

Palm Sunday 2018

It's All In Your Mind

Philippians 2:5-11

St. Andrew's Church – Jacksonville, OR

By Fr. Bill Baker

Life is not fair...nor should we expect it to be. Even if you lived in a rose garden you would still have the thorns to contend with. And we have all heard the proverbial words that 'in every life some rain will fall'. But it is not the rain drowning our dreams and aspirations that tear us down but how we react and accept the challenges this life has to offer. If we know that life this side of Heaven is distorted by sin, then we can react more appropriately when our burdens grow heavy. The Lord is not waiting for you to make mistakes that will damn your souls to hell. But He is giving you time to repent from those sins and come to Him in faith through repentance...Welcome to Palm Sunday and entry into Holy Week.

The season of Lent can be a mournful time for many as your priests and church leaders stand up to remind you that you are not as good as you think you are, that you are perpetual sinners and not worthy of God's grace and mercy. We don't do it to be mean, we are in the same sinking boat as you after all. Lent is a time-out where we spend an honest session getting back on track, putting life into its proper perspective...Why? Because we are all equally sinners no matter how unworthy or entitled we may feel we are and we need to be reminded of that. Nobody out there is better than you and nobody out there is worse than you. Some may fall more deeply into sin, but all sin is transgression against God and worthy of damnation. Don't ever forget that. Equally are we sinners and equally are we in need of Gods saving Grace.

Our human nature bind us, exhibit us as one kind, intertwines us as a people of one blood and unites us as the children of God...some wayward...some obedient. We are all more alike than we are different. Our needs for survival and comfort are similar, our desires and passions common in their emotional outpouring ...free will...an entitlement we all possess. We are all made in the image of God...why would we think that we are so distinct from one another? So, if we can consider that we are

all of a similar mind or at least capable of such a feat, the Apostle Paul has some relative words for us this morning.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." A short proclamation yet so Bold and powerful.

As sinners can we carry within us the mind of Christ? Can we be expected to portray that for which we were designed...to reflect the image of Christ? Remember God came into this world in the lowliest of estates. He did not lord over us His riches in the Kingdom nor propose a prosperity gospel, but came to those who would grasp that it is not what we have in this world but what we offer to those around us. Be mindful knowing that everyone you come into contact with is a sinner in need of love, a sinner in need of compassion, a sinner that needs to feel that they are a member in the family of God. So then, what is this mind of God that Paul is speaking of and can we expect to achieve it? Listen to Paul's words to the Philippians (2:1-5):

"So if in Christ there is anything that will move you, any incentive in love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any warmth or sympathy -- I appeal to you, make my joy complete by being of a single mind, one in love, one in heart and one in mind. Nothing is to be done out of jealousy or vanity; instead, out of humility of mind everyone should give preference to others, everyone pursuing not selfish interests but those of others. Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus:" (New Jerusalem Translation).

It is a love embedded in the life of Christ that conforms the mind and unites us as one in the body of believers. Outside a life found in Christ the world that surrounds us is free to pick our brains and insert false ideas and coerce us into unfruitful actions. The battle for our souls is real, the battle for our souls is spiritual. There is only one way to fight such a battle...in being of one mind we must LAY OUR BURDENS DOWN! Give your grief to God alone. Give your lives fully to the living God and walk in faith.

As the priests and elders led a conspiracy to put Jesus to death, one of His own betrayed him...with a kiss. Innocent blood betrayed by a false love...a love of mammon over the love of thy brothers...But it was outside the city where the true worshippers assemble to lay before the Savior of the world that which was most precious...the allegiance of

their lives to the One True God with the bold proclamation, *“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”* They laid branches and clothes in the way, they laid their lives before the King of the universe that Christ would take their burdens to the Cross and destroy the sin that has stolen them away. Glory to God in the Highest that through Christ we can once again be found worthy...

Not only is life not fair, but the world is deceptive. We live in a struggling world that changes its stance on a daily basis to accommodate worldly persuasions; pastors are telling their congregation that Christ is not the only way to Heaven, tax breaks are being given to satanic cults, one high school has a teacher and parent supported after-school Satan Club to promote the sciences and Islamic Sharia Law is getting closer to becoming a reality in parts of our own Christian nation. Life can be difficult if we are judging ourselves by the world's standards. But God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Let not your hearts be troubled. There is more to come on the world scene...much more. As God stood at the entrance of Jerusalem, in the form of man, He wept. His love for you so deep. And in tears Jesus spoke, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”* (Matthew 23:37-39).

What is your response? Has the timing put you off? Is 2,000 years too long for you to hold on to FAITH! How about 80, 90 or 100 years? Have you lost a great-grandfather, a grandmother... a parent? What about you...where is your faith...in the world...or in a creator who promises eternal life? Lent is a time for focus...a time for reality. Will you simply disappear or enter new life in Christ? The choice is yours. As the wheat continues to separate from the chaff our answers become more and more clear. Make your stance and remain firm for the Lord would rather spit you out of His mouth if you choose to remain lukewarm.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.