

Brian's Sermon Text at Collaborating Churches Worship

Sunday, June 21, 2020
National Indigenous Peoples Day

The Mind of Christ (Psalm 86 and 1 Corinthians 1:18 – 2:16)



“For who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?”
But we have the mind of Christ.
(1 Cor 2:16)

Word to Ponder = Mind

Congregational Wisdom = creativity, thoughts, impart discernment, non-physical, values, teachings, expression of the Spirit, path to God, intellect, living the mind of Christ, the church, easily misguided, a humble teachable spirit, expressions of the heart, mind is related to Spirit, reborn as a spirit with mind, body, and soul, awareness, learn and reflect

Let's take a moment to set our text for this morning
in its context in the story unfolding
in Paul's conversations with the church in Corinth.
He had lived with them for months,
nourishing them to flourish in the mind and purpose of Jesus Christ.
This Jesus, he had become convinced in a dramatic encounter,
was the long-expected Messiah sent by the Creator of the universe
to realign the ways humans lived together and cared for the creation
so they would align with the Creator's desires.
What provoked the writing of these letters was news
that this invitation and the unity of mind and purpose it offered
was being ignored or rejected.

Paul is writing to the friends of Jesus
in one of the most teeming metropolises of his time.
It is teeming with competing ideas and conflicting ways of living.

People come to this new trust in and loyalty to Jesus Christ, just as Paul had,
needing to align with a new way of thinking and acting.
That's hard.

People in the church, especially people wanting power and influence,
have put together their own self-serving representations of Jesus and his mission.
They have gathered factions around them,
all claiming to be the true and pure church.
Anyone thinking or acting otherwise is demeaned and dismissed.

Into this context, Paul advocates for a reconsideration of faith,
a reformation of their ways of understanding their trust and loyalty.

First, he reminds them that they are all saints,
beloved children and friends of God
who have received the mind of Christ
so they can enjoy and share its purpose
by doing justice while being kind and humble.
God is with them to support them in doing that.

Second, he reminds them that they find their unity
in Jesus Christ and in him alone.
But it's an inclusive unity,
one that reaches out to all the world.
It is not theirs to hoard and protect,
but Christ's to enjoy and share.
They are not capable of instructing the Lord.
They are being invited to be instructed
by the mind and purpose of Christ.

So, Paul is speaking and writing into
a society that is teeming with demeaning and dismissive
ideas and ways of living.
He is advocating that people realize and rejoice in that fact
that they already enjoy the gift of redemption
and are free to live in it and share it.
But they do not understand it deeply enough
to impose their misrepresentations on others.
They are invited to learn from the Spirit, through the whole community,
what it is that the Lord thinks and wants done.

Be humble in your following and flourishing.
The Lord still has much to teach you.

Speaking now for myself, formed so deeply by my WASP Settler ancestors,
I have much to learn about living into the mind and purpose of Christ

on this National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Some of those lessons are in our own past,
in the voices of those who came to this new land (for them)
determined to resist the tyranny they had experienced in their motherland.

They brought a spiritual tradition that was determined
to remove all occasion for tyranny
by ensuring full participation to enable full responsibility.
There was a strong abolitionist movement among Canadian Presbyterians
throughout the nineteenth century.

Most who went to war in the twentieth century
saw themselves fighting against tyranny.

But we also had and still have tragic blind spots,
evidenced in our relationships with Indigenous peoples.

WASP Settlers 150 years ago believed fervently
that their representations of Jesus
and the way of life that they saw flowing from his work and teachings
was superior, entrusted to them alone, and had to be imposed on others.
Their entire systems of living together was built on those assumptions.
They are still embedded in the Indian Act that still is the law of our land.

That's what we mean by systemic racism,
when the assumed superiority of one group over another
is enshrined in the systems by which we live together.
[For an analysis and additional resources on this law,
go to http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act.]

Changing those attitudes and behaviours
takes a lot of listening, unlearning, and redeeming/reseeing.
It involves showing up differently in all the systems within which we live.
It means being strong and courageous, not frightened or dismayed,
because the mind and purpose of Christ is with us and guiding us.

That is what Joshua 1:9 in our picture this morning is inviting.
That's what Paul was asking the Corinthian Christians to do.
That's what the Spirit, through our considerations of Paul this morning,
is asking us to do.

My Notes

My Prayers



Prayers of the People

[spoken or written into the service]

Humble us by teaching us more deeply, dear Family,
how to live in your mind and your purpose.

Inspire us by friends of yours, like Nelson Mandela.
Remind us of your invitation through him to forgive in your way.
Remind us that reconciliation does not mean forgetting
or trying to bury the pain of conflict,
but teaches us to work together to correct the legacy of past injustice.

Inspire us by friends of yours, like Mary Fontaine.
Remind us of your invitation through her, to reconcile in your way.
Remind us to think seven generations in advance,
to imagine how our alignment with your mind and purpose
can contribute to the abundance of their home in your world.

Inspire us by friends of yours, like Grace Ji-Sun Kim.
Remind us of your invitation through her to listen in your way.
Remind us to tune our souls to people who have been invisible to us,
whose voices have been silenced or demeaned,
whose potential you honour and offer.

You know, better than we do, our fears and dismays.
Infuse and inform them with your mind and your purpose.
Bring your finely-tuned blend of challenge and comfort
that nourishes us to flourish
so that we contribute to the flourishing of our teeming metropolis.

And inspire us to hear afresh your mind and purpose
as we sing your prayer: