

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped"
(Philippians 2:5-6).

The Apostle Paul knew well the mindset of human beings. We are selfish and conceited. We look to our own interests.

Our natural mindset is to want things our way. I deserve it. I want it my way. By nature, we are self-centered and self-focused. We think of self first.

Now, this is nothing new. In fact, this is as old as humanity itself as this has been man's mindset since the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We want what we want, and we want it now, and we want it the easy way.

- Instead of being patient in saving up money through hard work and sacrifice, we would much rather strike it rich through the lottery, sports betting, casino gambling.
- Instead of paying off those student loans through sacrifice and determination, we would much rather have someone else pay off our financial debts.
- Credit cards are super easy, so I can get whatever I want even if I don't have the money. Now, credit cards are great to get points and rewards, but only if you pay them off each month. If not, credit card interest rates can easily lead to financial ruin.

But what's the issue with all these illustrations? It's all about self: me, me, me.

You see, the natural human mindset is sinful. It doesn't want to fear, love, and trust in God above all things. It doesn't want to love our neighbor as yourself. Now, sin does do something. It destroys Christian congregations and unity in the one true Christian faith. It does destroy personal and family relationships.

This natural human mindset even believes you can be your own god. So, we think that we do not need the true God directing us in how we live. I know God says that abortion is murder, but I have the right to choose myself. I know God says that He created man male and female, but what about how I feel inside? This natural human mindset says that we can direct our own lives.

This is what Paul was aware of when he encouraged the Philippians to a whole new mindset.

It is only Christ Jesus who brings us to His mindset. Christ transforms our mindset by taking the form of a servant and being born in our likeness. This mindset that Christ calls us to have is that of a servant. As Christ served us, He calls us to serve one another. Now, we could never serve one another as Christ served us. He is God after all. He served us despite being rejected, mocked, and hated.

Christ served us as ***“He humbled Himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”*** (Philippians 2:8). Death on the cross was for criminals. Through Him taking upon Himself yours and my sins – *the sins of the entire world* – He became the chief of sinners, yet Himself without sin. He allowed the sin of the entire world to be nailed through His flesh and bone. He suffered the agony of the world’s sin in a slow and suffering death.

But with His shed blood and His death, Christ atoned for our sins of being self-centeredness, envy, and pride. In fact, every single sin of yours and mine – *and the entire world* – was paid for through Christ’s cross.

Through Christ’s atoning death and bodily resurrection, we, by grace through faith in Him, have a new mindset: we are forgiven in Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit leads us with this new mindset to worship the Savior that we didn’t even think that we needed, ***“so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”*** (Philippians 2:10-11).

When Christ comes again in all glory and dominion, descending from the clouds, like it or not, every knee will bow before Jesus. Those with saving faith and those who scorned Jesus. In awe or in terror, every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

Because Christ has redeemed us from our sin, through His atoning suffering and death, we, in Christ, now live the mindset of Christ.

We now look to Jesus as the Holy Spirit enables us to live humbly. We look to Jesus day after day, week after week. We look to Jesus today as He forgives you through His Means of Grace: Absolution, His Word, and at His altar. Now forgiven, you have eternal life now, so you live a life that is not seeking recognition, but a life that is for others. You share the good news of salvation in Christ with your family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors! You welcome them to hear this good news here at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church!

With the mindset of Christ, rather than having “*selfish ambition or conceit, [we live] in humility as we count others more significant than ourselves*” (Philippians 2:3). So now, through the Holy Spirit, we look not only to our own self-interests, but also to the interests of others. In Christ, we want to be of help to others in need. In Christ, we want to witness Him to them through our actions and our words.

On this Palm Sunday, the Passion of Our Lord Sunday, Jesus was on the march toward Calvary, a march that began in Bethlehem and continued to the Jordan River. A march that led to His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. To the shouts of “*hosanna,*” Jesus was welcomed as a king, but by Thursday, He would be betrayed and delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, then on Friday, He would be mocked, spit upon, flogged, and killed.

But the King of kings would not remain dead in the grave. He would rise again, so that we can live our lives to His glory and praise Him as He has destroyed the power of our evil foes: sin, eternal death, and the devil.

As we begin Holy Week, we glorify our Lord as we gather here again on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and of course, the reason we receive His gifts on Sunday, the Resurrection of Our Lord on Easter.

May the Lord always keep you in the right mindset – *His mindset* – as we love God and serve our neighbor. Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +