

SERMON: The Mind of Christ
TEXT: Philippians 2:1-13

If you could have any superpower, what would you choose? Invisibility? X-ray vision? Superhuman strength or speed? What about the ability to read minds? Hmmm. There are certain situations in which I think this last one would be quite helpful.

I wonder what some of you are thinking right now. On the other hand, maybe I don't want to know!

Do you ever wonder what Jesus is thinking, or was thinking? Sometimes, in his communication with his disciples and others he encountered in his life on earth, he was quite mysterious. He would answer a question with another question. Or he would tell a story, but not explain what it meant. Sometimes he would reveal something of himself to his disciples and then tell them to keep it a secret.

It was two or three decades ago when WWJD became the

trendy phrase for Christians. Everybody had a bracelet so that we would remember to ask ourselves in tough situations, "What would Jesus do?" Aside from the trendiness and all of the products it generated, it is a good question to keep in mind as we make our way through life. I remember someone giving me a newspaper clipping with a headline that read, "What Would Jesus Drive?" If you're concerned about the environment, it's probably worth considering.

I think it might also do us good to consider WWJT. "What would Jesus think?" Jesus is often one of those five people we want at the table if we could have dinner with any five people, living or dead. We want to pick his brain. We want to know what he thinks about religion; about how we're doing - individually and as the church - in terms of following him and making him known. We want to know what he thinks about world leaders and other religions and the eternal state of conflict in his homeland.

On the other hand, sometimes we're pretty sure we know exactly what Jesus thinks. Of course, it's usually right in line with what we think. We don't even pause to consider. There's a sitcom on Netflix called "Kim's Convenience" about a Korean family living in Canada and running a convenience store. When one of their young adult children does something that is outside their tradition or beliefs, the mother will often tell them, "You're making baby Jesus cry."

I wonder what Jesus thinks about how we spend our time, or how we spend our money? I wonder what Jesus thinks about our thoughts, and our opinions about other people, and our behavior towards other people? I wonder what Jesus thinks about what we do here in the church?

And yet, whether we're on the right track or way off track, whether we're behaving or misbehaving, I have no doubt how Jesus feels about us. I have no doubt that Jesus loves us so much

that he would go to the cross all over again for us. In THE MIND OF CHRIST, it's all about us.

As we read in the passage from Philipians, the Apostle Paul calls us to be of the same mind. "If there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete; be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves."

Note that the adjectives Paul is using are more about feelings than thoughts. Compassion. Sympathy. Love. Humility.

You know, Jesus had a choice. Fully divine and fully human, he could have exalted himself. He could have called ten thousand angels to come and spare him the suffering of the cross. As both Judge and Redeemer, he could have easily played judge and determined that humanity wasn't worthy of redemption. But Paul

believed, “Though he was in the form of God, [he] did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.”

One scholar explained, “Although Christ Jesus possessed all the properties that constitute divinity... he did not grasp them for his own advantage.... Instead, he limited his divine powers and privileges (“he emptied himself”). He lowered himself to human status (“he humbled himself”). As the New Adam, he demonstrated what is demanded of us: voluntary submission to the Father’s will.... In brief, the Son set aside the privileges of divinity and demonstrated humble obedience, even slavery, to the Father.” (David E. Frederickson, www.workingpreacher.org, October 5, 2008)

On March 16, 2003, Rachel Corrie was a young woman in her 20’s. She was part of an activist group called ISM – International Solidarity Movement working in the Middle East. In

an attempt to save Palestinian homes from destruction, she was killed by a man operating a massive D9 Caterpillar bulldozer. Years later, a judge called it an unfortunate accident, saying, "*She did not distance herself as a reasonable person would have done.*" (Ami Kaufman, For many Israelis, Rachel Corrie was a nuisance, www.theguardian.com, August 29, 2012)

We've all heard stories of soldiers falling on hand grenades to save their fellow soldiers, teachers who put themselves between children and school shooters, first responders who enter floodwaters and die trying to save complete strangers. *Humble* is not usually the first word we would think of to describe them. We want to call them heroes, but if you ask them, in true humility they would deny it. And that is how Paul describes Jesus' act of sacrificing himself. It was out of humility.

So, if you're not born with it, how does one develop such humility? How do we become of the same mind as Christ?

I think it follows the same pattern of the idea that “you are what you eat.” My grandmother used to tell me that I was going to turn into a dill pickle because I would eat all the pickles from the relish tray before we even sat down to eat. Remember that commercial where you see a woman walking down the sidewalk, then they show her from the backside and she has two giant cinnamon rolls in place of her behind? I love cinnamon rolls, and that commercial haunts me to this day.

So, what are you feeding your mind? I’m not saying that we should be reading the Bible exclusive to any other reading material. But it’s important to remind ourselves of the teachings of our faith and the life that Jesus lived on a regular basis.

I read an article by another pastor this week where she referred to one of her members and her reason for coming to church. “I need to come to church every Sunday to help me be who I’m supposed to be the rest of the week.”

We need the reminder. We need the support that comes

from one another. We need the strength that comes from Christ himself. As we receive the symbols of his body and blood we become a part of him and he becomes a part of us. Here at his table we find nourishment for our spirits and energy to live our faith.

Here at his table, on World Communion Sunday, we join with all the faithful around the world, from every time and place to renew our commitment to God, to remember the sacrifice of Christ, and to grow strong in our faith. As we do, may we grow in humility and develop the MIND OF CHRIST... to the glory of God!

AMEN.