

[IN GOD'S IMAGE 61 - THE HOLY SPIRIT – MIND OF CHRIST]

We have been looking at the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching us to become God's holy people.

- ◆ Last time we looked at the role the Spirit plays in the second aspect of the sanctification process, and that is teaching the newly adopted child to live their new life according to the Spirit.
- ◆ God is about more than just offering salvation. He is creating a community of people, His holy people who reflect His divine nature and character within whom He can dwell.
- ◆ It is a nature already at work in the community that is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God has His being in community, and the glue that binds this holy family together is the love that God is.
- ◆ He is in effect teaching us as His adopted sons to live as God's children.

We finished up last time by talking about the transformation that has taken place in our lives as a result of our being "born of the Spirit."

- ◆ The major life-changing event that has happened to us is the coming of God in the form of the Holy Spirit to live in us.
- ◆ He not only gives us a new life, but also a new nature, one that wants to cooperate with the Spirit as He moulds us into God's holy people.
- ◆ And crucially, in this process of sanctification, this new nature is governed by the "mind of Christ."
- ◆ ***1 Corinthians 2:15-16 The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,¹⁶ for, ...we have the mind of Christ.***

Today we are going to look at what it means to have the "mind of Christ."

- ◆ As we begin to look at this very important subject, I need to make a disclaimer.
- ◆ I don't pretend to know the perfect mind of Christ. Like Paul we have to admit we only see through a glass darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12).
- ◆ Plus, it would be the height of arrogance to pretend to know how Christ would act in each circumstance.
- ◆ After all, it was precisely His unexpected reactions to the various situations He faced during His incarnation that so baffled his listeners.
- ◆ One had to smile not so many years ago when the wristband, WWJD (What Would Jesus Do), was scooped up by well-intentioned young people claiming to know how Jesus would act in any given situation.
- ◆ Fortunately, children of God have been given better resources than just wristbands so we can mature and ***be conformed to the image of His son (Romans 8:29).***

What exactly are those resources God has provided for us so we can come to know the mind of Christ?

- ◆ Well as we have already discovered, although we don't have the physical Jesus here to instruct us personally, having returned to heaven, He has not left us spiritual orphans as He has sent the Spirit to instruct us in the ways of God.
- ◆ ***John 14:18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.***
- ◆ Notice, it is through the Spirit that Jesus returns to us to carry on the work He began while physically amongst us.
- ◆ In Galatians 4 the Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of Christ" showing the unity of mind that exists within the Trinity.
- ◆ ***Galatians 4: 4-6 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."***
- ◆ Not only does the Spirit bring us the mind of Christ but another important resource as well, a changed heart.
- ◆ It is the Spirit taking up residence in our hearts that entitles us to be adopted as God's children and gives us the right, along with Jesus, to call the Father "Abba."
- ◆ It's interesting two of the descriptions used of the Holy Spirit parallel these two attributes of Jesus.
- ◆ He is described as the "Spirit of Truth" (mind) and the "Comforter" (heart) (John 16:13; John 14:16).
- ◆ So God has made this wonderful resource, the "Spirit of Christ" to develop within us the mind and heart of Christ.
- ◆ Our responsibility in the process is to submit to and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us as He imparts godly thoughts and attitudes to us.

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- ◆ The apostle Paul in chastening the wayward Galatians admonishes them in Galatians 5 and 6 to, “walk by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16), to “live by the Spirit” and to “keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25), and to “sow to the Spirit”(Galatians 6:8).
- ◆ These two chapters are a reminder to the Galatians of their new reality in Christ. They are to renounce their old way of living according to the “flesh” and live the new life of the “Spirit.”
- ◆ The first resource we have available to us to help us develop the mind of Christ is the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit.

The second resource we have available to us in developing the mind of Christ is the living example of Jesus recorded for us in Scripture.

- ◆ If we want to know what a Spirit-filled person looks like, we have the living example of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ ***Philippians 2:5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.***
- ◆ What set Jesus apart from other human beings was His utter and complete trust and faith in His heavenly Father.
- ◆ As He went about His daily life it was His submission to the divine leading of the Holy Spirit that allowed Him to complete the Father’s mission of saving the world from sin.
- ◆ By studying the life and teachings of Jesus we are given a window into the very mind of God (Luke 10:21-22).
- ◆ Jesus reveals the true nature and character of God and the ideals of the kingdom of God.
- ◆ The other New Testament writers supplement the teachings of Jesus especially as they expound the dramatic change that has come about now that the New Covenant of grace has replaced the Old Covenant of law.
- ◆ Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ’s atonement alone—there can be no legalistic or behavioral additions to grace—it can only be received, never earned.
- ◆ Christianity is a relationship, not a transaction.

