3**. How can we practically serve people with Jesus’ mindset?**

The word ‘mindset’ is differentiable from the word ‘character’. Mindset defines attitude toward others whereas character depicts inner personality. (Ro 5:4, Php 2:5) Knowing Jesus’ mindset and putting it into practice is crucial to our discipleship ministry. Knowing Christ’s mindset is imitating his divine image and character, so by practicing it we can experience and participate in his divine humanity. In Christ’s mindset we also learn how God the Father deals with his people and serve sinners for his redemptive purpose. Spiritual revival does not come from the development of programs or the improvement of the church service, but from spiritual renovation driven by emulation of Jesus’ mindset.

What are some of the mindsets of Jesus? They are humility (Mt 11:29, Php 2:5), compassion (Mk 6:34), gentleness (Mt 11:29), obedience (Mk 14:36, Php 2:8, Heb 5:8), sacrifice (Mk 10:45), faith, hope, love, God-pleasing, kingdom-oriented, and spiritual. In Philippians 2:5 Paul said, “*In your relationship with one another, have the same* ***mindset as Christ Jesus***.” Paul admonished the saints in the Philippian church to imitate the humility of Jesus by considering other better than themselves. (Php 2:3) Christ’s humility was manifested and embodied by his incarnation and crucifixion. Paul continues in his letter to the Philippians, “*Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death-even death on the cross.*” (Php 2:6-8) These verses teach us about Jesus’ mindset toward God the Father, especially through his incarnation and crucifixion. Without knowing Christ’s mindset toward God the Father, we can’t understand his mindset towards others. His mindset as the Son toward God the Father is a preview of his attitude and messianic mission for other people.

1. Christ’s mindset toward God the Father. Incarnation is the embodiment of Christ’s humility and submission to God the Father. Christ Jesus, God the Son, is co-equal with God the Father along with the God the Holy Spirit in his divinity. John 1:1 says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” Colossians 1:15 says, “*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*” Though the Son is in very nature God, he did not consider himself equality with God and appeared as a man.

While Christ was carrying out his messianic task, his mindset toward God was always submissive and cooperative. In John 6:17,19 Jesus said, “*My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working…Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does*.” The Son could have worked based on his own plan and time schedule, but he always worked and followed the Father’s hour. (Jn 2:4, 7:6, 17:1,19:28) Christ often withdrew himself from the crowd and his disciples, and went to mountains to pray. (Mt 14:23, Mk 1:35, Lk 5:16) Through his intimate relationship with God the Father, the Son reaffirmed his messianic ministry and was recharged with the fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Christ gave thanks to God the Father and expressed his coherence with God the Father before he fed five thousand with five loaves and two fish. (Mk 6:41, Jn 6:11)

In John 17 the Son prayed to glorify the Father through the completion of his messianic task, which indicates crucifixion. (Jn 17:1-4) Christ accepted his imminent arrest, trial, and crucifixion if only he could glorify God the Father through his obedient death on the cross. From birth to death, from the cradle to the cross, the Son Jesus showed his submission to God the Father in order to fulfill His will.

Crucifixion is the culmination of Christ’s obedience to the Father. “…*by becoming obedient to death-even death on the cross”* Before his arrest, Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane for the cup to be taken which the God the Father provided. It was a fierce spiritual battle between obeying the Father’s will and submitting to the Son’s own will. Luke’s gospel describes the intense of Christ’s spiritual battle in this, “*An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground*.” (Lk 22:43,44) As the Son Christ wanted to avoid the cup if possible, but he surrendered to the Father’s will and determined to take the cup of the cross. (Mt 26:46)

Christ’s humility and obedience came from his deep trust and love relationship with God the Father. Without trust and love relationship, genuine obedience is impossible. Christ himself said to his disciples, “*Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching*.” (Jn 14:23) The Father God loved the Son. The Son trusted in the Father. Without having such intimate love and trust relationship with Christ and with others, practicing Christ’ mindset becomes superficial or unbeneficial. Hebrews 5:8,9 says, “*Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*” Christ, even though he was the Son of God, humbled himself and learned how to obey God the Father through suffering. Before we practice Christ’s mindset for others, we must learn how to put our mindset toward our Lord Jesus, as the Son did toward the Father. Christ Jesus is our perfect example and role model whom we should follow.

