

Serve Together**Philippians 2:1-13****Sunday, October 11, 2020****Beargrass Christian Church****I. INTRODUCTION.**

- A. We continue to head down the home stretch to my retirement.
 - 1. It happens to happen on Halloween, October 31, All Saints Eve.
 - 2. So, I already know what I will be wearing for my costume.
 - 3. I will be dressed up as a pastor heading out to pasture.
 - 4. And I mentioned last week that I already have my mask.
 - 5. It is this one—and it happens to have the Beargrass logo on it.
 - 6. Some faithful church folks helped us with the order, but a question came up when we were discussing the color and cost.
 - 7. Should we spend more to have the church's name on them?
 - 8. We decided to go for it and add the Beargrass logo.
- B. But strange things happen when I wear the mask beyond the walls.
 - 1. As soon as I put on the mask—my perspective changes.
 - 2. I become an ambassador—for Beargrass—like it or not.
 - 3. If I wear the mask—or a Beargrass T-shirt out and about—folks just might associate what I say and do with our church.
 - 4. Some have asked about my most embarrassing moments since I have been here and a lot of them occurred in the heat of battle.
 - 5. There is a rumor that I am a wee bit (very) competitive, so I regret the times when I behaved badly with the shirt on.
 - 6. You know it is bad when someone asks during a softball game or volleyball match: "Isn't that their pastor?"
 - 7. It is even worse when one of our own members asks the question...
 - 8. So, there is a great challenge and responsibility that comes with wearing items with the Beargrass logo on them.
- C. Perhaps you have had similar experiences?
 - 1. Some of you wear jewelry or lapel pins or get tattoos or bumper stickers in the shape of a cross or fish or other symbols of faith.
 - 2. People pay attention when we have identified ourselves as ambassadors or representatives for Christianity.
 - 3. Some of you have used these kinds of things effectively to begin conversations with others about your faith.
 - 4. Putting on the mask or wearing a shirt or other symbols can remind us also to put on the mind of Christ.

II. WE ARE FLIPPIN' THROUGH PHILIPPIANS.

- A. Last week we heard Paul encourage the folks at Philippi—and us.
 - 1. "Stand firm in one spirit—strive side by side with one mind."
 - 2. "Live your lives in a manner worthy of the Gospel!"
- B. We hear a similar message in the 2nd chapter of the letter.
 - 1. He proclaims: "Be of the same mind. Have the same love."
 - a. "Be in full accord—do nothing from selfishness or conceit."
 - b. "But in humility regard others as better than yourselves."

- c. "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus!"
- 2. Again, it sounds like Paul is pleading for Christ-clones.
 - a. We are to be like-minded with Jesus—perhaps twins of Jesus?
 - b. So, what could that look like for us...spiritually speaking?
- C. We have sets of twins at Beargrass—and a terrific trio of triplets.
 - 1. There is a general interest about relationships between twins and triplets and "multiples."
 - 2. Years ago, researchers studied over 400 pairs of twins who were separated at birth and raised apart from each other.
 - 3. The study went on for decades and the results were amazing!
 - 4. Twins, brought up in quite different circumstances, were still extraordinarily similar in many ways.
 - 5. One of the most remarkable stories was about a pair who were separated at birth and brought together at age 40.
 - a. During those 40 years, both took law enforcement training.
 - b. Both enjoyed blueprinting, drafting, and carpentry as hobbies.
 - c. They had first wives named, Linda, and second wives, Betty.
 - d. Each named his first son James and had a dog named "Toy."
 - e. They had similar IQs, EEGs, EKGs, and handwriting.
 - f. When they met, they said "It was like looking in a mirror."
 - 6. Isn't that remarkable—raised apart but still almost identical?
 - 7. And not only in looks—but in their behaviors and attitudes.
 - 8. That says a lot about the power of our gene pool in determining our physical characteristics and the ways we think and feel.
- D. Now imagine that you are a twin of Jesus raised around 2,000 years apart—and that you have similar spiritual characteristics.
 - 1. Isn't that what Paul asks for—to be "like-minded" with Christ?
 - 2. He says, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Jesus."
 - 3. It sounds not only impossible—but rather presumptuous!
 - 4. But Paul urges us to strive for this ideal—to be "twins" of Jesus.
 - 5. So, in practical terms, what could that look like?

III. PAUL TALKS A LOT ABOUT HUMILITY IN THIS LETTER.

- A. And I realize that humility is such a loaded word.
 - 1. We need to think about this from a faith perspective.
 - 2. Being humble does not mean letting people walk all over you.
 - 3. Being humble does not mean that you are a chronic pessimist.
 - 4. And being really humble does not mean that you start boasting about how humble you are—like Paul seems to do in chapter 3!
- B. And yet, some of us live like Eeyore, the droopy donkey.
 - 1. Many of our children and grandchildren know him well—our grandboys are getting to know him.
 - 2. Eeyore is known for saying uplifting lines like these:
 - a. "You wouldn't want me for a friend, would you?"
 - b. "Good morning...if it is a good morning."
 - c. "Don't count on it—the outcome looks sort of gloomy."
 - 3. Sounds like some of the political ads we've been hearing lately.
 - 4. Now Eeyore is a nice enough donkey dude.

