

Title: THINK LIKE THIS, PHILIPPIANS 1:1 – 11
(Chatham, NJ; 03/20/16, AM) [D – Exegesis, Cause and Effect]

Theme: The effect of Christ's ministry of service and self-sacrifice is to make us live in the same way.

Purpose: To elevate Jesus' model of service as the one we are called to aspire to.

Introduction:

1. Doctrines aren't merely tests of faithfulness; they are reasons we live faithfully.
2. There is a cause and effect relationship between our living and what we believe, or at least there should be.
3. Philippians 2 demonstrates this principle.
4. Paul draws a direct line between how Jesus lived and how we too must imitate him.
5. He reverses the cause and effect relationship by placing the effect first, and then explaining the cause.

I. The Effect, 1-4

A. Complete my joy, 2

1. Paul appeals to his relationship with the Philippians; this is personal, intimate
2. He had been in prison there in Acts 16; he is in prison again when he writes
3. Encouragement – exhortations in Christ to live faithfully; Paul appeals to their consciences to live in a Christ-like way
4. Comfort from love – consolation: "If my love has provided you with any consolation in your suffering, as indeed it has, then please now respond properly to my request."
5. Participation – fellowship, a close connection of Christians in their beliefs and experiences with one another: "If you belong to that community brought into existence by the Holy Spirit, and enjoy any fellowship with one another as a result, then live accordingly."
6. Affection and sympathy – mercy and compassion; again if they've experienced these things in Christ, Paul implores them to live accordingly.

B. Have the same mind

1. The word carries more meaning than mere rational thought processes
2. Paul means that the mind, will, and affections are brought together in unity
3. Hence he can talk about love and unity, not necessarily uniformity in all thought, but one desire for the progress of the Gospel

C. Rivalry and Conceit versus Humility

1. The first two things caused divisions in Corinth and were labeled "works of the flesh" in Galatians.
2. Humility takes a new approach to others
3. It puts us in a lower, rather than higher, position
4. That is why Paul can say "count others as more significant than yourselves"
5. And look to their interests, not just your own
6. Think about how that multiplies the number of people concerned about your interests
7. The problem is that no one wants to be the first one to take that step for fear that others won't do the same thing.
8. This brings us to the cause part of our lesson.

II. The Cause: Christ's Mind, 5-11 (read verse 5)

A. God, but not equality with God, 6

1. He was “in the form of God” – not that he only “appeared to be God”
 2. The Greek “signifies a form which fully and truly expresses the being which underlies it”
 3. An enigmatic expression for Paul which means that Christ truly was God in his very essence, not merely in what we perceived him to be
 4. That he could have counted “equality with God” affirms this interpretation
 5. Yet he doesn’t grasp it: he didn’t hold on to it as a means of elevating himself above us (even though he could have)
- B. He “made himself nothing,” 7
1. The complete opposite of what his divine nature could demand
 2. He became poor for our sake, 2 Corinthians 8:9
 3. He took the form of a servant
 4. Thus he can say in Mark 10:45 that he came not to be served but to serve
 5. His service took the form of becoming a ransom for us
- C. In human form, 7
1. He was fully human as well as fully divine
 2. His humanity brought him down to us
 3. God came to us; he sought us out; he became a human so he could become a faithful high priest on our behalf
 4. That God would so humble himself defies finding appropriate language for it
- D. He humbled himself, 8
1. Humility is the essence of the mind of Christ
 2. Paul wants us to imitate this
 3. It issued in obedience
 4. It lead him to experience death for our sake
- E. What we imitate and why
1. Humility
 2. Service
 3. Thinking of others first
 4. Jesus demonstrated it: he is our first cause, the reason we live the way we do.

Conclusions:

1. God exalted Jesus.
2. Every knee shall bow before him.
3. Every tongue will confess him.
4. Jesus is Lord (Ephesians 1:20-21) even now.
5. Don’t wait until you reach the next life when you will do these things involuntarily; confess him now voluntarily so he will accept you into his eternal kingdom.