

**LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU  
PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11**

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Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

People are ugly, selfish, and unlovable - **love them anyway...** When you do a kind deed, you may get accused of ulterior motives - **be kind anyway...** What you build up might get torn down - **build it up anyway...**

When you tell a person the truth, they might not believe it or accept it - **tell the truth anyway...** The person you help to heal, will one day get sick from something else - **help bring healing anyway...** The truce you help to negotiate might not last - **make peace anyway...**

Your contribution to God and your church may never get recognized on earth - **give it anyway...** You might get attacked by the person you try to help - **help them anyway...** When you sacrifice for your kids, you seldom get the appreciation you deserve - **sacrifice anyway...**

The good you do today, will probably be forgotten by tomorrow - **do good anyway...** *And here's the reason why:* **How you live your life is between you and God. It has never been between you and them anyway.**

This is how the Apostle Paul begins Chapter 2. He wants the Church in Philippi to live in harmony and love one another, but his reason has little to do with their own relationships with each other. One church member getting along with the other is not the point.

*It's not about us anyway.* It's about us and God.

Love between Christians, flows from Jesus' love for us. How we live our life is a reflection of our loyalty to Christ, not necessarily our feelings to one another.

This is how Paul begins Chapter 2, **"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being likeminded..."** And all that Paul mentions, *is* found in Jesus in great abundance!

*“In Christ”* the shelves are stocked with *“consolation,”* that is God’s with-ness (*we’re never alone, He has our back*)... there’s also loving *“comfort”* - He knows our needs and is attentive to them... there’s the *“fellowship of the Spirit”* - this overwhelming awareness of God’s presence... there’s *“affection and mercy”* - both oozing from the heart that’s received the same from Christ...

All this and more flows from God to us in Christ.

**A Christian's joy comes NOT from his external circumstances, but from the work of God in his heart.** The comforts of Christ are *not situational, but spiritual.*

And since God is at work in the Philippians, and us, Paul encourages *their church and our church* to *“fulfill my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”* Paul gives us a charge. He challenges the reasons for our gathering...

He wants the church to rally together NOT around dynamic pastors, or cool music, or likable people, or innovative programs - *or any of the other reasons Christians give today for joining and being part of a church family* - rather **Paul wants our connection with each other to stem from our connection to Christ.**

He challenges us - may all we’ve experienced in Jesus color and shape our fellowship with one another.

And notice what that includes - **first**, be *“likeminded.”*  
*But how can that be, when we come from such diverse backgrounds - and ethnic identities - and occupations - and economic means?* How can people who look very different

end up being *“likeminded?”*

When you read the church growth literature you realize most of the leading thinkers have given up on the idea of diverse congregations. That’s too difficult.

There are Christian sociologists who teach what they call, *the homogeneous principle*. The idea being, *“birds of a feather flock together.”* Supposedly, churches grow larger by targeting folks with similar *“likes” - the same age, the same race, the same salary, the same social status* - only then can a church be *“likeminded.”*

Just look at our own community. What we see supports this notion. *We’ve got growing African-American churches, and growing Hispanic churches, and growing Caucasian churches. And fifty years after our schools were integrated our churches remain segregated* - it’s sad. *So much for the church being society’s leading change agent. Sunday at 11 AM continues to be the most segregated hour of the week.*

I agree it might be easier to forge a *likemindedness* among folks with the same *likes*, but that doesn’t make it biblical. Paul doesn’t appeal to the same age, same race, same salary, same status... he says, *“having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”*

Can’t we see that God has a greater ambition for the church, than just us being a group of friends that like to hang out. *We’ve been called by God to show the lost world around us the unifying power of the Gospel.*

What if there was *one place in our community where black people and white people - poor people and rich people -*

Spanish-speaking people and English-speaking people truly got along and worked together - *would it make a difference in our fragmented world?*

I think it would. I think it would get people's attention, breed hope and goodwill, even be a force for peace!

But this takes Gospel-oriented people. Folks who prioritize *the good of the Gospel over their own good.*

Are we committed to sharing the "*same love,*" not just the "*same likes?*" Willing to live in "*one accord,*" even if it's not what *we all can afford?* Determined to be people of "*one mind*" - instead of just "*one kind?*"

The Philippians were the first church to be planted on the European continent, and Paul knew they had the potential to do something truly revolutionary.

The Christians in Philippi were being called by God to be the bridge that would carry the Gospel *from Asia to Europe, from east to west, from Oriental culture into Hellenistic culture...* but it would take people willing to live out the Gospel in their every day lives and in their relationships with the other people around them...

And I dare say, the Lord in heaven is presenting us with a similar challenge. CalvarySM is also positioned to bridge diverse groups for the sake of the Gospel.

But to do so, we first have to be Gospel-oriented people. We have to be committed to not only *believing* in the Gospel, but to *embodying* its implications in us.

And verse 3 tells us what that looks like... "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of*

mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Here's what *characterizes* healthy, Gospel-centered living - **people adopt an others-centered focus.** They look out for the other guy's interests, not just their own.

This begins with humility, as Paul puts it, *“lowliness of mind”* - a healthy, objective view of myself. Humility isn't self-deprecation. It's not some deliberate putdown.

Some people talk down about themselves for fear of pride - or they bash themselves so other people will build them up. It's a backdoor way of soliciting praise.

Real humility though is seeing myself as I truly am. Made in God's image. Blessed with God's gifts. *Not the most talented person in the world*, but equipped enough to do what God has called me to do. Most importantly, real humility realizes that up against God's glory, I'm an inadequate soul in need of His sufficiency.

We all desire joy in our lives. But a Christian realizes that the joy he wants, doesn't start with him. Joy begins when I look past me, and see someone else in need.

Once a man was given a vision of hell. He saw a banquet table filled with fruits, vegetables, meats, and breads - a feast fit for a king. But everyone around the table was malnourished and emaciated. **He wondered why they didn't eat, then he noticed their 10 foot forks.**

**They couldn't get a fork full of food to their mouth. It was impossible.** The forks were far too long.

Soon the man was whisked away to heaven, where he saw the same banquet table, and the same 10 foot forks! But this time the people around the table were full - healthy and happy. *Here was the difference...*

In heaven rather than feed themselves, everyone used their fork to feed the person across the table.

In hell, and in this world, it's every man for himself, but not so in God's kingdom. And that should be the case in His Church. A church is a place where people love and think of each other, not just themselves.

Remember, the encounter at the Pool of Bethesda. The belief was that whenever the water stirred it was an angel who would heal the first person into the pool.

Of course, this made healing impossible for the lame man. For everyone else was able to jockey, and push, and align themselves so they had a chance at *first in*.

But when Jesus came that day, He bypassed **the pool of competition**. He told the lonely lame man, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked."

And this is true of Jesus today. When Jesus appears His love makes the waters of competition irrelevant.

It's no longer about *who's first in - who beats out the other guy*. In the Church it's about help for everyone. Even the last and least take up their beds and walk.

In verses 1-4 Paul issues a charge to the church. Now in verses 5-11, he follows it up with an example.

*This is what Jesus did - a charge, then an example.*

Remember, a few days before Jesus' final visit to Jerusalem, His disciples got into a heated argument. They were debating who among them was greatest.

In Matthew 20:26 Jesus charged them, "whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant, and whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave..." But the Master's teaching fell on **deaf ears** - as well as, **hard hearts**.  
*Until a few days later...*

This time they're in the upper room - just hours before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. The Master and His men are celebrating the feast of Passover, but they're doing it with dirty, grimy feet. Jesus waited to see if any of His followers had taken heed to His teaching a few days earlier, and were willing to stoop down, humble themselves, and serve one another.