- a. Some days we might even identify with him.
- b. But do we want our children to take on the mind of Eeyore?
- 5. Being humble is not being helpless or hopeless or spiritless.
- C. Paul says, "In humility consider others better than yourselves."
 - 1. "Look to your own interests—and the interests of others."
 - 2. In other words, love your neighbor as you love yourself.
 - 3. That attitude can be hard to find sometimes.
 - 4. There are many people who only look out for number one.
 - 5. Some of these are leaders in our community and country.
 - 6. Some of them are church people and religious folks.
 - 7. Some are leaders in the business world.
- D. A respected consultant shared this story at a company gathering.
 - 1. He told about an excited 5-year-old girl who, with her mother, had sewn a costume for a children's Halloween party.
 - 2. He said, "At the party they were having so much fun."
 - 3. "They were having such a good time—until an adult got involved."
 - 4. "She suggested that a prize be given for the best costume."
 - 5. "One child was excited—the rest of the children were crushed."
 - 6. He asked: "Why does somebody always have to win?"
- E. A CEO said: "My joy comes from the love of the game."
 - 1. "I have overcome some significant obstacles and handicaps and contended with some bitter opposition from my competitors."
 - 2. "But I've beaten them all—and I came out on top."
- F. Some of us have no problem with that—it's the "American way."
 - 1. But the ways of America are not always the way of Jesus.
 - 2. We have seen examples in the midst of the pandemic.
 - 3. COVID is an equal opportunity infector and no respecter of people—even those with power, position, and prestige.
 - 4. We have had over 36 million cases and a million deaths.
 - 5. So many people on the planet are grieving—and yet we hear some people gloating in the midst of the grief and losses.
 - 6. Are you a winner because, by the grace of God, recovered from COVID?
- G. Humility involves concern for others and their well-being.
 - 1. To have the mind of Christ is to have a spirit of humility.
 - 2. And if we have a spirit of humility, we will gain something else.

IV. WE WILL DEVELOP A SPIRIT OF SERVICE.

- A. Paul proclaims, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Jesus, who took the form of a servant—being born in human likeness."
 - 1. Now, this doesn't sound like a win/win situation for Jesus.
 - 2. This is more like a lose/win arrangement.
 - 3. Jesus deliberately lost himself because of his obedience to God.
 - 4. He lost himself because of his deep love for God and us.
- B. Friends, sometimes we have to lose our minds!
 - 1. We have to lose our minds—and take on the mind of Jesus.
 - 2. What if we take on his mind in our treatment of all people?
 - 3. What if we take on his mind to make things just and right?
 - 4. What if we take on his mind when we use our resources?

5. What if we take on his mind when we go to the voting booth?
6. There are times when we have to lose our minds.
- C. Someone had a great line about all of this.
 1. "Jesus went ahead of us—he didn't go instead of us."
 2. And so, we look for ways to follow and serve...together.
 3. Pray—pray for those who are receiving care and giving it.
 4. Share—it may be as simple as giving a gift or as challenging as going on a mission trip or helping the hopeless.
 5. Let us hang on to our faith—we are in this together—nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something.
 6. People with a spirit of service are God's chosen people.
 7. They have a spirit of humility and a spirit of service.

V. AND THEY REMEMBER WHO THEY ARE.

- A. Power comes for those with the courage to live a life of service.
 1. They become filled with the Spirit of the Living God!
 2. They remember what Paul told the Philippians.
 - a. "It is God who is at work in you! You are children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation!"
 - b. And here is a line in verse 15 that you can hang your heart on.
 - c. Paul says: "You shine like stars in the world!"
 3. God sent Jesus to become a humble servant among us.
 4. This same Jesus calls us brother, sister, friend, beloved.
 5. We get to live with a spirit of humility and service—together!
- B. Yesterday I led a funeral—one of hundreds during my ministry.
 1. The woman never made the headlines.
 2. She served behind the scenes—she was steady and faithful.
 3. A small group gathered to celebrate and give thanks for her life.
 4. She, like so many others before her, was loved.
 5. And here is another serendipitously graceful part of her story and today's message.
 6. Her first name is "Estella"...which means "star."
 7. One said: "She was the most Christ-like person I ever knew."
- C. What a blessing it is hear that at the end of our earthly journey!
 1. And what a joy it is to have someone say to us...even now...
 2. "In your loving, in your giving, as we serve together..."
 3. "You look a lot like Jesus...."