

## **SERMON: “ThinkActBe: act like Jesus.”**

Rev. Geoff Ross: Sunday, May 6, 2018, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church

[Look up Matthew 15:10-23 – page #???.]

As I mentioned last week, life is a process of becoming – of growing/changing/transforming into who God made/means us to be: as Christians, we believe that we’re to become like Jesus. And this process of becoming takes time. God knows this – that’s why who we’re to become is imbedded/implanted/encoded in our creation; the purpose/plan/product of our lives is to be who we were made to be, to produce the “fruit” (as Paul describes it) we were meant to, to exhibit the evidence of our growth in/through our action/deeds. The goal/purpose/objective/inspiration of all of this becoming/growth is to become/grow into the likeness of God in the form of Jesus, the exemplifier of a life lived out by putting ones faith into action. But that’s not all.

This process of becoming never stops – it even goes beyond death. Friends, regardless of whether we’re young/old, we’re still becoming/all still have time to live up to God’s plan/purpose/dream for us. If last week we heard how we’re to ‘think like Jesus’ – to put the mind of Christ first, to see the world/others as God/Jesus sees it/them – as the start of our transformation; this week we shift to how we must respond by putting into action/practice what He preached by using the gifts given to us by God so that we might be His hands/feet/voice/body/Christ on earth – by being the Church!

[God’s plan for us to work in/through us – to be God’s 1<sup>st</sup> responders to the world.]

Being like Jesus starts with thinking like Jesus – but it must become a way of life: belief begins in your head but must live in your heart. Again God knew this because, like us, God also lives in His heart (Emmanuel/God-with-us/for-us: put His faith/belief/heart into action, modelling for us the process of becoming God wants for us) and God wants us to exercise ours: the more we use our heart, the more it becomes like God’s. Let’s take a quick at that passage – Matthew 15:10-23 – page #???.

Jesus is teaching about the outward signs that reveal one’s faith/what’s in our heart. First He speaks about how we’re to honour our elders/father/mother and not lie: *“people honour me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.”* In this passage Jesus teaches about the *“things that defile”* – and says that *“It’s not what goes into the mouth, but it’s what comes out.”* He then goes on to say that *“What comes out of your mouth comes from your heart – they/words make you unfit to worship God.”* And then He expands the list to include our thoughts and actions – murder/unfaithfulness/vulgar deeds/stealing – that all come out of our heart – are the outward manifestations of our beliefs – make us unclean/unfit to worship God.

[U2:Acrobat – *“And I must be an acrobat to talk like this and act like that.”* What contortions do you live with?]

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul, writing about service that is well-pleasing to God, lists a litany of outward acts – mutual love/hospitality to strangers/remembering

prisoners/being faithful – that reveal an inward faith, faith like those people of faith/“leaders” displayed by “*their way of life*”: “*Consider and imitate their faith,*” he exhorts those listening to his words/teaching. (Heb 13:1-8) Just as Jesus us the same yesterday/today/forever, he says, to become like Jesus we must act like Jesus. In this case imitation is more than flattery – it is the ‘practice’ that is needed to ‘put on’ our faith, to live out what we believe, to move what we think/believe from our head to our heart because what comes out of our heart should worship/give glory to God.

[HDR/BB – Practice/s makes perfect:learn by heart – do on the field. For Xtians: practice what you/we/Jesus preach! To “act like” Jesus/must DoWJDid/fiA!?!]

In our first reading, Paul clearly tells us that our faith is not to be an idle(not idol)/lax/lazy, ‘thinking’ faith; it must be one of full/complete/active service. Paul exhorts his listeners (then/them,now/us) to respond to God’s grace/plan/purpose for us with action. “*God has been kind/good to you/me/us;*” says Paul, let us respond to God’s kindness/goodness by doing all we can with what God has given to us where God has placed us! Doing this says Paul, is the “*most sensible way to serve God*” by offering ourselves to God as “*living sacrifices, pure and pleasing*” to God. This is our spiritual – and physical – worship! Friends, all that we say and do should be to God’s glory – our work and worship must be one! Jesus lived this out and calls us to do the same – to act like Jesus is to put your faith into action. The good news is that God has gifted us with diverse/complimentary gifts to use by serving/building up our neighbours/God’s kingdom: gifts for us for the sake of others.

As we continue our faith in ACT!ON series, let us think/act/be like Jesus, let us give glory to God by giving ourselves to His service “*in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you/me/we give thanks to God the Father because of him.*”

Amen.