*But no one was willing...* That's when an amazing event took place. One that no doubt stunned angels in heaven. The King of glory, the Creator of all things, left the table, grabbed a bowl and towel, filled that bowl with water, and washed His disciples' dirty feet.

And that's when Jesus told them, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."



Jesus had given them a charge, that He followed with an example. *And that's what Paul does here...*

He charges the Church to be "*likeminded*" - of the "*same love,*" "*of one accord,*" "*of one mind.*" Now he explains to us what that *mind* - or *attitude* - looks like...

Verse 5, "*Let this mind (literally, this frame of mind) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation...*"

Realize, Jesus was no wanna-be god - no shadow God - a god with "*a little g.*" Jesus wasn't someone striving to become God. He was God in every sense. From eternity past, Jesus was God's peer. His equal.

I like JB Phillips translation of verse 5, "*For He, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to His privileges as God's equal, but stripped Himself of every advantage...*"

Jesus was God, but stripped Himself of the advantages of being God. He became fully human.

The Greek word translated "*made*" in verse 7 means "*emptied.*" When Jesus became a man He didn't stop being God. He was fully God, but He laid aside the privileges and clout of being God. He emptied Himself of any benefit His Deity might bring Him. He lived a truly human life. **He added humanity to His deity.**

When Jesus wanted to travel from the Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem He didn't call for a fiery chariot, or leap into the air like Superman, and fly the 75 miles. Instead, **He walked the dusty roads and climbed the rugged terrain. There were no**

## short-cuts for the Savior.

Before He chose His twelve disciples, Jesus could've called for a heavenly vision, or cast supernatural lots; instead He spent the night before in prayer trusting the Father to guide Him. He walked by faith just like we do.

Even on the cross, no angel assisted Him. No water from the rock quenched His thirst. No healing for the Healer's wounds. Jesus died like other crucified men.

In Christ, God nailed Himself to our limitations and to our plight. He stayed the course to the bitter end. **He paid sin's tax without taking any special deductions.**

**Jesus refused to use His deity to make His way easier or His load lighter.** He lived the way He asks us to live - always dependent on the power of His Spirit.

Jesus subjected Himself to all our vulnerabilities. He *tangled* with our enemies, and did it on our *turf*. This is why today, Jesus has real, heartfelt empathy for us.

Again, in verse 7 Paul tells us Jesus ***“made Himself of no reputation.”*** When Jesus came to Earth, He not only lived as one of us - but as the least of us. Rather than enjoy the high life, He lived a life of sacrifice.

Jesus didn't throw His weight around, or insist on special treatment, or expect to walk the red carpet.

Mary couldn't delivered her baby boy in the finest hospital. But Jesus was born in a barn... There was no first class for Jesus - if He boarded an airplane he would've flown coach... Imagine, the most holy child, Heaven's Prince, was the most

down-to-earth person who ever walked our planet. He took the humble road.

And this is the way Jesus wants you and me to live our lives - *humbly, unpretentious, simple, unassuming*.

Jesus never used force or intimidation or to get His way. And this is how He wants us to roll - with humility.

Are you always pressing and pushing your agenda? Do you *intimidate* or *manipulate* to get what you want?

Listen to this confession by Robert Raines, “Lord, I size up other people in terms of what they can do for me; how they can further my program, feed my ego, satisfy my needs; give me strategic advantage. I exploit people, ostensibly for Your sake, but really for my own sake. Lord, I turn to You to get the inside track and obtain special favors, your direction for my schemes, your power for my projects, your sanction for my ambitions, your blank checks for whatever I want.” **We forget, real joy comes when it’s not about me.**

But we’re also told in verse 7, Jesus took “**the form of a bondservant...**” Jesus was a servant by choice. He served other people not because it was His job, but simply for the joy of serving... It brought him great joy!

Famous composer, Leonard Bernstein, was asked, “*What’s the most difficult instrument to play in the orchestra?*” He replied, “**Second fiddle... anybody can be first violin. It takes humility to play second fiddle.**”

Which reminds me, what is the late composer Leonard Bernstein doing today? **He’s decomposing.**

It's interesting, when Jesus went to change the world He didn't use *political persuasion*, or *computer technology*, or *nuclear energy*, or *genetic engineering*.

He took **a bowl and a towel**. He washed feet, and in doing so, turned the world's ideas of success topsy-turvy. Up until this point everyone saw success as an upward trajectory. But through Jesus' example for the first time men saw how true greatness is a descent.

People who think life owes them seldom experience joy. Real joy comes when you stop worrying about yourself - and start caring about God and other people.

Joy is counterintuitive - *you get it when you give it*.

A man once asked Lorne Sanny, former president of the Navigators, "How do I know when I have a servant-like attitude?" Lorne Sanny had a wise reply. He told him, "*By how you act when you're treated like one.*"

We all like serving when it makes us *feel good* or *look good*, but that's not a true, servant's heart...

Ruth Calkin writes, "You know Lord how I serve you with great emotional fervor, in the limelight. How I effervesce when I promote a fellowship group. You see my genuine enthusiasm to teach a Bible Study. But how would I react, if You pointed to a basin of water, and asked me to wash the calloused feet of a bent and wrinkled old man, day after day, month after month, in a room where nobody saw, and nobody knew?"

When my grandpa finally couldn't take care of himself, my dad took him into his home - *bathed him - got him to and from the bathroom* - he served Him.

My dad was like Jesus to my grandpa.

Listen carefully, **we're never more like Jesus than when we stoop to serve and nobody is looking.**

Then Paul says of Jesus in verse 7, **“And coming in the likeness of men...”** Jesus became human so He could experience man's dilemma and inspire all men.

I got a Top Ten List. **The top ten ways life would be different if the next United States President was a dog.**

- 10) The Oval Office would have a doggy door.
- 9) All National Parks would have dog runs.
- 8) Leashes would be outlawed.
- 7) The new American healthcare plan would include coverage for flea collars and heart-worm prevention.
- 6) Birth control would be more than spay and neuter.
- 5) Tax breaks for convertibles.
- 4) Year round open hunting season on cats.
- 3) The Washington Monument would be turned into a 100-story fire hydrant.
- 2) Doggie biscuits would become tax deductible.
- 1) Seat-belts would be reconfigured so that you could drive with your head hanging out of the window.

Obviously, all dogs in America would rally around a canine president. But this is why Jesus come to Earth as a human - so all humans would rally around Him.

He became a man to assure us that He understands and feels our plight. As one of us, He deeply cares for our needs. He wants us to know we can trust Him.

It reminds me of the nine year-old boy, sitting at his desk in school. Suddenly, a stream of water pooled up between his feet. He'd tried to hold it, but he couldn't.

The little boy had wet his pants.

*And he knew what was about to happen...* as soon as that puddle of pee was discovered, his life would be over. The boys would be relentless in their humiliation. The girls would never speak to him again. The little guy thought, *"In five minutes, I'm going to be dead meat."* He prayed, *"God, quick it's an emergency. Help me!"*

That's when a classmate, Susie, came to his rescue. She had a goldfish bowl full of water in her hand, when she noticed what had happened. She walked over to Bobby, stumbled a bit, and spilled the water in his lap.

Bobby jumped up, pretending to be angry, but on the inside he was singing the Hallelujah Chorus!

Instantly, the situation changed. Rather than be the object of ridicule, he was now sympathy's recipient.

Everyone was mad at Susie for being so clumsy, while Bobby was being handed paper towels, and people were helping him dry off. They all let him know how sorry they were that Susie had been such a klutz.

At the end of the day, Bobby and Susie were together, waiting to catch the bus. Bobby walked over, and whispered,

*“You did that on purpose, didn’t you?”*

Susie whispered back, *“I wet my pants once too.”*

And with all the reverence I can muster, let me say, **Jesus also wet His pants.** He soiled a diaper, and blew His nose. His feet got sore, and back ached. He came in our likeness, so He could understand and identify with the people He would die to save and rise to lead.

Paul adds to Jesus’ resume’ in verse 8, *“Being found in appearance as a man...”* Notice, He was **a man!**

Jesus wasn’t *just* human. In becoming human, God took a Y chromosome. **He had a manly appearance.**

**It was God’s design for Jesus to have hairy legs, stubble on his face,** a husky voice, and an eleventh toe. Jesus was **“Son of God,”** not *“daughter of God.”*

On Father’s Day, let me say this is one more reason why men should follow Jesus. **He is the man all men are meant to be. Jesus was not just human, but male.**

And notice His most masculine act, in verse 8, *“He humbled Himself...”* Real men humble themselves.

Jonathan Last is an accomplished author, *and a new father.* Recently, he wrote an article, **“A Dad’s Life,”** in which he discusses how being a dad humbles a man.

He writes of changing a diaper, when his son chose to spray pee all over the bookcase. His quick reflexes caused him to cup his hands over the boy’s manhood and minimize the damage. Jonathan Last writes, **“The dismantling of my dignity took 3 weeks, more or less.”**

Later in the article he writes as only a dad can, “The primary effect of children is to take things from you. It starts with sleep, time, and dignity, and expands over the years to include serenity, sanity, and a lot of money. I’m not complaining, just observing. It’s what they do...”

This is why it takes a sacrificial and servant’s attitude to be a good dad. You have to die to your own desires and live for the good of others. This is what Jesus did.

*But there’s a difference...* A dad gets humbled. He has no choice. “*It’s what kids do...*” But notice, in verse 8, “*(Jesus) humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*”

He “*humbled Himself.*” No one humbled Jesus - not Herod, not Pilate, not the High Priest, not the soldier who applied the scourging, or hammered in the nails. Jesus “*obeyed*” the Father’s will - even to the cross.

Realize, the crucifixion of Jesus was history’s most courageous moment... The strength of Jesus had been on display for centuries! He was the voice in the burning bush - on fire, yet not consumed... He threw down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah... He was the Captain of the Lord’s Army before Who Joshua bowed.

Isaiah called Jesus, “*Immanuel,*” the Messenger who killed 185,000 Assyrians in a single night. Over and over, the pre-incarnate Christ flexed His muscle.

Even on Earth Jesus showed unparalleled courage. He passed through an angry mob untouched. He threw the crooked priests from the Temple with His bare hands. Jesus was never timid. He was a manly man.



In fact, when He returns to Earth, He'll come as a mighty warrior. Revelation 19 pictures Jesus coming on a war horse, ready for battle. Pardon the lingo, but Jesus will *bust chops, takes names, and start breaking kneecaps*. He'll make war with sinners. Yes, He'll usher in an age of peace, but only after He kills His enemies.

Yet here, when Paul spotlights Jesus' masculinity, He doesn't mention *His strength, or resolve, or bravery?*

*But His humility. "He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."* A real man can *throw a punch or pull a punch*. He'll *step up or stand down* depending on his orders.

Jesus' greatest example of manliness was *not the pain He'll inflict, but the pain He endured*. He obeyed God even though it meant the torture of a Roman cross. Our Lord Jesus did what was necessary to save us from our sin, and to make this world a better place.

And this is what it means to be like Jesus. We too should be *"obedient to the point of death"* - the death of our *own conveniences, and comforts, and pleasures*.

To be like Jesus is to stop whining and bellyaching about the hand we've been dealt. We need to put our wishes on the back burner, and start making life better for the people around us. A real man humbles himself, and is a help to his wife, his kids, his church, his world.

Men and women need to die to their selfishness and take up their cross. It was Spurgeon who said, “Every crown-wearer in heaven was a cross-bearer on earth.”

Life is not all about *our happiness*. At times life gets hard. **Joy flies at half-mast.** I’ve heard commitment defined as “the willingness to be unhappy until we work it out.” In the end, joy is a byproduct of obeying God.