2.Christ’s mindset toward his disciples. From the initial stage of his messianic ministry Christ called his disciples and let them stay with him. (Mk 3:14) He knew the importance of raising disciples who would take over his ministry as responsible gospel workers and shepherds for God’s flock of sheep. The twelve disciples were chosen not from social elites or religious celebrities, but from the rank of ordinary men. They were unschooled folk. But Jesus called them with hope. Jesus saw God’s vision for world salvation through them. When Jesus called them, they were still full of earthly messianic dreams and selfish ambitions. Their knowledge about Christ was shallow and their relationship with him was weak. But Jesus saw the establishment of the Father’s kingdom through these social commoners. Jesus saw his chosen with the eyes of hope.

Christ often encouraged the Twelve and disciplined them to share his faith and vision. Christ kept them with him and gave them authority and power to drive out demons and to heal the sick. (Mt 10:1; Mk 3:15, 6:12; Lk 9:1,10:1) Christ’s task required great risk and faith. His disciples experienced the power of God in their mission journeys when they simply trusted in Jesus and obeyed him. (Lk 10:17) Jesus opened their spiritual eyes to see the work of God and experience his power. (Mt 10:22, 26:19; Mk 4:41, 6:12, 6:37, 51,7:37, 9:2; Jn 2:11) Jesus also helped them to see the world with God’s redemptive perspective. After converting a Samaritan woman, Jesus helped them to see the townspeople as ripe for harvest. (Jn 4:35) To the eyes of the Twelve the crowd was only groups of the needy and the poor. But to the eyes of Jesus they were ripe for harvest. (Mt 9:37,38)

Hope and faith go together in raising disciples of Jesus. Christ saw his disciples with the eyes of hope because he had faith in God the Father. Jesus believed that the disciples were those whom God the Father sent. (Jn 17:6,7) He believed that God the Father would make them one as he was one with God the Father. (Jn 17:11) While they were arguing among them about who would be greater, Jesus had faith that they would follow his sacrificial servantship and share his mindset toward each other and toward other people. (Mt 20:28, Mk 10:45) Jesus often challenged their faith in the time of persecution and in the midst of storms. (Mt 12:10, 14:31; Mk 4:40) Even at the time of his trial Christ encouraged them to love one another and to become one in doing the work of God. (Jn 13:34, 15:17, 16:33) Above all, he promised to send the Holy Spirit, who would become their counselor and helper, for them to carry out world mission. (Jn 14:16,18,26, Ac 1:8)

Love and faithfulness meet together. (Ps 85:10) Christ’s servantship toward his disciples was another picture of God’s incarnation. Christ Jesus served his disciples with compassion and humility. Christ saw Simon Peter, who was lost in struggling with his empty net of life as a fisherman. (Lk 5:5) Jesus called him and restored Peter’s failure and enabled him to find himself as a sinner before the Holy God. Jesus blessed Peter’s life from being a hopeless fisherman to being a great fisher of men. (Lk 5:8-10) Jesus called a selfish tax collector Levi and changed him to become Saint Matthew. (Mt 9:9, Mk 2:14) Christ was patient with him until Levi’s value system was changed. Christ opened Levi’s spiritual eyes to see the kingdom of heaven and to understand the secret of the kingdom of God through many parables. (Mt 6:19-24, 25-33)

Christ understood the disciples’ earthly messianic dreams and their selfish ambitions. But he did not rebuke their human ambition and desire for becoming great; rather, he taught them how to become truly great in the sight of God through his servantship. (Mk 10:15, 43-45) Christ humbled himself and washed their feet and commanded them to wash other’s feet as he did. (Jn 13:14) Washing other’s feet means forgiving other’s sin and serving others with the love of God and the mindset of Christ. (Col 3:13, Gal 6:2, Eph 4:2, Php 2:3) By washing his disciples’ feet, Christ was ready to sacrifice himself as the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (Jn 1:29, 1 Jn 2:2) Christ prepared himself to forgive the sins of the world. After his resurrection, he visited his unfaithful disciples, who had run away during his trial. At the Sea of Galilee, Christ forgave the erring Peter and reinstated him by entrusting to him sheep under his care. (Jn 21:1-19) Christ’s servantship toward his disciples was an example of humility. Faith, hope, and love, as Paul mentioned in 1Corinthians 13, are three components of Christ’s mindset to his disciples. These should be our mindset toward disciples of Jesus under our care.

3.Christ’s mindset toward people. Compassion is one of God’s main characters and his mindset toward sinners. Psalm 103:8 says, “*The Lord is compassionate and gracious…*” (Ex 34:6, Ps 145:8) Compassion is a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for those who are afflicted or suffering. Rev. Billy Graham said that compassion means sharing suffering together. God had compassion on the first man Adam, who was banished from the Garden of Eden and had to live in this cursed world with shame and fear of death. So God killed an animal and covered the man’s shame. God had compassion on his people the Israelites, who were suffering under the yoke of slavery in Egypt. God heard their cries and delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh through Moses. God’s heart was broken when the Israelites sinned against him in the Promised Land by worshiping idols and falling away from their covenant. God put them under the Babylonians for 70 years, so that they might remember their God and worship him only. Compassion is God’s broken heart for lost souls.

Christ Jesus saw people with the eyes of compassion. Jesus’ heart was broken when he saw suffering people under the power of Satan. Jesus wept when Mary and Martha were mourning before the power of death. (Jn 11:35) His tears were God’s compassion for the suffering souls who were under the power of sin and death. When we see case studies from John’s gospel, we learn how Christ demonstrated his messianic compassion for suffering people.

1. Jesus’ mindset toward Nicodemus: (Careful instruction with great patience: Jn 3:1-20) Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a Jewish ruler in the council, the so-called Sanhedrin. He was a man of social standing and a learned scholar. But he came to see Jesus at night because he saw God’s wonders and signs through Jesus. Nicodemus expected to gain from Jesus answers to his unsolved life problems which his knowledge, experience, and other human achievements couldn’t provide. Jesus had compassion on Nicodemus. Jesus saw the deep inner darkness and agony in Nicodemus’ heart and taught him the spiritual secret - how to be born again and how to enter the kingdom of God. Nicodemus couldn’t understand Jesus’ teaching because he was not born again and he was spiritually blind. He repeated the same questions, ‘how?’ Jesus rebuked his spiritual ignorance and arrogance, but still he patiently explained to Nicodemus that he could be born again through faith in the Son, whom God had sent. Jesus was patient in teaching a spiritually blind intellect. Patience is one of Jesus’ mindsets toward wandering intellectuals like Nicodemus and doubting skeptics like Thomas. Those who live in the physical world can’t understand the spiritual world with their own experience and knowledge. Patience comes from deep understanding of each individual and unceasing compassion for the lost.

