

Lent In Plain Sight
CROSS – Cross Purposes
Philippians 2:1-11
Second Sunday of Lent
March 8, 2020
Pastor Dea Sharp, Pikes Peak UMC

Philippians 2:1-11 (NRSV) Imitating Christ's Humility

2 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was^[a] in Christ Jesus,
⁶ who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

I'm sure you all remember the WWJD campaign a few years ago – the bracelets and t-shirts.

We wore 'em and gave them away.

But, did you know that the WHAT WOULD JESUS DO slogan was first used by a minister in Topeka, Kansas in 1886. Pastor Sheldon developed a sermon series that included an entertaining story and then pose the question: "*What Would Jesus Do.*" The pastor tackled difficult moral questions and would end each

message with a “cliff hanger” so that folks would return to worship to find out what happened next.

The WWJD movement was revitalized by a youth pastor in the 1990’s – that’s probably when we all “got it.” That pastor developed the bracelets for her youth group so they could wear them and be ready to evangelize about WHAT Jesus HAS done.

The mid-week Bible study group is studying the book of Philippians and the verses that Rick read for us were tackled a couple of weeks ago.

God’s timing, AGAIN, comes up – that we could tie our *Lent in Plain Sight* object (the cross) with that study...for today!

Our Scripture reading is one of the Apostle Paul’s pleas – this time to the Philippians – that is urgent. And that plea is as relevant TODAY as it was in Paul’s life.

Paul wanted to new believers in Philippi to

- Be who you are
- Show love
- Think of others as better than yourselves

In short, BE LIKE JESUS.

That’s not WWJD

Maybe BWHI – is better: BE WHO JESUS IS.

That is such a high standard for us living in TODAY’S culture. ‘Cause most of the “world” out there – don’t

- Look to the interests of others
- Or practice humility

And what’s the “have the same mind as Christ?”

What’s THAT?

Today, as we’re one week closer to THE cross – where Jesus is traveling to through these weeks of our Lent –

...we see that the “same mind as Christ” is the one where Jesus emptied himself TOTALLY.

Jesus was OBEDIENT to the point of death on a cross.

So to be like Christ – we can sure ask a couple questions. Like:

- What would that look like for us...to give ourselves away for others?
- In light of THE TRUTH that Jesus, THE SON OF GOD, came from Heaven and went ALL THE WAY to the cross, how should WE live together?

The cross shows the love of God.

In the cross, God shares in our suffering.

The cross fixes our broken relationships and we are brought back into a right place with God.

Jesus went to the cross and did those things for us.

He went to the cross and made a personal investment in OUR redemption.

In some places, the UMC is active in the prison ministry called Kairos.

Kairos is a weekend experience, in which men from “outside” interact with prisoners.

Bonds are formed as ALL the men eat together, share their testimonies, and open up about their personal lives.

There’s a connection made that allows men from the outside to help men on the inside find freedom, even while they are still in prison.

In order to do this, the men from the “outside” have to empty their pockets, drop their cell phones in a basket and go through TWO gates.

They give their weekend and go beyond their comfort zones to *invest* in something for the good of others...for those men on the inside.

That’s a lot!

For someone else to know Jesus better!

It requires a personal investment.

Those men from the “outside” are BWJI – *being who Jesus is*.

It is through the blood of Jesus, who was sacrificed for US – that we are free.

Not just from prison bars like folks in jail, but we're set free from the powers of sin, death, and darkness.

Do we act like FREE PEOPLE?

The Apostle Peter wrote in one of his epistles, (1 Peter 2:16) "Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil. Live as God's slaves."

Free and yet a slave?

Many people think of freedom as "doing whatever you want."

Yes, but how do we determine what we want?

It can't be like a Hallmark movie that tell us "just follow your heart."

'Cause, too often, our hearts aren't right. Sadly, our hearts are corrupted by the world around us.

But!

Jesus showed us that there is a better way.

Jesus says, in John's gospel (8:31-36) "*If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free...everyone who sins is a slave to sin....if the Son sets you free [from sin], you will be free indeed.*"

According to Jesus, freedom comes from:

- Learn, through personal study, his teachings
- being his disciples – and telling others about what we've gained from his teaching AND HIS SACRIFICE and
- accepting the truth from him. It's not going our own way, doing whatever our hearts desire at any given moment – it's following Jesus.

So, the 1990's was when the WWJD movement was really active.

But, did you know that there is a movie – it came out in 2015 and stars the Dukes of Hazard actor, John Schneider, called *WWJD: the Story Continues*.

It's about a drifter comes to town and inspires a group of people to live as Jesus would.

Sounds like a movie we should watch at an Outreach Matinee (coming this Saturday @ 1 p.m. – hint hint)!

We can DO what Jesus DID.

We probably won't be asked to "go to our deaths on the cross" like Jesus but we CAN:

- Tip generously
- Let people ahead of us in traffic - WITHOUT GRIPING
- We can make a call; send a note

None of these things all can, like Jesus did, contribute to the joy of the *entire* body of Christ.

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? (WWJD)

He'd ask us to BE WHO JESUS IS. (BWJI)

And more than anything – one more acronym: HWLF

HE. WOULD. LOVE. FIRST

Jesus did.

On the cross.

In order to save us.

Amen.