



Let This Mind Be In You

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Please read Philippians 2:1-13

The letter to the Church in Philippi has been described as one of the most beautiful letters written by Paul. This was against the background that Philippi was part of the Via Egnatai – the road that connected Europe to Asia. It was indeed a chaotic world, and Philippi was the scene of the battle during which Brutus and Cassius were killed. William Shakespeare, in his epic ‘Julius Caesar,’ identified Brutus and Cassius as the ones who plotted against and eventually took the life of Julius Caesar. The infamous question ‘Et tu Brute? – and you, Brutus?’ remains within our culture as a question to ask when one feels betrayed by a close friend.

Yet, this Church at Philippi was a place of calm in the chaotic world and Paul had a special love for the people. It was at Philippi that he met Lydia, the seller of purple cloths, by the river worshipping. She invited the Apostles to start the Church at Philippi in her home (Acts 16: 13-15).

It is to this Church that Paul wrote, ‘I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.’ (Philippians 1:3-4)

It is to this Church that Paul also wrote the Kenosis- the humility of Christ’s self-emptying to become like us. Christ, at the Incarnation, emptied Himself, took on human flesh, and became like us. Paul states it thus in Philippians 2:6-7, - ‘Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.’

Paul encouraged the Christians at Philippi to have the same mind/ mindset as Christ as they related one to the other. Paul knew and understood the power of the mind. He knew that the mind influences our words and actions, and perhaps the echo of Proverbs 23:7 was uppermost in his mind. ‘As he a man thinks in his heart, so is he.’

Our thought life is paramount to our well-being. Our thought life informs our words. Words of discouragement, judgment, curses, and maliciousness come from a depraved thought life. These words are written and spoken daily, and they can lead to the destruction of the lives of others.

Our thought life also dictates how we act and respond to our family, friends, the environment, institutions, and laws. We live with persons whose thought life, if they are not careful, can lead to crime and corruption, violence and aggression, anger and bitterness.

It has become increasingly important for us, who are Christians, to have a good grasp on our thoughts as we do exist in a milieu of intense and rigorous conflict.

Some people experience this complexity within the family and home and have, therefore, chosen to disown or disregard this basic institution of human existence. If the home is a place of disquiet and discontent, then those who dwell there cannot be at peace. It is, therefore, of dire importance that the thoughts of those who live in the family be aligned with the pillars of truth, justice, love, and respect. These pillars are indicative of the mindset that Christ expects of us and has given to us in and through His own life.

The power of thought also affects the wider society, and this can lead to anger, hatred, and bitterness that can destroy human existence. Wars and acts of terrorism begin with the power of thought, which seeks to inflict pain and hurt upon fellow human beings. The grasp for power and control, the overpowering of others, the dehumanization and marginalization of fellow human beings all begin with destructive thoughts.

The Church, as an institution, unfortunately, does not escape the power of thought that can malign and make life miserable for others. When we criticize mercilessly, discourage others, and deny others their God-given hope of redemption, we fall short of God’s desire for us as human beings. We must call to mind that we are not just an institution, but we are the body of Christ. We are, therefore, called to love each other regardless of our creed and circumstances in life.

Micah 6:8 reminds us, ‘He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly[a] with your God.’

Because thoughts can diminish the value we place on our own life and on the life of others, Paul’s reminder in Colossians 3:2, ‘Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things,’ must

become an important injunction for us as we live in family, world, and Church. Often, when we focus on materialism, power, and avarice, laced with envy, we forget that we and others are made in the image and likeness of God and hence the need to respect the other as we respect ourselves.

More extensively, Paul wrote to the Philippian Church ' Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

In our focused passage, Philippians 2: 1-8, Paul, therefore, set Christ as the example. Christ had everything but emptied Himself of all because of His obedience to God and His humility. It was a key lesson to the Church at Philippi to make amends in their relationship and fellowship.

Christ's obedience to God provided a testimony to the Christians of how to live in relation to God so that we can live in good relation with those around us. A mind focused on obeying God will cultivate thoughts of peace and harmony and will seek the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3)

Obedience to God beckons us to worthy living, and this is crucial in our world today. Some may live in casual and careless ways, sometimes forgetting the author and finisher not only of faith but of life itself. Our obedience to God should enable us to be credible witnesses of the goodness of God and the love of God in Christ Jesus and in His sacrificial death upon the cross.

The Humility of Christ, which Paul explains in the Kenosis, ought also to help us guard against the nature of the flesh to be proud and boastful. There is the call to forget the centrality of the 'self' and to think of the other. It is a call to so live that others might simply live. In this society of plenty, there is the need to have a full vista of the least amongst us and to help in ways that are kind and generous.

This focused passage presents the Servant Christ, obedient and humble, as the example for us to follow. The pericope continues with the Exaltation of Christ. Philippians 2:9 -11, 'Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Christ's obedience, humility, and exaltation are key markers for us as Christians as we navigate the world, society, Church, and family. How we live begins with our thinking, the dictates of our inner being. What do our inner thoughts reveal to those around us? Do we think of war or peace? Do we think of hate or love? Do we think of unforgiveness or forgiveness? Do we think of ridicule or help? Do we think of meanness or kindness? Do we think of purity or unrighteousness? What are our thoughts, really?

Indeed, let us pray constantly that the mind of Christ would be in us. 'Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Harvest Service



Webster Memorial United Church (Bodden Town) held its Harvest Service on September 24, 2023. A table overflowing with produce showcased the bounty of God's creation. Rev. Euthman Wray, Minister of the Congregation, pointed out that the Bible speaks frequently about thanksgiving and worship and God receives praise and adoration from creation, which is a testament to God's glory. Such expressions like "head of cabbage," "ear of corn," or "hand of banana," etc. aren't mere descriptions, but they also serve as reminders to offer ourselves, our eyes, ears, hands, and heads - our entire selves - to the glory and service of God.



D'Leah Cardoza offered a special item during the Harvest Service.

Welcome, Members!

Rev. Donovan Myers

On Sunday, September 24, 2023, the John Gray Memorial Congregation "welcomed back" three members, Ms. Elena Jacob, Ms. Dana Brandon, and Ms. Elaine Rivers, into fellowship. Elders and congregants joyfully embraced them as their paths led them home! We look to the future as they live and serve among us!



See You At The Pole

Ms. Latavia Henry-Campbell

See You At The Pole is an international event where students across the world find a pole or any other available space on campus to engage in a collective prayer session.



Photo from the event held at the Triple C School.

SAVANNAH UNITED CHURCH
INVITES YOU TO OUR
SPORTS TOURNAMENT
Under the Theme: 'Sharing Christ: One 2 Ten.'
October 6-7, 2023
Friday Registration: 6pm
Saturday Finals 4pm
VENUE: SAVANNAH UNITED CHURCH BASKETBALL COURT
Request the rules and registration details via email: SUCEVANGELISM@GMAIL.COM
Register Now!

Remember in your prayers

All those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way. Please include in your prayers especially

- The bereaved
- The sick and ill
- Those going through a challenging time
- Those before an important decision
- Those needing guidance, support, or encouragement
- Those who feel lost and hopeless

Your prayer matters!

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