

SERMON: “ThinkActBe: becoming like Jesus.”

Rev. Geoff Ross: Sunday, May 27, 2018, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Brampton

[Thank You! To those who signed up/came out/pitched in:put their faith into ACT!ON! A lot done/More to come!]

As Victoria said; this is the conclusion of our 2018 faith in ACT!ON preaching series over which we looked at how we are to first *‘think like Jesus’* – then to *‘act like Jesus’* so that we might *‘be like Jesus’* and want to *‘give like Jesus.’* The purpose of this series goes beyond this weekend/LOVEbrampton; becoming like Jesus is more than just a weekend thing, it’s meant to be our response to Jesus’/God’s giving nature: putting ones faith into action – giving of ourselves to/for the one who gave Himself for us – is a privilege, we ‘get to do it!’ And, this weekend you did. Thank you. God bless you!

Last week we celebrated Pentecost – the birthday of the Church –when God’s gift of the Holy Spirit transformed the frightened/fragmented band of disciples into the first Church [Acts 2 Church] that started Christianity by putting their faith into action. But it wasn’t just the disciples, it was everyone who followed Jesus – the many unnamed women/men who had witnessed/experienced Jesus’ teaching/healing/miracles/love – who received and used the gift of the Holy Spirit to become like Jesus – the Church – to a world in need of God’s teaching/healing/miracles/love.

Lost in the build up to Pentecost was the Ascension – the moment when, after His resurrection and proving to the disciples that He had defeated death, Jesus ascended/rose up into heaven – and His final instruction/commission to His disciples/followers: *“Go/make/Proclaim/Teach/Witness/Obey – in other words, Do what I have commanded you. Go/Do/Be like me!”* But that wasn’t all. This command/commission was the second half of God’s plan/purpose for the disciples/us/you/me: the reason He came to be-with us was so He could teach/prepare us to fulfill that plan/purpose.

[“Prepare” is a special word: John 14:Place prepared for us/Knows us by name/Heaven]

Not only was Jesus preparing a place for the disciples/us/you/me; He was also preparing them/us/you/me for/to get to that place. To do this Jesus, little by little, day by day, through His teaching/signs/wonders prepared His disciples to become who God longed for them to be: like Jesus. And He wants the same for us/you/me: to be transformed into His image/likeness, His Body/Church. This is why we do our faith in ACT!ON campaigns around Pentecost: the gift of the Holy Spirit was the last piece of Jesus’ training/preparation for us. When we think/act/be/give like Jesus did every day of His life – submitting His life to God’s plan/purpose/will, relying on the Holy Spirit to do all things – we become like Jesus. This is Jesus’ desire for us, and He’s inviting us/you/me to share in it.

[God’s gifts: meant to be shared; they’re gifts given to us for the sake of others.]

For Jesus’s disciples/followers, with their training/preparation – practice over, Jesus’ gift of the Holy Spirit emboldened them to Think/Act/Be/Give like Him and to take up the cause of building up the kingdom of God: and they did this by choosing to become like

Jesus, not for themselves but for their neighbours. Our Acts 2 reading – an account of what can happen to a community of faith when it surrenders itself to the power of the Holy Spirit – and the reading from Romans that outline the ‘*rules for Christian living*’, reveal what becoming like Jesus – as individuals and collectively – looks/acts/sounds like: a living/vital/active ambassador/envoy/spokesperson for God’s saving plan on earth. Becoming like Jesus means that you/me/we choose to become a living sacrifice – like Jesus – to save the world.

[Meatloaf: “*do anything for love – but won’t do that*” Jesus: “*Do this for love*” but do we?/What won’t you do? Faith is an action! What will you do?]

As we wrap up of ThinkActBe series, I want you to imagine what you/St. Andrew's/Brampton would be like if you would do anything for love. What would your relationships/family/life/eternity be like chose to become like Jesus and you gave of yourself, freely/willingly/sacrificially – all for love? What would this Church be like if we all chose to BE the Church – and not just by going to Church – by putting into practice what it means to become like Jesus not for ourselves but for our neighbours? What would Brampton be like if we were Christ to it so that, in all that we say and do, we would reveal God’s glory? Fulfill God’s plan/purpose/desire for you: put your faith into action by choosing to think/act/be/give/become like Jesus. Amen.