

SERMON: “ThinkActBe: give like Jesus.”

Rev. Geoff Ross: Sunday, May 20, 2018, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church

This is our fourth week of our ThinkActBe faith in ACT!ON series – and over the past three weeks, as the title suggests, we’ve looked at how we are to first *‘think like Jesus’* – then we are to *‘act like Jesus’* so that we might *‘be like Jesus.’* Today – as we prepare for our faith in ACT!ON weekend next weekend – we’re looking at both why we’re to think/act/be like Jesus and what thinking/acting/being like Jesus moves us to do: When we put the theory into practice/training kicks in, we want to *‘give like Jesus.’*

[Kids: Boredom is a choice: so is joy. Choose to do something....]

We all are given exactly the same amount of time: the most precious gift we can either make use of or squander. There are 7 days in a week and 24 hours in each day: $7 \times 24 = 168$ hours every week. All for us to use! The question then becomes this: How do you use your time? As a people of faith – looking to the Bible – we are reminded that we live each hour by God’s grace alone; that our lives should be lived differently because of our salvation. The new life we have in/through Jesus should change our priorities: *“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”* (Col 3:17) Friends, our faith should inform/transform our calendar – not the other way around: to Think/Act/Be like Jesus – to become more like Jesus – we must give of ourselves and our time, not for us/our needs, but to fulfill God’s plan/purposes/will.

And this is what Jesus did. By coming to be-with us, by living as one of us, then by dying on the cross for us, He made His life/time – His sacrifice – all about us. Now, the proper response to Jesus’/God’s giving nature is to give of ourselves in return/in His name. To emphasize this point, Jesus’ teaching continually directs us toward using all we have to love Him and love others. The practices Jesus modeled and taught, such as worship/prayer/reading Scripture/serving the needs of others – the poor/lost/sick/giving away time/of ourselves to help others in need/prioritizing our lives according to God’s will/plan/purpose/agenda instead of ours, and even the act of total surrender, all aim to move our faith from our heads to our hearts, and then to our hands/feet/body. Giving is about putting one’s faith into action; giving is about giving of ourselves to/for the one who gave himself for us. (Gal 2:20) This is what it means for us to give like Jesus.

[kids growing up: BIG difference btwn “have to” & “get to” wait or go – boring/fun, bad/good, chores/ice cream.]

God’s grace – the gift of God’s love/of our salvation – should move us to feel privileged to respond by giving of ourselves; not required/obligated/compelled to give: *“God loves a cheerful giver.”* (2 Cor 9:7) To this end, just as we pray that God will help us to think/act/be more like Jesus, we ought to pray; *“Lord, how can I use/give of the gifts you’ve given me to give like Jesus.”* And by praying this we need to understand that we’re offering up/back to God everything/all of our resources. And why not? Everything you/I/we are/am and everything

you/I/we own came from/belongs to God – they’re gifts given to us but they’re not simply for us; God’s gifts are meant to be shared: gifts given to us for the sake of others.

This is what Pentecost is all about! As we heard in the introduction to the reading, God’s gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples not only emboldened them but also gave to them the tools/skills/gifts to change to world – tools/skills/gifts that we’ve also received. This is why Paul, in our reading, encourages the Christians of Corinth – and us – to use the gifts we’ve been given to show our love for God through our acts of love that we show toward our neighbours. And, Paul says, we can all give because Jesus “*gave up all his riches and became poor so that we could become rich.*”

[Not worthy/good enough/able to do/help/give/share: all have something to offer!]

Friends, as we celebrate the gift of Pentecost/Holy Spirit and prepare to share in Communion – the meal that symbolizes the extent of what it means to give like Jesus, let us also celebrate the wonder of God’s plan and purpose for us: that each of us has been given us gifts to share and give away to a world desperately in need of God’s grace/love/presence! God gave us gifts – they’re in us to give. Give like Jesus; freely/willingly/sacrificially – all to God’s glory. Amen.