

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-13

Sermon Title: "Same Mind. Same Love."

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"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus". This quote from Paul's letter to the church at Philippi which we heard today essentially sums up the message in our reading. Paul is encouraging the church to have the same mind - That same mind, founded in the same love, as Jesus. Now, on the surface, this may appear to be a call to think the same. To have the same rationale, come to the same conclusions, see things in the exact same way, to do the exact same things as everyone else in the church. Do you hear how impossible that sounds? What I just described makes it sound like to have the same mind means being a carbon copy of one another. Luckily, this is not what Paul means when he is encouraging the Philippians in this letter. Being of the same mind is not so much about engaging in the same actions. Rather, it is about approaching life with the same attitude. An attitude of humbleness and of service to others. An attitude that cares for the needs and interests of our neighbors. An attitude that is like that of Jesus.

While on a mission trip in Joplin, Missouri, helping to rebuild after a tornado, the work crew from my home church was sent to a job site to put a new roof on a home. Now, we were all there with the same attitude, the same mind. We were there to care for, to help, and to love the woman who owned this home after she had lost so much. Yet each of our group members achieved this in different ways. There was the group that was up on the roof - those who were comfortable and gifted in that type of work removing what was left of the old roof and putting on a new one. There were a couple folks on the ground, cleaning up as the crew on the roof threw off old shingles to keep the property tidy, passing new supplies up to the roofers. There was one woman on the trip who filled a mothering role, encouraging safety and ensuring folks stayed hydrated. And then there was me. I wasn't sure what my role should be. I wanted to help this woman and be of service to her - so I had the same mind as everyone else, but I wasn't sure

what actions to engage. I was not a roofer – me and heights do not get along so putting me on a roof is just not a good idea for anybody involved. There were plenty of workers on the ground. And I didn't fit the qualification for the mothering role. So I was at a loss – what could I do to be of service to this woman? After contemplating this question, I walked around to the front of the house and I knocked on the door. The owner came out and I simply asked “if she would like to talk”. She was pleased with the offer and so we sat down on her porch and for a good two hours, that's exactly what we did – we sat and talked. She told me about the storm, how scary it was. She shared many things about her life. We talked about faith. We talked about family and the challenges she faced with her family. And at the end of our chat, she thanked me for taking the time to simply listen and to lift her spirit by just sitting with her. When we finished on the site the following day, we left the owner with a new roof, a clean yard, and a lifted spirit. All of these different actions were done with the same attitude of humility and service; were done with the same mind as Jesus. And even though the members of our group served in different ways, engaged in different actions, we were motivated by the same attitude which took those different actions which were founded in our unique gifts and talents, combined them and offered so much to the woman whose home we worked on.

As the church, as any gathered community, we have our differences among us. We are not carbon copies of one another and that is such a good thing. We each bring different skills and abilities. We have different likes and dislikes. We have different callings in life. We see things differently. We think differently. We may even believe differently. Yet all of these differences have the ability to be the greatest of blessings if we only strive to have one thing in common - the same mind as Jesus. To look toward the interests of others as Paul says, and to be like Jesus and serve with the greatest humility. For when we do that, all the differences become an abundant gift to meet the needs of our world – to care in a wide variety of ways for our neighbors. To live our faith with a multitude of actions, inspired by same love found in Jesus.

You know, as we hear today about Bread for the World, I think of the how helping to feed people is one way that we are of the same mind as Jesus – for he did indeed feed and care in that way for others. Yet there are so many different ways that we do this holy work. Some are called to bring food for the pantry, others to give money to feed ministries, some share in a paint night fundraisers to help the youngest in our community to be feed, some will write letters encouraging adequate funding, some will cook meals for their neighbors when challenges are faced, some will invite a friend to share a meal, and I am sure there are other ways that I am forgetting. And here too, we are not all called to share the same action but in all of these actions is the same attitude – the same mind as Jesus – to humbly serve and meet the needs of others.

Beloved People of God, as we hear Paul's words of encouragement to the Philippians, there is a call in there for us too. A call to bring the things that make us different and unite them in the same mind as Jesus. So what are the gifts that you bring? What is unique about who you are that is ready to be used to live your faith? For when we all bring our differences and unite them in humility, service, and care, they can be powerful gifts for the work of being Christ's Church in the world. So be it and may it be so. Amen.