

~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:

The Apostle Paul said, "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). For anyone to live a life which is Christ, he must have the mind of Christ.

The first great principle which we meet in the life and character of the apostle Paul is self-displacement. Without this no one can live the Christ-life. Others was the motive that lay behind Paul's marvelous life. Constrained by the love of Christ he lived for Him who died for him. In living for Christ he lived for others and thus he lived Christ. Such a life is and must be energized and controlled by the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Self-displacement is the great truth which lies enfolded in these words. This is the starting point in the life of practical holiness. This is the root out of which the Christ-life springs. Outside of this "mystery of godliness" there can be no Christian holiness. The kind of holiness that does not proceed from the mind of Christ is either legal holiness such as the Pharisees boasted of, or theoretical holiness preached by the scribes, or professional holiness mouthed by the hypocrites.

Practical holiness is like-mindedness with Christ who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life for others. Paul said, "I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:20-21).

Practical holiness seeks not its own things but the things of others. In order to do this we must esteem others better than ourselves. When we have done this we have displaced ourselves. If we continue to do this we shall continue to live a life of holiness. When we cease to live thus we cease to live the Christ-life. We may still have the outward form, but the power is gone.

The opportunities for the display of this cardinal virtue are just as great today as in Paul's time. The only reason why more are not practicing the mind of Christ is on account of the cost. Self-displacement is a business of no ordinary kind. "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself" (Matt. 16:24).

This is a greater work than the building of an earthly empire. It is a challenge from the Forerunner to the glory, to the man that is ambitious to build a kingdom. It is a contract let by the Architect of the universe to those not counting their lives dear unto themselves who are in partnership with His Son in building a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Who is sufficient for these things? Only those who take up their cross daily and follow Paul as he followed Christ, who thought it not a thing to be grasped, to have a place in the Godhead.

Self-emptying

The second great principle in the life hid with Christ in God is that of self-emptying. "He made Himself of no reputation." Or, "He emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant." To serve one's superior is honorable. To serve one's equal is just. But to serve one's inferior is divine.

If a pauper should offer to exchange rags with a fellow pauper it would be adding reproach to his sorrow. But if a millionaire should disrobe himself of his wealth in order that through his poverty the pauper might be enriched, that would be the mind of Christ.

To divest ourselves of our inherent rights in order that another may take our place and sit down in our possessions, this is practical holiness. To have the mind of Christ and show it when we are called upon to give preferment to one more honorable than ourselves, is praiseworthy. But when, after the toil of the day is over and the way home is long and the car is crowded with weary passengers, we rise from our place to let another sit down in our comfort while we take his place, and we do so because we esteem him better than ourselves--this is Godlike.

Self-humbling

The third quality in the life of holiness is self-humbling. Legal, theoretical, or professional holiness knows nothing about self-humbling. To be lord and master and yet humble one's self and take the place of the servant of servants, to be chief of the apostles and less than the least of all saints is a grace found only among those who walk in the Way of Holiness, whereon no ravenous beast is found, and which no vulture's eye hath seen.

Self-offering

The fourth and crowning virtue is a self-offering mind. "He offered Himself." Until we have reached this stage in the Christ-life, our "fruit unto holiness" has not been brought to perfection.

The life which has not these cardinal qualities: self-displacement, self-emptying, self-humbling, and self-offering, is devoid of the mind which was also in Christ Jesus. It knows not the daily cross and the death of self. It may appear outwardly beautiful but its shimmering is only the glint of a cheap tinsel.

The mind of Christ is free and spontaneous like the springing fountain. It goes out of its way like the Good Samaritan on the Jericho road. It esteems others better than itself. It naturally cares for the things of others, saying, "I will come and heal him"; "I will, be thou clean"; "Have ye here any meat?"; "Rise up and walk"; "Stretch forth thy hand"; "Bring him hither to me"; "Give ye them to eat"; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we were healed."