

TO HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST: HUMILITY

PHIL1:27-30, 2:1-11

I. HUMILITY DEFINED (with Jesus as the definitive illustration)

A. Not:

1. Self-contempt, self-denigration; rejecting commendations, exaggerating flaws
2. Obsequiousness, fawning servility; pretending to secure favors
3. Timidity, fearfulness; unwillingness to stand up for truth, goodness

B. But:

1. Down-to earth, “humus” goodness; Jesus interacting with woman at the well, et al.
2. Laying aside certain strengths, granting others preeminence; Jesus “came too serve”
3. “Lowliness of mind”—not thinking too highly of yourself; Jesus re Father’s will & work;
C.S. Lewis: not so much thinking less of yourself than thinking less about yourself

II. WHEN SUFFERING

A. Adversities

1. Job & sorrows & “friends”
2. Paul & Corinthians
3. George Washington & war, administration (Jefferson vs. Hamilton)
4. Dwight Eisenhower & Bernard Montgomery & George Patton

B. Persecutions

1. Paul’s beatings, execution
2. Ante-Nicene Church persecutions—especially Decius & Diocletian in 3d Century
3. Barbarian invasions throughout Middle Ages—Goths & Vandals & Huns & Saxons & Vikings
4. Islamic Jihad—1400 years of aggression, slavery, slaughter; Nigeria today
5. Armenian genocide (ca. 1890-1920 A.D.)
6. *Broken Altars: Secularist Violence in Modern History* by Thomas Albert Howard

III. WHEN SEEKING UNITY/PEACE

A. Jesus & Paul continually pray for, plead for unity/peace (especially within Church)

B. Yet schisms mark (mar?) Church history

1. Heretical & sectarian separations throughout centuries—Montanists, Arians,
2. Great Schism in 1054—thenceforth Eastern Orthodox vs Roman Catholics
3. Protestant Reformation consequences—mounting number of separate churches; estimated 45,000 denominations without counting numbers of totally independent congregations
4. Conservative/Liberal divisions within various churches
 - a. Protestant (e.g. J.G. Machen vs Henry Emerson Fosdick)
 - b. Catholic (e.g. John Henry Newman vs Alfred Loisy, Benedict XVI vs. Francis)
 - c. Current struggles: United Methodist; PCUSA; Episcopal Church.

C. Admirable (if inadequate & ultimately unsuccessful) ecumenical movements

1. Sporadic efforts to resolve Orthodox/Catholic division
2. Missionaries in 19th century awaken to need for united front
3. Occasional conventions seeking common ground leading to World Council of Churches et al
4. Billy Graham & crusades pull together dozens of faith communities
5. Publications (*First Things*; *Touchstone*) seek commonalities across denominational lines

Serenity Prayer: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time. Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace. Taking, as he did, the sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that he will make all things right if I surrender to His will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever. —Reinhold Niebuhr, 1892-1971