

Patterns of Grace and Gratitude Week 3

Monday, April 26



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Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Philippians 2:1-8

How do we emulate God's grace? We can never attain it. But the writer of Philippians asks us to be "like-minded" with Christ...having the same love, being one in spirit and one mind. Impossible? Maybe a stretch...but a worthy aspiration and an important step of faith. And we are not leaping into the darkness, but following a model we have seen and know: Jesus the Christ.

This is the pattern we are to follow; a pattern of humility and selflessness. John Wesley, founder of Methodism, encouraged us to be "perfected in love". This passage from Philippians describes the pattern for this. We cannot hope to be perfected in love if we do not let go of some of our ego and our certainty about everything. Christ who is part of the trinity, poured himself into being a human servant. He demonstrated this over and over again, eating with tax collectors, touching lepers, washing dirty feet and ultimately, dying a criminal's death on the torturous cross.

The butterfly is another example of this, you know that the butterfly starts out as a lowly caterpillar and transforms into the beautiful creature we see fluttering from flower to flower. So, there is work ahead for us. But we are on a journey of faith, and God is with us. We can do it. With God's help, let's go!