

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

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Phil.2:5

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Our present lesson pertains to the Spirit of Christ which the N.T. says we must possess.
 - a. It is that which we are commanded to have.
 - b. That which, if we are without, we are “none of his.”
 - c. The one which involves our taking his “yoke” upon us and learning of him.
2. So you can see we are not talking about some kind of miraculous operation on or in us in this study of “the Spirit of Christ.”

II. DISCUSSION

A. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY AND WHAT IS “THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST” OF WHICH WE SPEAK AND WHICH WE MUST POSSESS?

1. In order to make it clear what we are talking about and what we mean by the expression “the Spirit of Christ” in this study, we remind you that in speaking of the Spirit (or spirit) of Christ one may mean one of two things.
 - a. One may mean the spiritual disposition, pervading principle, essential characteristic, or prevailing attitude of Christ – the spirit that pervaded his life, work, words, and actions, Phil.2:5; Rom.8:9; 15:3; Mt.11:29.
 - b. Or one may mean the Holy Spirit, 1Pet.19-12.
2. As you can see, they are not the same even though both are identified by the words “the Spirit of Christ.”
 - a. By means of the context in which the expression is found we must be able to distinguish between the two uses.
 - b. Another way to distinguish between the two is to consider the fact that the former is a characteristic (of him or of us) while the latter is a personality.
 - c. Also, to help keep the distinction clear, and to help determine in each biblical context which one is meant, it is helpful to think of one as the **cause** and the other as the **effect**:
 - (1) The Holy Spirit is the **cause**.

- (2) The disposition of Christ or characteristic is the **effect**.
3. When we think of the Holy Spirit as the **cause** we must remember:
 - a. That he was sent by both the Father and the Son for the purpose of **revelation** and **confirmation** – revelation of the word of God and confirmation of the same by miraculous acts or manifestation – making known the mind of God to the mind of man through Jesus' chosen apostles.
 - b. That he did not speak of himself but as he was directed by the Father and the Son, Jno.16:13-15.
 - c. Therefore, it is the Father and the Son speaking through the Holy Spirit in his work of revelation and confirmation of the word – both in oral and written form.

B. HOW IS THE SPIRIT, OR THE DISPOSITION, OF CHRIST DEVELOPED IN US?

1. In our day the work of the Holy Spirit through the written word of God (Eph.3:1-5; Jno.8:31,32; 17:17-21), results in a Christlike character being developed in us. And one manifesting such a character is said to have “the spirit (disposition) of Christ.”
 - a. There is no spirit of Christ without the work of the Spirit.
 - b. And there is no work of the Spirit in anyone without the written word of God being heard, believed and obeyed.
2. The spirit or disposition or attitude of Christ is not directly instilled in us by the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of Christ, in the miraculous sense.
 - a. It is taught by him through the word and developed by the Christian as he follows the instructions of the Spirit given to him by Jesus Christ.
 - b. The Holy Spirit thus gives the instructions by which the spirit of disposition of Christ is developed in the child of God.
 - c. Since the Holy Spirit does not work directly on the individual to produce a Christlike character or disposition of mind, the only source of information or instruction available from the Holy Spirit in our day is the written word of God.

3. We, one and all, must therefore look to the Holy Spirit's instructions to discover the nature of the attitude of Christ, what it is, and whether or not we possess it.

C. TO HELP DISPEL THE ABSMAL MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST WE NOTE SOME THINGS IT IS NOT.

1. It is not the spirit or attitude of seeing everyone and everything as right and nobody or nothing as deserving a rebuke for wrong.
2. It is not the spirit of accepting every man as he is without trying to correct him or any of his ways.
3. It is not the spirit of, "You go your way and I will go my way, but we will both end up in the right place. We are just traveling different roads both of which lead to heaven."
4. It is not the spirit of indifference, of apathy, of compromise, the spirit that says agree with, or, at least, offer fellowship to everyone and everything regardless of what it is or what one may say, do, or believe.
5. All of this overlooks the fact of what the Lord has said so many times in so many different verses; some of which are: Jno.14:6; 8:24; 6:44,45; Mt.7:21-23; Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:21,36-41,47; Mt.16:18; Rom.16:16.
6. All of that may sound narrow and exclusive in nature; but it is the spirit of truth and right. Besides, truth is obviously narrow and exclusive. Illustrate by: ---
7. Yes, we know that the spirit of Christ is the spirit of love, but what exactly is that?
 - a. R.L. Whiteside put his finger on a vital principle when he wrote: "Much is said about preaching the truth in love, and so it should be preached. But in love of what? The preacher should so love the truth that he will not sacrifice any of it nor pervert it, and he should so love people that he will not withhold from them even an unpleasant truth. He that does either of these things loves neither the truth nor the people. We frequently fool ourselves, we think we do thus and so to spare the feelings of others, when it is our own feelings that prompt us. 'Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.'" (R.L. Whiteside, *Kingdom of Promise and Prophecy* [Denton, Texas: Miss Inys Whiteside, 1956], p.61).

- b. Thus if we love our fellow men we must teach them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
- 8. But how can one know when he has the spirit or disposition or attitude of Jesus Christ.?
 - a. In the final analysis there is but one way to know – namely, we must study the life and teaching of Christ as revealed in the Holy Spirit-inspired Scriptures to see what his disposition or spirit was.

D. SOME EXAMPLES OF THE SPIRIT OF DISPOSITION OF JESUS CHRIST ILLUSTRATED IN THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST AS OUR EXAMPLE. 1Pet.2:21; Cf. 1Cor.11:1; Phil.4:9.

- 1. The spirit of Christ in obedience, Heb.5:8,9; Jno.5:19,30; 12:49.
- 2. The spirit of Christ in temptation, Mt.4:1-10; Heb.2:11-18; 4:14-16.
- 3. The spirit of Christ in preaching, Mt.5,6,7; Mt.7:13,14,21-23; Mt.23:1-39; 2Tim.3:16-4:5.
- 4. The spirit of Christ with respect to false doctrine, Mt.15:1-9; cf. 2Jno.9,10.
- 5. The spirit of Christ is personal judgment of others, Mt.7:1-5.
- 6. The spirit of Christ in retaliation, or returning evil for evil, 1Pet.2:21-23; Mt.5:38,39; LK.6:27-29.
- 7. The spirit of Christ in willingness to sacrifice on behalf of others, Phil.2:2-5.

III. CONCLUSION

- 1. From all that we have learned, we must conclude that the spirit of Christ is the spirit that believes, obeys, practices, propagates and defends the truth, the truth as it is revealed in the inspired, infallible, immutable word of God, the only source of all true righteousness, Jno.8:32; 1Jno.37; Prov.23:23.
- 2. Do you, do I, have we, the disposition of Christ?
- 3. Remember Phil.2:1-10.

(Credit to Howard Winters – from his book: “The Word of the Holy Spirit,” pp.142-150)