For if you humble yourself *like Jesus*, God will exalt you *with Jesus*. Verse 9 tells us what follows the cross.

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

One day every knee will bow to Jesus. Saints in heaven, men on earth, even the dead under the earth.

*Herod’s knee, Pilate’s knee, the High Priest’s knee, Genghis Kahn’s knee, Napoleon’s knee, Hitler’s knee, Stalin’s knee, Kim Jong-il’s knee, Obama’s knee, even Donald Trump’s knee, will bend in subjection to Jesus.*

In that day, you’ll have no choice. All other gods will prove worthless. Money, sex, power, and fame will become irrelevant. Islam, Buddhism, Humanism - in fact, all the other “isms” - will be unmasked as a farce.

Every human tongue will confess, and every human knee will bow in declaration that *Jesus is Lord!...*

What's surprising is that because of Jesus' humility we can choose to bow today. *We have a choice...*

When you think about it, *why did God become a man?* In the eternal halls of heaven Jesus was always celebrated. Angels were at His beck and call - in awe of His majesty. If Jesus wanted respect, or worship, or glory He would've stayed in heaven. *Why did Jesus humble Himself?* I believe **He wanted to be loved.**

Could it be the Almighty was tired of *intimidating* - He wanted to *inspire*... The Holy One wanted to *reveal His heart*, not just *herald His judgment*... God not only wanted to be *feared*, He desired to be *followed*... **To capture our hearts, Jesus became subject to our hurts.**

Is there someone in your life that you love, *and wished they loved you?* A disillusioned spouse, or an angry teenager, or an estranged friend... you desire to build a bridge, instead there's only a high wall.

*Could it be the problem is you?* You've been too busy demanding respect, to earn it. You lay down the law, but you've never stoop down to love. It's not God's *invincibility* that draws us to Him, it's His *vulnerability*.

Sometimes a dad is so right, he becomes wrong... A husband grows so demanding his wife *fears him*, but *no longer follows him*... A wife can get so cynical she forgets the good her husband does and the effort he makes... **If you want to be loved, first try serving...**

A little humility goes a long way. So *what if you're right, if you can't reach the people you love*. It's time to get off our high horse and take the low road like Jesus.

Rather than draw a line in the sand - pick up a cross.

Let me close with a story. Thirty years ago God called Saul Cruz to work among the poor and needy in Mexico City. Saul planted a church on the edge of a vast garbage dump. It was a rough start for a church.

It's tough to get folks to come to worship by a mound of garbage, but the bigger obstacle was Saul himself. He was seen as *distant*. The people didn't trust him.

Until one fateful Sunday morning. A man barged into the worship service with news of leaking sewage. It was flooding the street. Dozens of homes were threatened, and the city wouldn't respond for 3 days.

Immediately Saul, and a local engineer, went to work. They stopped traffic and started filling sandbags. For the next 15 hours Saul spearheaded the effort.

At 3:00 the next morning, when the flow of sewage had finally been stopped, Saul walked back to the church - *cold and filthy*. Several of the ladies had warm water waiting so the workers could wash off the sludge.

When Saul entered the building he broke down and cried. He told his co-workers, "I'm sorry, but we need to pray." He reached out his arms and everyone knelt.

They thanked God for delivering their community.

But God did more than save the town that day. He established Saul as the pastor and leader. Never again was Saul seen as “*distant or aloof.*” Once you wear somebody’s sewage you’re connected - you’re trusted.

This is why Jesus humbled Himself, *and this is why He calls on us to follow.* **Hearts get won, love is felt, people are persuaded - not with muscle, but humility.**

And here’s how a church can turn their diversity into likemindedness - *when they emphasize **this** Gospel.*

When we follow Jesus down the path of humility, and emptiness, and service, and cross-bearing - that’s when God will exalt us! That’s when our lives and church will be filled with His joy and ring out His praise!

**Let the mind that was in Christ, also be in us!**