1. Jesus’ mindset toward the Samaritan woman: (Quenching and yearning: Jn 4:1-26) When Jesus met a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, she had already had five husbands and was living with a new boyfriend. After marrying and divorcing five times, her soul and body were drained and ruined. No one and nothing on this earth could quench her thirst. When Jesus saw her, his heart went out to her. He humbled himself and asked her water for drink. Then Jesus provided her with the gift of God and the living water welling up to eternal life. When she came to know who Jesus was, her thirst was quenched. She tasted the living water welling up to eternal life while conversing with Jesus. Jesus also taught her who her true object of worship is. Jesus knew her thirst was her yearning desire to find her true object of worship and to worship Him. Jesus identified himself to her as the one. In the past the woman was always looking for someone who could love her and care for her. Jesus quenched her thirst by loving her and helping her to worship God in spirit and in truth. Practicing compassion is not lip service, but humbling and fulfilling. Jesus understood Nicodemus’ thirst for wisdom and the Samaritan woman’s love.
2. Jesus’ mindset toward the invalid for 38 years. (planting desire: Jn 5:1-11) In those who repeat the same failures, only despair and bitterness remain. The man invalid for 38 years experienced the same failures 38 times at the Pool of Bethesda. Whenever he failed in healing his sick body, he despaired. He didn’t have any desire for another attempt. His body was nothing but a living corpse. Jesus visited this fatalistic invalid and planted hope for healing, saying, “*Do you want to get well*?” Jesus stirred up and waked him up from the mat of despair so that he could restore the desire for healing. Hope is the best remedy and answer for those who despair.
3. Jesus’ mindset toward the man born blind (changing the view of life: Jn 9:1-12) According to the ancient Jewish consensus, the children’s afflictions were considered to be the consequences of their parents’ transgressions. When Jesus’ disciples saw the man born blind, they asked Jesus whose sin caused him to be blind - his parents or his own. Their view was fatalistic and pessimistic. But Jesus changed their view to see men’s afflictions, not from a human point of view, but from God’s point of view. Jesus answered them that the blindness was not caused by men’s sin, but was purposed to display the work of God in this man’s life. There is no failure or despair in Jesus because in all things, whether it is good thing or bad thing, God works for the good of those who love him. (Ro 8:28) Jesus’ word encouraged the blind man to see his life with new perspective. Jesus opened not only his physical eyes, but also his spiritual eyes. There is no one on this earth who was born worthless or meaningless in the sight of God. All creatures were created to display the glory of God. (Ge 1:31)
4. Jesus’ mindset toward the sorrowful Martha and Mary (Hope for eternal life: Jn 11:43) Death is the worst enemy of all human beings by depriving us of our hope and leading us to the bottomless abyss of darkness. It produces all kinds of spiritual and mental diseases, such as sorrow, fear, despair, anxiety, emptiness, and meaninglessness. Martha and Mary cried endlessly before this power of death. To these sorrowful women, Jesus proclaimed the victorious and glorious message of eternal life, “*I am the resurrection and the life…*” (Jn 11:25) Death is not our enemy whom we cannot defeat. Jesus died for our sins on the cross and rose again from the dead on the third day as he had promised. The resurrection of Christ conquered the grave and frustrated death. Jesus helped these two sisters to believe in eternal life through faith in him. Only the hope of eternal life can conquer death and give us the final victory. Those who have resurrection faith don’t fear death. They have power to turn tragedy into victory. In the resurrection of Christ our life is full of meaning and reason for existence.
5. Jesus’ mindset toward our emerging generation (If you hold to my teaching: Jn 8:31,32) If Jesus appeared today, what will he say to our young generation? Our young generation we call the millennium generation now lives in a rapidly culture-changing, globally net-worked, morally-confused relativistic post-modern era. They deny all their traditional and conventional moral values and reject the absoluteness of truth. They live the age of relativistic pluralism. How can old generations, the baby-boomer or X-generation, understand them, accept them, and lead to the life based on the truth of God and the principles of the Bible? We must go back to the Bible. If Jesus appeared today, he would say to all of us, “*I tell you the truth, if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*” (Jn 8:31,32) Though generations change, the word of God never changes. As the prophet Isaiah mentioned, “*All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field…The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the God endures forever*.” (Is 40:6-8, 1 Pe 1:24,25)

In human history new generations have always challenged the older generations. The old generations struggled to assimilate their younger generations and to find solutions by compromising with those challenges. These phenomena have occurred in families, communities, and countries. Our generation now confronts serious challenges from the new. We can adjust to those challenges and compromise, but we must not step back even one inch regarding retaining the truth of God. The world changes, but the truth of God never changes. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west even today. Jesus taught the truth of God to his disciples and the crowd in the midst of severe persecutions from the religious leaders. Jesus did not compromise. He did not withdraw, but ran to the cross to the end, until he finished dong the Father’s will.

In conclusion, Jesus obeyed the Father’s will and appeared as a man. He saw a vision for world salvation through his handful of disciples. Above all, he served God’s flock of sheep one by one with great compassion. Humility, Hope, and Compassion are Christ’s mindset toward all those who live in this post-modern era.