

Sermon Title: **“The Same Mind of Jesus Christ”**

Bible: **Philippians 2:3-5**

When: on World Communion Sunday, October 1, 2023

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, thank you so much for all of our diverse languages and cultures. Thank you so much for your grace upon all of us. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. World Communion Sunday

Thank you so much to all of our scripture readers today! Today is World Communion Sunday! It is the day to celebrate our Christian unity, not only beyond the differences of the denominations, but also beyond the differences of our cultures and languages. So, I hope for us to read and listen to the scripture in many other languages. Before the Reformation, only one language was used to read and listen to the Bible in church, which was Latin. At that time, only clergy could read and understand the Latin Bible, and most of the congregation did not know Latin and could not read the Latin Bible. They had to accept however the clergy interpreted the Bible. This led to many people having access to only one understanding or only one theology. After the Reformation, the Bible was translated into many other languages. This means that not only clergy, but also all Christians, and even non-believers, can access the Bible, in order to read, listen, and study it in their own languages. The myth of

there being only one Bible translation and only one theology were broken. Many different Protestant denominations have been started, along with diverse understandings and theologies. Even though we are different, many Protestant denominations, including the United Methodist Church, celebrate today, the first Sunday in October, as World Communion Sunday. That's because we are all the body of Jesus Christ. And Communion is a powerful means of mystery and grace in which we are one altogether in Christ.

2. Three Theories of Immigration

Have you heard of the Melting Pot theory? I learned that there are three theories used to talk about the United States and immigration. The Melting Pot theory is the first one. No matter how people come to make a new start in the USA, once they have been in the USA for a while, they become "American" and lose their individual identity. In this theory, who is "American"? Who is in your mind? What language do they speak? What color of skin do they have? What food do they eat? I am a Korean. Can I become an "American"?

The second theory is the Salad Bowl concept in which different ethnic groups mix together to create an American society, but still keep their individual identities and cultures to enrich their society. Where can you see this Salad Bowl theory? Can we see this Salad Bowl in our church? Each of you is so important. We need each of you. Your prayers, your gifts, your service, your presence, your witness, and just yourselves are so precious in making us what we are.

The third theory uses the Mosaic idea, in which people have a choice about whether they want to be either an 'American' or to keep their own identity. I am not sure if they really have a choice or not. They can be in between. They are not in, and they are not outside. They might be strangers from "America" and even from where they come from. Sometimes, we can feel the space between us rather than hospitality or connection.

I believe that we can discover and experience all of these three theories in our daily lives. What theory most makes sense to you? What theory do you like the best? What church do you hope for, Melting Pot Church, Salad Bowl Church, or Mosaic Church?

3. The Same Mind of Jesus Christ

Today's scripture reading is from Philippians 2. When the Apostle Paul in prison wrote this letter to the Philippian church, there might have been some signs of conflict or tension. Let me read Philippians 1:15-17, "15 Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry but others from goodwill. 16 These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment." Some people did not like Paul in their minds. When Paul was in prison, they regarded it as the opportunity for themselves to proclaim Christ, instead of Paul. They did it out of selfish ambition, not out of goodwill. The Philippian church members worried about their motives. They might did it for themselves for their position or fame. However, what mattered to Paul was not his position, not his fame, but the Gospel, the Good News of Christ. Paul continued to say, "18 What does it matter? Just

this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true, and in that I rejoice.” Sometimes, we want to be perfect in every way, from beginning to end, from the motive to the fruit, and we tend to judge others and doubt others’ motives. Sometimes our judgements are right. But what is the most important to us, our judgements or the Good News, God’s grace and love? Who is the most important to us, ourselves or Jesus Christ? Even though Paul was in prison, even though all he could do was to write letters, he rejoiced. How could he rejoice?

There is a key in today’s reading, having the same mind of Jesus Christ. What is the mind of Jesus Christ? Let me read the following verses after today’s reading. “⁶ [Christ Jesus], though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.” Jesus Christ is God. But Jesus Christ emptied himself and humbled himself even on the way to the cross. Why? Because Jesus Christ is God. This Jesus is an almighty God, who could perform miracles and show his power. But his miracle and his power is emptiness and humility. Paul had this same mind of Jesus Christ, and he could rejoice.

One image that I learned from clergy boundary classes still resonated with my heart deeply and vividly. If a clergy is like a motorboat, a lay person is like a sailboat. Who has the power? When the motorboat and the sailboat are on the same way against each other, which one

needs to change their way? The motorboat, because it has power. Who has the responsibility when there is a conflict? Who has the privilege to be protected? Clergy have the power. Does that mean that clergy perform whatever they want in order to boast of their power? Clergy have the power not to wield absolute power but to be responsible; not to be served, but to serve. And I think that this is the same mind of Jesus Christ, described in Philippians 2.

Is this same mind of Jesus Christ only for clergy? How about church leaders? Church leaders have power compared to the church members. How about our church members? Our church members have power compared to our visitors. How about Christians? Christians have power compared to non-believers. Then, do we all need the same mind of Jesus Christ? Of course, the clergy have to have the mind of Jesus Christ. Please watch me to see if I have this same mind of Jesus Christ and if I rejoice!

Today we will have Communion. The body of Jesus Christ was broken. The blood of Jesus Christ was poured out. That's how Jesus Christ showed his emptiness and humility. And this Jesus Christ is in you and me.

Closing Prayer

O Lord, thank you so much for calling all of us as your children. We are also followers of Jesus Christ as you are with us and in us. Please guide us to discover your mind of emptiness and humility, and express them through our actions. In Jesus' name. Amen.