from enjoying fellowship with God.

3. And furthermore, through His death, burial and resurrection from the dead, we are able to escape the FEAR OF DEATH – PHYSICAL DEATH, which was introduced into the world as a result of ADAM'S sin and being denied right to the Tree of Life, which was in the midst of the Garden of God.
- B. This whole idea is expressed in TWO New Testament passages penned by the apostle Paul.
1. **Romans 5:12, 18-19** – *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned — [verses 13 through 17 are a lengthy parenthetical statement explaining Adam's sin and the consequences of that sin.] Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.*
 - a. The apostle Paul says that it was by Adam's act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden, that sin was introduced into the world, and as a result, judgment and condemnation

have been passed to all mankind because we have ALSO disobeyed God and sinned like Adam.

(1). We are ALL under the same condemnation as Adam because WE have ALL SINNED.

(2). While we do not inherit the SIN of Adam, we suffer the CONSEQUENCES of his sin because we are under the SAME CONDEMNATION AS ADAM as a result of our OWN sins.

b. But JESUS, through HIS righteous act of OBEDIENCE (His sacrificial death on the cross), made it possible for US to receive the FREE GIFT of SALVATION, resulting in JUSTIFICATION.

(1). Because WE sinned like Adam, WE were CONDEMNED to be ETERNALLY SEPARATED from God.

(2). But when WE obey God as JESUS DID, God's free gift of SALVATION is given to US, resulting in our being JUSTIFIED in God's eyes.

(3). In other words, the PERFECT, SINLESS life JESUS lived, and His SACRIFICIAL death on the cross, REVERSED the FATE of the whole human race.

2. **1 Corinthians 15:21-22** – *For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*
- a. God created man to live FOREVER in a state of BLISS and JOY in the Garden of Eden – man could live FOREVER because he had access to the "Tree of Life," which was in the midst of the Garden
 - b. But Adam's sin introduced DEATH into the world – not only depriving HIM of being able to live in that state of ETERNAL BLISS and JOY, Adam's sin ALSO deprived US of being able to live forever.
 - (1). Why? Because the father of all mankind was EXPELLED from the Garden, and was DENIED further access to the "Tree of Life" – and because he could no longer partake of the fruit of the "Tree of Life" he eventually died. And that's why WE die as well.
 - (2). And so, once again, while we don't inherit the SIN of Adam, we suffer the CONSEQUENCES of his sin – we ALSO die physically because HE lost right to the Tree of Life for us ALL.

- c. However, through JESUS CHRIST, we can be made ALIVE through the RESURRECTION from the dead – and live FOREVER in HEAVEN.
 - d. Until Jesus came, mankind was CONDEMNED to die and to have NO HOPE of a resurrection from the dead at the end of time.
 - e. However, Jesus REVERSED the whole course of human history by His faithful OBEDIENCE and SACRIFICIAL BLOOD, and made it possible for US to break FREE of that condemnation and HAVE the hope of a resurrection from the dead at the end of time.
3. To put it simply, what we LOST in Adam, we GAINED in Christ.
- a. What we LOST when Adam partook of the tree called "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," we gained BACK when Jesus partook of the tree called "The Cross of Calvary."

III. But there is SOMETHING ELSE we need to understand about the Cross.

Through the death of Jesus, we were RANSOMED.

- A. There are several New Testament WORDS that are connected with this picture of Jesus coming as a RANSOM – including the words, REDEEMED, and BOUGHT.

1. For example, when the disciples of Jesus were arguing over who was GREATEST among them, Jesus told them, "... *whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a RANSOM for many.*" (**Matthew 20:27-28**)
 - a. The word "RANSOM" means, "the price paid for the emancipation or the liberation of any person or thing."
 - b. In the Old Testament, a RANSOM was the price a man had to pay to avoid the DEATH PENALTY for something he did.
 - (1). For example, in **Exodus 21:28-32**, the Law of Moses spelled out the punishment for a man who neglected to keep an ox penned that had previously gored someone to death, and had now killed another person as well.
 - (2). The ox and the owner were to be put to death – UNLESS a fine was imposed on the owner. The only way he could redeem or ransom his life was to pay the fine.
 - (3). Therefore, the money he paid was the ransom for his life – the price paid to free the man from the death penalty.

- c. But in the NEW TESTAMENT, we're told we have been RANSOMED by the LIFE of Jesus – because Jesus came, *"to give His LIFE a RANSOM for many."* **(Matthew 20:27-28)**
 - d. YOU and I are able to escape the PENALTY for the sins WE'VE committed because Jesus gave His LIFE as the RANSOM to FREE us from that penalty of death.
2. Another word associated with RANSOM is the word REDEMPTION or REDEEMED.
- a. There are TWO KEY New Testament passages that speak of Jesus paying to free us from condemnation with HIS OWN BLOOD.
 - (1). **Hebrews 9:11-12** – *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, BUT WITH HIS OWN BLOOD He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained ETERNAL REDEMPTION.*
 - (2). **Colossians 1:13-14** – He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have REDEMPTION

THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF
SINS.

- b. The meaning of REDEMPTION is very similar to RANSOM. It means, "to pay the price necessary for liberation, or the price to set one free."
 - c. Just as Jesus said He gave His LIFE as a RANSOM for many, THE apostle Paul tells us we have been REDEEMED BY and THROUGH the BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.
 - d. THAT'S the price Jesus paid to FREE us from the DEATH PENALTY we were under as a result of our sins – He paid for our FREEDOM WITH HIS OWN BLOOD ON THE CROSS.
3. And finally, let's consider the word BOUGHT.
- a. Consider these passages that speak of the fact that we were BOUGHT WITH A PRICE.
 - (1). After speaking about the sins of sexual immorality – sins that are committed against our body – the apostle Paul said **(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)**: *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, AND YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE;*

*therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit,
which are God's.*

(2). **1 Corinthians 7:20-23** – *Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you CAN be made free, rather USE IT. For he who is called in the Lord while a SLAVE is the LORD'S freedman. Likewise he who is called while FREE is Christ's SLAVE. YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE; do not become slaves of men.*

(3). **2 Peter 2:1** – *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, EVEN DENYING THE LORD WHO BOUGHT THEM, and bring on themselves swift destruction.*

- b. THIS word is ALSO inseparably linked to the words RANSOM and REDEEMED.
- c. The word BOUGHT conveys the ACT of buying freedom for a slave who was previously in BONDAGE.
- d. No one is more familiar with the ACT of BUYING a slave than a slave themselves. In the 1700's and the early 1800's, when

slave trade was at its height, it was common for slave traders to raid African villages along the western coast of Africa and place men in women in iron collars all linked together with chains, and march them to the coast where they would be forced aboard slave trading ships bound for the Americas.

- e. However, if a man or woman had been captured by the slave traders, it was possible for the family of the captured person to BUY their loved one's freedom. The slave traders were more than happy to get money up front for a captive, because they knew many of these captured slaves would die on the ocean voyage anyway.
- f. When the family BOUGHT their loved one's freedom, the slave trader would undo the iron collar around the neck of the captive and set them free.
- g. There is an interesting West African translation of the Bible that translates the words RANSOM and REDEEMED as, to take our neck out of the collar.
- h. More than ANYONE, THESE people understand the role Jesus Christ paid in TAKING THEIR NECKS OUT OF THE COLLAR – of BUYING their FREEDOM from captivity to SIN.

- i. But even MORESO, THESE people understand that the PRICE Jesus paid to take THEIR neck out of the collar was the price of HIS OWN LIFE.
- j. Jesus bought THEIR freedom from slavery to sin by giving HIS OWN LIFE in THEIR PLACE.

CONCLUSION:

- I. So, what have we learned in THIS lesson about the cross of Christ, and what He ACCOMPLISHED there?
 - A. There are three VITALLY IMPORTANT things Jesus provided us as a result of His death on the cross of Calvary.
 - 1. Jesus became our "HUPOGRAMMON" – our EXAMPLE.
 - a. He provided for US the perfect example of the kind of person we NEED to be, and CAN be.
 - b. He provided a perfect example of:
 - (1). COMPLETE and PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO GOD.
 - (2). TRUTHFULNESS
 - (3). CONTROL OF THE TONGUE
 - (4). CONTROL OF HIS ACTIONS
 - (5). TRUST IN GOD

- c. Therefore, WE need to FOLLOW that example – "follow close behind, or track the footsteps – of Jesus in our OWN lives.
2. We ALSO learned that EVERYTHING we lost in ADAM, we REGAINED through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- a. While we don't inherit the SIN of Adam, there are two ways in which we suffer the CONSEQUENCES of his sin.
 - (1). Just as ADAM was under CONDEMNATION as a result of HIS sin, WE ALSO are under the SAME CONDEMNATION as a result of OUR own sins – we are under the condemnation of death (SPIRITUAL DEATH – separation from God).
 - (2). And just as ADAM lost right to the Tree of Life as the result of HIS SIN, and therefore is subject to DEATH in the PHYSICAL SENSE – we ALSO DIE, because WE have also been denied access to the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden because of Adam's sin.
 - b. But through the death of Jesus Christ, we can ESCAPE the condemnation of spiritual death, and RE-ESTABLISH fellowship with God once again...

- c. AND, we no longer need to fear DEATH in the PHYSICAL SENSE, because through His death, burial and resurrection from the dead, JESUS provides ETERNAL LIFE for US.
- 3. And finally, through His death on the cross, Jesus paid the RANSOM for our sins, REDEEMED us and BOUGHT us from our slavery to sin.
 - a. But the MOST amazing thing is that Jesus paid to RANSOM us with HIS OWN LIFE, and REDEEMED and BOUGHT us with HIS OWN BLOOD.

CONCLUSION:

- I. The BEAUTY of all this is that EVERYONE is now able to take FULL advantage of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross – no matter how FAR AWAY FROM GOD you might think you are.
 - A. The Hebrew writer says THIS about Jesus: *Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him...*

(Hebrews 7:25)

- 1. The word "uttermost" NOT ONLY means that Jesus is able to save us "COMPLETELY, and PERFECTLY," but ALSO that through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we are able to be saved "PERPETUALLY, and CONTINUOUSLY."

- a. This DOESN'T mean once saved, always saved. Rather it means there isn't a SIN IN YOUR PAST that the blood of Christ can't save NOW, nor is there a SIN YOU MAY COMMIT IN THE FUTURE that the blood of Christ can't save THEN.
- b. The blood of Christ has the power to cleanse EVERY SIN you've committed in the PAST, and EVERY SIN you may commit in the FUTURE.

II. Have YOU received the benefits of the death of Jesus? Has the blood of Christ cleansed YOU from EVERY sin?

A. Take a look at your life.

1. Is Jesus the EXAMPLE YOU'RE following, or are you following the examples of others?
2. Through Jesus Christ, HAVE YOU escaped the CONDEMNATION of SPIRITUAL DEATH, and the fear of PHYSICAL DEATH, or are you still out of fellowship with God and afraid to die?
3. And finally, HAS Jesus RANSOMED YOU, REDEEMED YOU and BOUGHT YOU with His life and His blood, or are you still enslaved in sin?

- B. If you have to answer "NO" to ANY of these questions, then what are you WAITING FOR?
1. The PRICE to RANSOM and REDEEM you from sin has ALREADY been paid.
 2. Therefore, SOME of you need to simply come to Christ in complete OBEDIENCE – coming in faith, repenting of your past sins, confessing your faith in Christ before men, and being baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins.
 3. And for those of you who have DONE that, but have RETURNED to serving the old slave master who held you in bondage to sin, you need to come to Christ out of genuine repentance, confessing those sins to God and He will cleanse you and set you free.