

Christ's Twin

Philippians 2:1-13

September 27, 2020

Some were born as a twin. I am one of them. Identical twins. My brother and I looked alike so much, even my mom could not tell who is who quite a few times when we were in teens. If you saw my twin brother, Kun Jung and me side by side 50 some years ago, you would be surprised by our similar look.

I read that researchers at the University of Minnesota studied 402 pairs of twins who were separated at birth and raised apart. The research started in 1919 and continued for decades. The results were startling. Twins, raised in quite different circumstances, were still extraordinarily similar in many ways. The interesting example was a set of twins named Jim Lewis and Jim Springer. The two Jims were separated at birth and brought together at age forty. Guess what. Both had taken law enforcement training. Both had taken up pencil drawing and carpentry as hobbies. Their wives' name was Linda. Each named his first son James Allen. Each had a dog named "Toy." Further, they were found to have similar IQ's, personality type, fingerprints and handwriting.

It is fascinating. Isn't it?

Now imagine that you are a twin of Christ raised 2,000 years apart, but having the same personal attributes. I think that it is what Paul is asking for this morning when he tells us to be "like-minded" with Christ.

Paul says in verse 5, "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus." (KJV) Wow! The same mind in us that was in Christ! Is that possible? Yes, I believe it is possible because if it would not so, it would not be written in the Bible. We are called to live a twin of Christ, being "like-minded" with Christ.

What kind of mind, or attitude, did Christ have? The title for today's lesson is Imitating Christ's Humility. Christ has an attitude of humility.

A husband said to his wife one day, "I've noticed that you always carry my photo in your handbag to the office. Why?" His wife said, "When there is a problem, no

matter how impossible, I look at your picture and the problems disappear." The husband puffed himself up and said, "You see how miraculous and powerful I am for you?" And his wife answered, "Yes, I see your picture and say to myself, "What other problem can there be greater than this one?" hahaha...

We have been reading this month the Proverbs in the Old Testament.

(We have been joining reading a chapter of the Bible every morning. Please let Anne or me know if you haven't signed up for this daily spiritual discipline.)

More than dozen times we encountered verses about humility. Let me share several of them.

"The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility goes before honor."
Proverbs (15:33)

"Before destruction one's heart is haughty, but humility goes before honor." (Prov. 18:12)

"A person's pride will bring humiliation, but one who is (humble) lowly in spirit will obtain honor." (Prov. 29:23)

James in the New Testament says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (4:6)

Peter says, "And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another." (5:5) And he says also, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time." (5:6)

St. Augustin says, "It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men to angels."

Mother Teresa says, "To forgive takes love, to forget takes humility."

St. Isaac the Syrian says, "As salt is needed for all kinds of food, so humility is needed for all kinds of virtues"

Humility! Humility! Humility! It is what we should have. It is a sign that shows we are a twin brother or sister of Christ.

More practically, what do you mean by having an attitude of humility like Christ?

1

Paul replies to this question in Verse 3 which reads, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.” What he is saying is that regarding others as better than yourselves is coming from an attitude of humility.

I don’t need to tell you how rare this kind of attitude is in our society. All of us have been taught and trained to look for number one. “Be the number one. Be the champion. Be the winner.” You gotta be the best and do better than others to succeed. You gotta be on the top of others.

Isn’t it what we are asking from our children and youth in school. Look at the sports world. Look at what is going on at works. Competing one another is normal. For many of us, life is about competition. Life is about winning over others. Maybe some of you have no problem with that. “Competition is the American way, Pastor!” Is this the best way?

This competitive lifestyle separates us from one another and makes us to see others just as objects to fight against and run over and win over. As a result, both consciously and unconsciously we think we are superior to others and they are inferior to ourselves when we make it. Likewise, when they win, we do not rejoice with them. Rather, envy and jealousy fill our hearts. Isn’t it our sad reality?

To us, Paul says this morning, having the same mind with Christ, regard others as better than yourself.

Racism in our society is another pandemic crisis we face these days. Actually, it has been in our country for centuries. Where was it originated from? It is from an ideology, known as White supremacy, the belief that white people are superior to those of other races and thus should dominate them. What a scary belief! What we believe is all people are equal before God; all people are created in the image of God; all people regardless their skin color are God’s masterpiece to honor and respect. Discriminating, degrading and ignoring others are a grave sin against God, the Creator of all people.

Proverbs 14:31 reads, “Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor him.” We can put this verse this way, too. “Those who ignore, degrade and disrespect others insult God, the Creator.”

Paul steps forward, saying that acknowledging the fact that we are all precious and equal before God is not enough and we, a twin sister or brother of Christ, are to regard others as better than ourselves in humility.

2

Let’s continue to hear what Paul is saying more about living as a twin of Christ.

Verse 4 reads, “Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”

Not only regarding others as better than ourselves, but also looking to the interests of others is what we do as a twin brother or sister of Christ.

After saying, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,” Paul adds the lyrics of a hymn our early Christian sisters and brothers sang in the first century. Hear them once again.

“though he was in the form of God, 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.” Taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness, Christ humbled himself and died on a cross. For what? To save us. Put it differently, to serve us.

One point he told his disciples, “I did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matt 20:28) We remember Christ washing his disciples’ feet and saying afterwards, “if I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” (Luke 13:14-15)

One man who had an enormous impact on his company was the founder and former CEO of Wendy's fast food restaurants, Dave Thomas. Dave Thomas was a remarkable life story. Adopted as a child, he never finished high school. In his

book, "Well Done: the Common Guy's Guide to Everyday Success," Dave said he got his MBA long before his G.E.D. He says he has a photograph of himself in his MBA graduation outfit--a knee-length work apron. He claims to be the only founder among America's big companies whose picture in the corporate annual report shows himself holding a mop and a plastic bucket. That wasn't a gag. He calls it leading by example. At Wendy's, he says, MBA doesn't mean Master of Business Administration. It means Mop Bucket Attitude. It means a commitment to service. Dave Thomas, who died in 2002 had a commitment to service.

Jesus served not only on the cross but also before taking the cross. He met with people in need. He befriended people whom were considered as the second class and helped them see their human dignity. He set them free from sickness and bondage to live freely as God's people. When the world turned its back to them, he turned his face to them. He looked to the interest of others, living on earth and dying on the cross.

How about us?

C.S. Lewis defines humility this way; "humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less." Paul the Apostle defines it this way; paraphrasing his saying, "humility is not thinking less of others, it is thinking of others more."

"Saved to serve" is one of the Scottish family mottos. Yes, we are saved to serve. We are healed to serve. We are set free from the bondages of sin to serve. We are accepted as God's children to serve. We are here to serve.

Someone says, "living this life can be compared to playing tennis. You gotta serve well. A good and consistent serving is the key in playing tennis well." Isn't it true? Serving is what we need to do well. Serving is what a twin sister or brother of Christ do in this world.

Who shall I serve today? The interests of whom shall I look to today?

In the name of God, the Creator, Christ, the Savior and the Holy Spirit, the Encourager, Amen. Amen.