

SERMON: “ThinkActBe: be like Jesus.”

Rev. Geoff Ross: Sunday, May 13, 2018, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church

[Being a mother/labour of love:birth/nurture – hope; it’s a challenging/rewarding task! As I get older/2 things. Younger/we’re someone’s/somebody’s child: parents ‘made’ us (nature/nurture.) - named us (HDR). Older/once a parent always a parent. Children define us/make us. Good/bad-Influence/rejection-admire/opposition. Once a parent...]

This is our third week of our ThinkActBe faith in ACT!ON series – (don't worry!) As the title suggests, to do this we first must *‘think like Jesus’* – to see the world/others as God/Jesus sees it/them – then we must *‘act like Jesus’* by putting into action/practice what He preached because it’s God’s plan to work in/through us so that we might be His hands/feet/voice/body on earth – the Church! [God’s 1st responders/training kick in.]

As we’ve heard over the past two weeks, life is a process of becoming – of growing/changing/transforming into who God made/means us to be: 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. From the moment of our conception, the purpose/plan/product of our lives is to be who we were made to be, to do (produce “fruit”/Paul) what we were meant to by/in/through our action/deeds. This process of becoming even goes beyond death. Regardless of whether we’re young/old, we still have time to live up to God’s plan/purpose/dream for us. And The goal/purpose/objective/inspiration of all of this becoming/growth? To become/grow into/be like Jesus. But how?

[Favourite Bible story: Simeon&Anna/Baby Jesus. God has a plan/we were created to live it out!]

As I mentioned with the children – God gave us bodies for a reason. Faith starts with our head, with our belief. For our belief to become a life-forming conviction it must move to our heart: we live out of our heart. But, to put our faith into action, we must use our hands – we must express our faith by physically becoming the hands – arms/legs/feet/body – of Christ to a world in need. Having said this, learning to use our hands/arms/legs/feet/body takes time and practice. Baby’s hands are tiny/perfect; what will these hands do? They first grab/grip/wrap around a finger out of reflex/instinct; this is the way God made them. Later, we hold hands in the parking lot out of practice knowing that by holding on they’re safe/protected/provided for. Those once chubby fingers become stronger – helping hands helping others, busy being of use/service, giving/receiving comfort. Then, one day, weathered/worn/scarred and wrinkled – experienced/older – our hands reveal how we’ve given of ourselves to others out of our love for and to the glory of the one who made us.

I was looking through some photo albums (Yes) and came across the pictures of Regan with Harrison on the day he was born: we both looked so young/tired/scared/hopeful! As a parent we have dreams/hopes/plans/wants for our children, we wonder/worry who/what they’ll be/become. So does God – for us. And our baptism is part of God’s plan. To ensure that we become who He longs for us to be, He gave us gifts so we could become like

Jesus. What are these gifts? We heard during the blessing at the end of the baptisms – did you catch them? They're the same gifts that made Jesus who He was. The gifts of love/joy/peace, patience/kindness/goodness, faithfulness/gentleness, and self-control (parents pray for that one!).

[Lunch: Gifts of HS are relational – given to us for the sake of others – they define us as Xtian/S&D to God's glory.]

This is what Jesus did – by using the same gifts, He gave Himself for others/us. To become like Jesus we must act like Jesus – it is the 'practice' that is needed to 'put on' our faith, to live out what we believe; by 'doing' we move what we think/believe from our head to our heart to our hands so that we can make a difference where God has placed us! Jesus calls us to love and serve God by loving and serving our neighbours by putting our faith into action. To do this we're to use God's gifts to give of ourselves just as He did – humbly (Phil 2), lovingly (1 John 4:10-12), and joyfully (John 15).

Amen.