

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church—WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Palm Sunday, April 17, 2011 Philippians 2:5-11



Philippians 2:5-11 (New American Standard Bible)

⁵Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Attitude! Attitude is everything! Attitude is what's in your heart and in your mind. It happened again the other day. A mom was feeling a pain in her heart and mind that was so painful she thought she couldn't bear it. And so she drove her mini-van into the Hudson River. The ten year old son bails out. That's probably a 4th grader! He bails out as his mom goes speeding down a boat ramp and into the River – along with three little children – a 5 year old and a 2 year old boys and a little 11 month old girl. The 4th grader flags down a car for the 4 blocks ride to a fire station to get help – but it was too late! If you watch the news video they interview a Psychiatrist who says it's difficult being ten years old. She said it's going to be particularly difficult for this 10 year old survivor because they are old enough to know that death is *forever!* It's not! *Death is not forever!* Heaven or Hell is forever! Death is not the end. When we die we don't cease to exist. After you die – we will be safe by Jesus forever – because the Lamb of God – rode into Jerusalem to die on the cross to wash away all our sins. This Palm Sunday – we are talking about fruits of faith – about how our saving faith will show itself in our life when we:

Have Jesus' Attitude!

- 1. Jesus emptied Himself**
- 2. Jesus' Father exalted Him!**

Context! We have that already in our first reading this morning – the Old Testament Lesson that Pastor Gartner read – from the scroll of the prophet Zechariah. When you turned your bulletin over this morning and saw First Lesson: Zechariah – what came to mind? Maybe not too much. The more you read your Bible – the more familiar you will be with all the books of the Bible. If you get up just a little earlier on Thursday morning – and come to Perkins Family Restaurant – you can have a very tasty breakfast – and get a sneak preview of the Bible Readings for Sunday. The name Zechariah means: The LORD – the Great I AM – the Holy One of Israel remembers! That's law and gospel in the LORD remembers! I told the Heritage Homes Bible Class which meets on Tuesday mornings – at about 5 minutes after 10 – after about 10 minutes of hymn singing – that I remember when I was about 5 years old – I was bouncing a basket ball in the house! Everyone knows – don't bounce a basket ball in the house! I knew that. But I did and it bounced on top of the clothes washer and dryer and knocked over a big glass

vase full of pussy willows – and water. And the water and the broken glass were everywhere! And my Mom was pretty upset. And I still feel guilty. Some 54 years later I still feel guilty. And a little German Grandma blurted out – “You should!” But I *shouldn't*! Jesus washed that sin away along with all my other countless mistakes! We need to remember the painful sins and mistakes of the past have all been washed away by the innocent Lamb of God! Zechariah – the LORD remembers – was a prophet about the same time as Haggai! Haggai’s name means Festal – like Festival! He was probably born on one of the three great feasts – like the Feast of Unleavened Bread – or the Feast of Pentecost – Old Testament Thanksgiving – or the Feast of Tabernacles – the Feast of Tents – when you would camp out for a week – and remember the Exodus! During the Feast of Tents – you could pretend that Abraham or Isaac or Jacob was camping with you – having supper with you! What would you talk about with these heroes of faith? Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to rebuild the Temple! 538 years before the Christ child was to be born – Cyrus – King of Persia issued a decree that God’s people should return from exile to Jerusalem. Solomon’s Temple would be rebuilt. This was all part of God’s plan! People needed encouragement. God gave that encouragement through Haggai and through Zechariah. Zechariah’s prophecy is some 14 chapters long. It contains 8 night visions! That’s interesting. A vision is what? A vision is a dream – except you are awake! You would expect visions during the day and dreams during the night. Zechariah had 8 *night visions*! It was night time but he was awake when the LORD showed him things about the Kingdom of God! Zechariah saw a flying scroll – 30 feet long and fifteen feet wide – it’s huge – imagine it like a flag fluttering – with writing on both sides. Who is in trouble? People who are thieves – stealing – taking what isn’t theirs! And people who swear falsely! People who take an oath that they are telling the truth – when all they do is spread falsehoods! These two sins may have been very common. They represent all our sins. The thief and the liar will be banished – sent away – out of the country. And their houses will be destroyed – the timbers – the wood and the stone will be crushed by the LORD. His judgment will be swift and fierce. Zechariah saw the vision of a measuring basket. Inside the basket a nasty woman – wickedness is who she is. Two other women – with stork wings – put a lead lid on wickedness and fly her and the basket away. Again – a picture of judgment! Don’t ever fool yourself into thinking my sins aren’t serious business! They are!

