

25 March 2018  
Palm Sunday / Sunday of the Passion

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church

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“Restored to a Right Mind”

Text: Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14-15; Zechariah 9:9-12

***Have this mind among yourselves . . .***

*What mind?* You just heard it in the reading of the Passion. The mind of Christ.

A mind knowing that you will not always be here, but that your end is coming; and perhaps sooner rather than later. So making the most of every opportunity.

A mind to serve and love others, even those who betray you and let you down.

A mind to pray fervently, and praying ***Yet not what I will, but what you will***, even knowing that will demand great sacrifice.

A mind filled with calm confidence in God’s Word, that it will be fulfilled, and that it is good.

A mind not quick to defend yourself, to prove yourself right; yet speaking the truth, even if that truth brings opposition and condemnation.

A mind knowing mockery and abuse and not lashing back, but trusting that blessed are you when you are persecuted (Matthew 5).

A mind to lay down your life for others instead of trying to save it.

A mind that does not, perhaps, understand everything that is happening, yet trusting your Father in heaven.

***Have this mind among yourselves . . . this mind of Christ Jesus.***

But more often, we must confess, we have a different mind.

*What minds?* You just heard it also, in the reading of the Passion.

A mind that is quick to criticize others, maybe even those who are doing good and the good you should be doing.

A mind that betrays, maybe even our Lord, by what we do or fail to do, speak or fail to

speak.

A mind that wanders or falls asleep - either physically and/or mentally, exhausted by the things of this world and life - instead of praying.

A mind that makes pledges and promises we do not keep.

A mind that draws our swords, ready to fight. Oh, for us not physical swords; for us it is with stabbing pens and tongues.

A mind causes us to run away in fear.

A mind that cause us to deny and hide, that avoids speaking the truth. That is more fearful of men than of God.

A mind that goes along with the crowd instead of standing up and speaking up for what is right.

A mocking mind.

What a contrast of minds we heard today.

This mind of Christ, it is what we had before sin. Before sin corrupted our minds, twisted our thinking, curved us in on ourselves. Adam's mind only for Eve, and Eve's mind only for Adam. Christ's mind only for you. And our mind . . . ?

And yet it has changed. Paul said it. Have this mind among yourselves, ***which is yours in Christ Jesus!*** Either Paul is completely deluded, not really knowing us, or there's a wonderful truth here. That in Christ Jesus, we are being put back to where we were before. That in Christ Jesus, we are being put back into our right minds.

We sometimes say that a person is *out of their mind*. We mean they're acting crazy, not right. We heard that today. A lot. And ironically, the ones who were acting *out of their minds* thought the one who had a right mind was the crazy, deluded one!

But that one, who so humbled Himself, who do not exalt Himself, who served even those who wanted nothing to do with Him, and who went to the cross . . . He is the one who received what those who are out of their minds wanted and were striving for. He is the one who was raised and exalted, and given the name and the place above every name and above every place.

And He did it all for you.

The prophet Zechariah said that today - did you catch it? After telling you to ***rejoice*** because

*your king is coming*; because our King entered Jerusalem on this Palm Sunday - he said this: *Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.*

*Return to your stronghold* - to the Word and promises of God; they are the strongest thing we have in this world and life.

*O prisoners of hope* - not prisoners of sin, but prisoners of hope!

*Today I declare that I will restore to you double.* Restore. Put back what once was. Make it right again. Make our minds right again. But not only that, but more. **Double**. Give to us *more* than what we lost. Not only the forgiveness of sin for us who are out of our minds with sin, but more - the gift of everlasting life. Life that death will never be able to end.

So no more war, Zechariah says. Against each other or against God. Instead *he shall speak peace to the nations*. Praying for His enemies and doing good to those who persecute Him. Praying for us and doing good to us.

And this too: giving us, now, the same mind; the mind of Christ. By giving us His Spirit. His Spirit to work in us and live in us. That we be in our right minds again. And so Peter would proclaim this gift to the crowd on that first Pentecost: *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:38).

Baptism, forgiveness, Spirit. Dying and rising with Christ. That's why He did it, His death and resurrection. For your resurrection from death. He gave you life and we chose death. Now we who die He restores to life again. And our minds, dead in trespasses and sins, He makes right again. That we repent of our own minds and have the mind of Christ.

So we enter this Holy Week. We will hear of Jesus' love. We will hear of His Passion - His suffering and death. We will hear of His service. We will hear words of hope, or promise, and of joy. We will receive His Body and Blood. And then when these seven days are over will come an eighth day, a new day, the day of resurrection. The day when Jesus made all things new. Including you and your mind. That what we hear this week we may also live and think.

That's why Paul could say: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus*. He did it, for you. All things, all this week, for you.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.