It is at this point that we now need to address that vexing question of what is to guide a new babe in Christ if we are no longer under the law (Romans 6:14).

- ◆ And the answer to this question revolves around this remarkable resource God has made available to us, the “mind of Christ.”
- ◆ ***2 Corinthians 3:3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.***
- ◆ No longer are God’s people identified by externals such as circumcision, feast days and dietary laws but by their righteous behaviour (***You are a letter from Christ***), as a result of the Spirit of the living God taking up residence in their hearts.
- ◆ As mentioned earlier, it is the Spirit that is the game changer in this whole process.
- ◆ It is the “living Spirit” that replaces the “dead tablets of stone.”
- ◆ The failure of the Old Covenant law was its inability to empower the people to live up to its holy requirements.
- ◆ ***Hebrews 8:7-8 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. ⁸ But God found fault with the people and said...***
- ◆ As we saw with the Pharisees, the law makes people “religious”, but failed to produce the righteousness of God.
- ◆ But this deficiency is addressed with the establishment of the New Covenant.
- ◆ ***V.10 This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.***
- ◆ In contrast to the dutiful observances required by the external laws of the Old Covenant, righteousness under the New Covenant now blossoms internally from an obedient and thankful heart motivated by the Spirit.
- ◆ ***Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.***
- ◆ For many Christians, including many pastors, any talk of the doing away with the law now that we are under grace is to invite anarchy and lawlessness into the church.
- ◆ Paul asked the same question, ***“Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” (Romans 6:1).***
- ◆ The concern that anarchy will result is to misunderstand our new status in Christ.
- ◆ We are now sons of God, part of the new spiritual creation with a new nature directed by the Spirit that provides us with the mind of Christ.

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- ◆ ***Romans 6:11-13 Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body.... Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.***
- ◆ Notice here that just because Torah has been done away with, it is not the end of righteousness.
- ◆ The righteousness the Spirit provides is the real deal, the righteousness of God Himself.
- ◆ In contrast to the Israelites who only had an external set of laws to reflect God's righteousness, sons of God are given the "mind of Christ" to lead them in the ways of God.
- ◆ With the shedding of His blood, Christ instituted the New Covenant.
- ◆ This replaced the Old Covenant characterised by the "flesh" and the "law" and replaced it with the New Covenant of grace characterised by the "Spirit" and the "mind of Christ."
- ◆ ***Romans 8:3-4 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.***
- ◆ As Paul goes on to explain in Romans 8:5-8, we are no longer people of the "flesh" nor subject to the "law" which condemns us.
- ◆ Christ has set us free from both of these characteristics that described our life prior to our conversion.
- ◆ ***Romans 8:5-8 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.***
- ◆ Paul contrasts the two ways of life, one, a life prior to our conversion governed by the "flesh," and two, a life after our conversion governed by the "Spirit."
- ◆ ***V.6-8 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.***

Hopefully this answers that vexing question as to what should guide a new babe in Christ if we are no longer under the law? (Romans 6:14).

- ◆ God is not an irresponsible parent who leaves His newly adopted children as orphans with no spiritual guidance to become His holy people.
- ◆ Instead He provides the necessary resources so Christ, through the Holy Spirit, takes up residence in our hearts and gives us the "mind of Christ."
- ◆ Hopefully this gives us a better understanding of the divine resource God has made available to His children so they can develop the nature and characteristics of God Himself.
- ◆ The "mind of Christ" Himself guiding and motivating us is so much more effective in developing the holiness of God than the Old Covenant law.
- ◆ So the question comes down to this. What would we rather trust to develop the characteristics of our holy God in us? The external code written on stone or the mind of Christ in us?
- ◆ Having said that, it doesn't mean we can't learn very important spiritual lessons from the Mosaic Law and the rest of the Old Testament, which we will address.
- ◆ However by far the major change in developing holiness in God's people, comes from receiving from God the "mind of Christ."
- ◆ When we have the mind of Christ, then our thoughts and actions will flow from whom we are, children of God led by the Spirit of God.
- ◆ What an amazing blessing God has given His people.

We have spent a lot of time today discussing the subject of the law. Next time we will back up a bit and look at the purpose of the law.