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Christ the King & Immanuel Lutheran Churches – Cody & Powell, WY

Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion

March 24, 2024

Text: Philippians 2:5–11

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In Christian circles, you hear people talk a good deal about “worldviews.” It’s a shorthand way of asking, “How do you see and understand the world.” Some see the world through a Christian way of thinking. Others see the world through a secular, or non-religious way. Talking about worldviews is a handy way to evaluate how we think about the many aspects of life in this world.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in the city of Philippi while he was in a Roman jail; arrested unjustly for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was experiencing the world under the justice of the Roman Empire and through the hateful spite of the Jews who wanted to silence the Christian Gospel.

Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians under these less-than-ideal conditions and said they ought to have a particular mind or mindset about the world. Paul doesn’t say “worldview”. Rather, he says in Philippians 2:5, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.” You Philippian Christians are to have the mind of Christ Jesus which we also share in common. This is a fascinating exhortation. Each and everyone of you, as individual Christians and as members of this congregation – for we are the body of Christ in this place – are to share a common mindset, the mind of Christ. We ought to think about the world in a distinctly Christ-like way.

And this Christ-like way of thinking is not something we drum-up on our own. It’s ours already in Christ Jesus. When we were baptized in God’s holy name and filled with the Holy Spirit, the mind of Jesus was given to us. This is part of our glorious inheritance as Christians. Listen again to vs. 5, “Have

this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.” It is already ours. We are to keep that mindset always by the grace of the Spirit lest the lies and deceits of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh rob us of this true, Christian way of thinking.

Though a Christian mind is given to us already by the Spirit, we must still cultivate it. In the next few verses of Philippians 2, the Holy Spirit teaches us how a Christian mind thinks about everything in this world: life, family, what it means to be men and women, politics, government, education, entertainment, money, food, pleasure of every sort, trials, joy, death, and the world to come. What is our God-given, Christian mindset?

Think about Christ. He was and is God’s Son sharing fully with the Father and the Holy Spirit all the divine attributes. He is fully God, no less than the Father and the Spirit. But this divine equality with the Father and the Spirit was not something the Son grasped and held onto with a selfish, defensive attitude. You know, “It’s mine and I won’t give it up in the least. And you dare not ask me to do so.” Instead, God’s eternal Son made Himself nothing, “taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (vs. 7). God the Father’s Son was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary in order to become the servant of all mankind. God became a servant.

Already, we can see in Christ Jesus a very different mind. Remember, this is the one we are to have and it’s already been given to us. Whatever gifts, abilities, talents, and skills we may have as unique individuals, we use them with a mind of service to one another. The Christian mind thinks about the world in such a way as to see it as the arena in which the neighbor is served for his or her good. The Christian husband thinks about his wife as the closest, nearest recipient of his sacrificial loving service. And the same from wife to husband. Parents think of their children with this mind of Jesus. How to serve and love them in the discipline of Christ so that they may know Christ Jesus and have this same Christian mind. The Christian thinks about his or her money with the mindset of service. How do I use these and all I have for the good of those whom the Lord has brought into my life. I trust

you can see why every form of hatred and cruel subjugation of another human being is so appalling to us Christians. Slavery, pornography, abortion, the destruction of the family, every form of exploitation, unjust wars, the suppression of all things true, good, and beautiful in public and private life, do not reflect the mind of Christ. This is a general description of our Christian mindset. But Paul gets more specific.

Vs. 8, “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Jesus came to serve the world, every man, woman, and child who will ever be conceived, by becoming obedient to His Father unto death on the cross. In other words, the mind of Jesus says, I will empty myself of everything – all divine glory, honor, and power – in sacrificial, loving service for the good of the world so that my service of suffering and death on the cross can give them eternal life. This is the mind of Christ. All that we heard from the account of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the Passion reading from Matthew’s Gospel and the hymn we sang in the midst of it, reflects the mind of Jesus. To love the world by becoming the world’s servant who brings them into eternal life. To give them everything that is truly good, holy, joyous, and everlasting even if it costs me everything to give it to them.

Because Christ Jesus had this mind of obedience to His heavenly Father and loving service to one another, the God the Father exalted Him. His name, Jesus, is the highest name. All heaven and earth will bow their knees to Him. Not because the exalted Christ Jesus stands over them demanding their honor and worship. That would be contrary to the mind of Jesus. No, heaven and earth bows before Christ Jesus because He is truly worthy of such love and devotion. Nothing could be more appropriate and fitting. Nothing could be more beautiful and joyous than to worship Him who loves with such devotion and perfection.

What is the Christian mind that we Christians are to have? We have received freely and graciously the greatest honor and gift anyone could possibly receive: the love of God in Christ Jesus. There is nothing greater we can

receive or give. Our Christian mind is to love the people of this world, particularly those whom the Lord has given to us close at hand, family, church, community, country, and the peoples of the world, with a self-emptying, self-giving, sacrificial love marked by joy and the beauty of holiness. We love them in Christ's name, in Christ's way of loving service unto death and resurrection. We love each other knowing that the end and purpose of each and every human life is to know the Father through Christ by the Spirit. To that end, we seek the mind of Christ in order to be Christ-like in the world and the world to come.

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...”

✠ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ✠ Amen.

Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.

#### **HOLY GOSPEL**

*John 12:12-19*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the twelfth chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>12</sup>The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” <sup>14</sup>And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

<sup>15</sup>“Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!”

<sup>16</sup>His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. <sup>17</sup>The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. <sup>18</sup>The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. <sup>19</sup>So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”

#### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

*Zechariah 9:9–12*

<sup>9</sup>Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. <sup>10</sup>I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall

speaking peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. <sup>11</sup>As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. <sup>12</sup>Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

**EPISTLE READING***Philippians 2:5–11*

<sup>5</sup>Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.