⁵Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being a bond-servant – someone who belongs to someone else – no will but to do the will of the one who owns you. Not the kind of life most of us aspire to. Most of the time – we like to have things my way! We celebrated my Mom and Dad’s 60th wedding anniversary last Saturday night. It was very nice – at a very popular German restaurant in the original German Village – by brick streets and everything. We had bratwurst and sausage – very spicy German potato salad and sauerkraut and chicken. It was very nice – except – well, not to complain – but – I kind of expected strudel! You know – *crisp apple strudel*? Well we had a very nice cake with strawberries – very moist and sweet – it just wasn’t strudel! On the way home we were going to stop at Fazoli’s. I love Fazoli’s. I love to say Fazoli’s – baked spaghetti – in your own little metal dish – with baked cheese on the top and bread sticks! We looked. We didn’t see it. We couldn’t find it last time either – there’s Arby’s! Fine...I guess...except it isn’t Fazoli’s! I felt very badly for my self – until you stop and think about it! This is wrong – painfully sinfully wrong! When there are people everywhere who are literally malnourished – and I’m disappointed? How wrong is that? Shame on me! And shame on you – if you have felt sorry for yourself – in spite of

all of the blessings Jesus has showered down on you too! Consider all that Jesus went without—leaving the peace and wonder and joy of heaven to come to this sin encrusted and sin frustrated world—to rescue sinners like me and like you!

⁸**Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** Jesus died to pay for all my sins. Driving through Indiana—you see lots of signs beside the highway. There was a huge billboard that had the first 5 commandments! **You shall have no other gods. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God. Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy. Honor your Father and Mother. You shall not murder!** Big print—you had to read fast. About a quarter of a mile later the second 5 commandments—**you shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house or his wife or his servants—or anything that belongs to your neighbor!** Then you watch and you wait. Nothing! Not a picture of Jesus. Not a cross—not an empty tomb—no Gospel—just the law! That's just wrong. If all you have is the law—you either get very self-righteous people who think they are very well behaved. Or you get despair! I have failed again and again to keep the law. I deserve terrible punishment! Only the Gospel—the amazing grace of Christ Jesus—can take away all your sins by grace through faith!

⁹**For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,** ¹⁰**so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,** ¹¹**and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.** Driving down the highway we saw crosses beside the highway. At one place there were four white crosses—and one very small white cross. You can close your eyes and imagine what happened—can't you? A car speeding down the interstate—somewhere around 75 miles an hour—maybe even faster when something goes horribly wrong. Slam on the brakes. There are black skid marks and literal smoke from the tires. There is a horrible crash—the sound of metal crumpling and glass shattering. Suddenly it is completely quiet—then screams and shouting. Cell phones come out—and before you know it—you can hear the sound of sirens and you can see the flash of emergency lights—maybe even Flight for Life. But the sad fact is—many times it's too late. Four grownups and one little person must have perished here where the road is flat and straight. It doesn't make sense—but it's what happened. People are very breakable! Jesus himself died and rose from the dead. His Heavenly Father lifted him up—that we might have forever life. On Judgment Day—every knee will bow—every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord—to the glory of God our Father!

Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. It happened just the other day—a man was lying in the middle of the street—by Hollywood and Highland. The man was injured—even bleeding. People in fancy and very expensive cars drove around him. People on the sidewalk watched him—or hurried down the sidewalk—minding their own business. Some people ran across the street—like the Priest and the Levite in the Bible—quickly passing by—literally on the other side. Up pulls a very rich and famous Hollywood person—jumps out of his car—to help this injured person. He calls out for someone—anyone to call 911. He takes hold of the injured man—and pulls him from the middle of the street to the sidewalk. He helps him and stays with him—until the paramedics arrive! Would you? Would you stop and help a complete stranger—injured—bleeding? Would you? I dare say you don't have to find a bloody stranger to have someone you could help! Just look around! There are people who need our help. There are people—maybe members of our own family—relatives—coworkers—people we know that need someone to listen to them. Then tell them about God's Word and Jesus' forgiving love. To be prepared to share God's Word we

need to know as much as possible about what the Bible says. That means there is nothing more important than reading your Bible—reading *Meditations*—reading *Forward in Christ*—hearing sermons and Bible readings in Church—coming to Bible class to discuss and ask questions about God’s Word. There is nothing more important than our children and grandchildren learning about God’s Word! Let us come to Church and Lord’s Supper and Bible Study again and again—to be equipped to bear sweet fruits of faith to glorify Jesus. Then love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control will be everywhere. And everyone will know we are Jesus’ students, followers and imitators when we love one another. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz