

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church

Shobonier, Illinois

Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday C

April 13, 2025

Philippians 2:5-11

A Christ-Like Attitude

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, . . .
. humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 2:5, 8 ESV)

In the name of Jesus, the only Savior of the world,

It's said that attitude is everything. And to an extent it's true. Your attitude will affect, or even determine, how you respond to things. If you have a negative attitude about an upcoming event, it will probably be a somewhat, if not mostly negative, experience. If, on the other hand, you have a positive attitude, if you look forward to the event, more than likely you'll enjoy yourself. That's why having the proper attitude is so important.

St. Paul recognized this. He writes, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." Or, as some translations put it, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (NIV). Now that is certainly easier said than done. For changing one's attitude is not that simple. And simply telling us that we should have the same attitude as Christ doesn't just make it happen.

Especially when we consider that Christ's mind, His attitude, was one of humility and obedience. We're told that He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. This we do not and cannot do. Not one of us is as humble as our Lord. Not one of

us is as obedient as our Lord. And if this is all we hear today, if Jesus is only held up as a good example that we should follow, then we are hopelessly lost because none of us can live up to it.

Yet, the Holy Spirit has called and gathered us here today to establish and nourish just such a mind. For the mind of Christ Jesus *is* far different from our own. And at its core is an attitude of humility and obedience which flows from unbounded love. Indeed, Christ had such an attitude that He willingly left His glory in heaven to be born of a woman. The Son of God became man. The Creator took on the form of a creature. He became one of us and one with us. Indeed, Christ didn't consider being God something to hold onto. The second person of the God-head didn't cling to His rights. He didn't grasp His power and glory for dear life. Rather, He gave up the full use of that power and glory for our salvation. Though, when Christ became incarnate, when He became flesh, He didn't stop being God.

Still, Jesus became poor for your sake. He became man for you. He came to serve you by dying in your place so you could go to His place. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). In Christ we see the Lord of all become servant to all to save them.

And it's in that humble service that we see the mind of Christ the clearest. For He comes to serve you by riding a donkey. He comes to hear your shouts of "Hosanna. Save now!" He comes to give His body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins. He comes to suffer the agony caused by the guilt your sins. He comes to be betrayed and denied by His friends and followers. He comes to be falsely arrested, accused, and condemned. He comes to be beaten and spit on. He comes to hear the acclamations from Palm Sunday turn to shouts of "Crucify Him" on Good Friday. He comes to be nailed to a cross and crucified. He comes, the only perfect man to ever walk the face of the earth, to suffer a criminal's punishment. The King of Glory becomes cursed for you. He comes to serve you by dying for you. He comes to serve you with the full and free forgiveness of your sins. He comes into our presence this morning according to His promise. He is right here, seated on His throne to give you forgiveness, life, and salvation.

When we consider all that Christ has suffered for us, we realize how unlike Him we are. So, we must confess that we have not always had a Christ-like attitude. We must confess that too often we are not humble, though we may think we are. We must confess that we have not always thought of others before ourselves. We must confess that we would rather be served

than to serve. We must confess that we have not always obeyed our heavenly Father. And as the shame and the guilt of all this weighs heavy upon us, we come to God's throne of grace and mercy and there receive forgiveness for all our sins. And as we do, we come with bowed heads and contrite and sorrowful hearts because we realize that we don't deserve His kindness, or even an audience with Him. When we come before that throne, we do so only because Christ has come to save us all, from sin, from eternal death, and from hell. He has come to forgive us. He has come to give us heaven itself.

As the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and drives us to the dust before God, as He brings us to trust in the forgiveness of sins earned by Jesus on the cross, as He immerses us in the saving Gospel of Christ, as He speaks to us in the Word and Sacraments, He works in us the mind of Christ. By the Word made flesh we are "transformed by the renewing of our mind" as we live in Him and He in us. "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener