

“Let the Same Mind Be in You”
Philippians 2:5 for April 1, 2020
Reflection – Pastor Barnes

May God’s peace, patience and love flow through you as we find our footing and foundation in Christ through these difficult times.

Who would have thought!?! Certainly we had the mindset that like the Flu...we could conquer this in a couple of weeks and certainly not be as deadly or put the world on “hold!”

But it has happened. Like Jesus being led into the wilderness, not difficult when we are “full” but after a time, empty of answers...we are tempted to panic or search for an easier answer. ???Can we continue to answer, even though we do not clearly see each day....”It is written...”

That is living by the Hope and Trust, we continue to agree that God is more than COVID-19.

The passage we have been focusing upon these past 5 weeks has been Philippians 2:5-11

And this day: “Let the Same Mind be in You,” that was in Christ Jesus.

Let the same mind! I have trouble being clear minded with my own thoughts, let alone trying to understand what strength of faith should be dictating my mental directions as Jesus has taught.

After 39 years in the ministry....with all that experience and 5 congregations. With 4 years of seminary training and Clinical Training and Internship. With myriad people in relationships both calm and in crisis as well as with other clergy....

One would think that my “being of the same mind” would work easier. Ha! By nature we are all sinful and unclean....simply put “we have our own ideas,” that often take us down the wrong path.

So...rather than thinking that this is an accomplishment...for me, it is better to think of this as a journey. Getting to know someone better each day is the task....much like husbands and wives. Much like best friends. Much like children and parents. Much like co-workers and bosses.

It is also much like getting to know Jesus. I don’t want to sound “fundamentalist,” but how well do you know Jesus? I mean, if you are going to be “of the same mind,” don’t you need to know what that means?

This is not just an osmosis project! This is being in community. This is worshipping. This is Bible study in groups. This is devotion and prayer and “using” your Bible.

This is context of the reason for the cross!

Our version this week for the Philippians passage is from “The Message.”

I like the way it translates “being of like mind.”

IT says:

“Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.”

Still not easy....but does give some perspective.

We are not to think we can be AS Christ Jesus....but we can begin to see the path to “think” of ourselves differently as Jesus stood against the world at times, but in step with God.

Differently maybe than: the world. Those who think of themselves more highly than they ought....

Which by the way comes from...Romans 12:3

The chapter begins: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, To present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

FOR BY THE GRACE GIVEN TO ME I SAY TO EVERYONE AMONG YOU NOT TO THINK OF YOURSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN YOU OUGHT TO THINK, BUT TO THINK WITH SOBER JUDGEMENT, EACH ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF FAITH THAT GOD HAS ASSIGNED."

Beginning to understand how to think of yourself the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.....takes "discernment."

When I was a young boy...I thought I knew a whole bunch more than I really did. Now on the old end of life...I have begun to realize how little I truly know. It is always being open. It is always being ready to change. And it is always being connected to Christ Jesus in so many ways.

Besides "What Wondrous Love," the hymn for this Wednesday is "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Listen to it. But focus on verse 2:

"Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood."

Yes, this world has its charms. Yes, we often (usually in retrospect) realize we have been charmed by what we THINK we know. Let us only boast in Christ.

If you do your devotions by following "Hope-full Living" Then you have probably read March 26, 2020. Jane Wilke from Woodbury, MN makes some interesting points. She titles this page: "Deposits vs. Withdrawals." The Bible quote is from Colossians 3:12. I add a few verses.

2 – Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Then 12 - 15 – As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body."

Sounds like that "like mindedness" to me! Jane Wilke concludes:

"We live in a sinful world and it's easier to get caught up in the negative by-products of sin than to live by the fruit of the Spirit.

That's why we can't accomplish this on our own; only through the gift of discernment....."

That means community, worship, prayer and study. She shares a brief prayer: "Lord, surround me with others who live in the light of your love. Amen.

Now....does this "like mindedness," or "think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself" happen all at once, or quickly or even a short period of time???

No...it is loving and being loved.

Do you remember the book: The Velveteen Rabbit? One day the stuffed Rabbit asked the play horse, "what is real?" The horse said: "Real isn't how you are made, It's a thing that happens to you when a child loves you for a long, long time. In fact, the horse said: "It doesn't happen all at once, you become. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges or who have to be carefully kept." It is the wear and tear of becoming real and it is about love, just as Jesus loved you and me.

Let me conclude this "like mindedness" or how we think of ourselves with another one of my favorite passages – Jeremiah 31:31-34

Two things I would like you to consider....

#1. Jeremiah writes: "The Days are surely coming." We are not there yet! But God is re-writing the covenant based on His never waning search for love.

God says....I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their HEARTS...

#2. We are still learning and yet one day....those days are surely coming –

"No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more."

WOW!

Our challenge is to "know" the Lord. And to "know" the Lord is to "know" Jesus the Christ.

We are still in process to "think of ourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself."

I know I am getting closer to my time of "fishing and relaxing" up north....because I have one more story:

When my dad was teaching me to fish....I didn't get it all correct the first time or many times thereafter! There were plenty of "backlashes" where sometimes dad had to even cut the tangled line. There were plenty of times when I casted the bait and it landed about a foot and a half from the boat....not out where it was supposed to be. There were plenty of times when fish got away or line broke...EVEN one time, when I lost a complete rod and reel in the lake! When I look back....the love and patience he had with me, was amazing! But I understand now, because it was based on being his child and love.

Hmmm.

Sound familiar. We are God's child and we are loved!

So the learning and teaching will go on. Thanks be to God!

We WILL slowly begin to think of ourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.....if we stayed connected.