

# Am I Kingdom Bound – Now?

Scripture: Philippians 2: 1-13

Date: March 29, 2020

## **LOOKING FOR JESUS**

### IN A HOPELESS WORLD

We are walking through some very uncertain and turbulent times as Covid 19 has been creating much pain and suffering as we cope with the Covid 19 flu itself, as we cope with fear of the future even as we cope with loss of jobs and our identity.

### HEIDELBERG CATECHISM WORLD

But these issues aren't new to society or to the culture in which we live because as a congregation we've been on a journey through a question - a pertinent question for us right now - what is your only comfort – in this world and for the world yet to come. The question has led us to recognize that there has been pain and suffering – long before an unknown virus came upon us.

### ATTITUDE OF RUDE

This condition of brokenness and suffering has become a part of the attitude of our culture. It's more than a few actions – it's an attitude. Attitude is a perspective of how we see life, attitude is a way of living out our lives. In short – an attitude is a mindset that affects behaviour.

An attitude / mindset – in this broken sin filled pain riddled world that is pervasive to all we are and all we do, it is toxic and poisonous to all that we would hope to be and do. An attitude / mindset that is separated from God, that is imprisoning us away from God, that destroys our trust & dependence on God and that is eroding our hope for any future with God.

### IN A HOPEFUL WORLD

Yet the question from the Heidelberg Catechism has been leading us into a journey of looking. Mirroring the one that the catechism asks by looking at the issues we face - what is our comfort in troubling times? Lent is a time of journeying - with God and with ourselves in order to get a better clarity of who God is and who we are called to be and what we are called to do in response.

The journey recognizes a deep down fostered hope that this isn't the end and that this isn't the way it was made to be. We find ourselves in Lent and throughout the year looking for answers. As Christians we seek Jesus even in this darkened world and even in this darkened time within this world as our hope is that this attitude that we find ourselves with is not the only attitude that we can have

## LOOKING AT JESUS

### GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

The Heidelberg Catechism – a teaching tool of the Christian Reformed Church - challenges us to look at the issues in our world as well as the responses by God. As we've looked at earlier in our Lenten journey, we've seen that there is a gospel of good news from God for us. God – through the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ offers us:

- forgiveness from our sins
- freedom to live fully and abundantly – in Him and for Him.
- trust of His provision and protection
- assurance - through the Holy Spirit – of a hope that there is a better world yet to come and that we will enjoy it – and Him – forever and ever.

Paul in his writing to the church at Philippi also encourages the people to look to Jesus. In the text today in verses 6-11 we see Paul point to Jesus Christ. The author and perfecter of their faith – in all of His glory. Paul gives God thanksgiving and praise because He recognizes that he didn't deserve any of this. Yet through God's gift of grace – he did. So Paul affirms his gratitude for who God is and what God has done in and through His son – our Saviour and Lord – Jesus Christ

### GRATITUDE TO JESUS CHRIST

Paul reminds the church in Philippi of the blessings and the power of this personal covenantal relationship with God through Jesus. He's reminding them that there is a new attitude – of gratitude – within them. Even if they can't always see it – feel it or believe in it.

He challenges them that if there has been ANY amount of unity with Christ – any morsel / molecule of being united in Christ then they need to affirm it. Any comfort, any encouragement, any tenderness, any compassion or any sharing of the Spirit. Then they are to remember their (our) unity with Christ.

## LOOKING LIKE JESUS

### ATTITUDE OF SERVITUDE

The Heidelberg Catechism is filled with many great truths of comfort – being forgiven, being freed, being provided for (here on this world and in the world to come) but it also empowers us to live fully and abundantly as God's children, as God's church.

The catechism concludes with the phrase – that in gratitude we become *wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him*. To serve God whole heartedly wherever, whenever and however. To love our neighbour as ourselves. To serve their needs.

An attitude of gratitude is a phrase used to challenge Christians to live triumphantly in this world. A mindset that transitions our behaviour away from ourselves and towards others. Jesus served others – so should we. We should live for Jesus.

Serving the world for Jesus is cool but the reality is that we should be living an attitude of servitude. We see that an attitude of gratitude is cool but we also see that an attitude of servitude is cruel. We know that servitude is slavery where one person is at the complete control of another. We know that racial slavery, sexual slavery any form of human slavery – where one human is in control of another – is wrong.

But the reality is – in this world – we're not meant to be in control of others. Paul spoke of having the mindset of Christ (vs. 5) so that we could be a servant of each other. Our gratitude isn't just actions but rather it's our attitude of being a child of Christ, a follower of Christ and living our lives in obedience to him.

Later in the passage (Philippians 2: 12-13) Paul challenges the church to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Not a works based effort but a works fruit effort. So that they would look like Jesus not just live for Jesus. As such they would shine like stars in the sky holding out truth for all who would see and hear.

Paul in writing to the church in Rome (Romans 12: 2) calls upon them to have a renewed mind / attitude – one that tests and approves God's perfect and pleasing will

This is a cultural shift - from selfish to selfless, from us to others. A shift that challenges us to look up – as we look around. A shift that challenges us to seek God's kingdom first – and then all else will be added to us

Serving isn't about doing what we want. Serving isn't even about doing what others need. Rather serving is about doing what Jesus calls us to do. If we remember that the attitude of gratitude is focused on Jesus – then the actions of gratitude are more than just actions. An attitude of servitude takes that gratitude and turns it into action. They become a new mindset, a way of life, a perspective.

#### ACTION OF SERVITUDE

Paul in writing to the church in Rome (Romans 12: 1) speaks of how that renewed mind and attitude would flow in and out of being a living sacrifice as their act of worship to God. In the letter to the church at Philippi Paul's challenge of humility is to look out for the interests of others – with an attitude of gratitude (vs. 14)

Jesus in teaching on the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 speaks of God's will being done – on earth as it is in heaven. An understanding that our gratitude is not a response dictated on our terms but on a calling to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our service of His kingdom.

**APPLICATION / CONCLUSION****KINGDOM BOUND**

Over the course of Lent, we've discovered God's kingdom found in forgiveness from our past and freedom in our present and future. We've found trust and assurance from God for our present and for our future. The catechism continues that the God's will for us would be God's will through us. As we are bound to inherit eternal life in the world yet to come – we are bound into helping building God's kingdom here and now.

**GRATITUDE & SERVITUDE****AWARENESS**

This calling into the world comes from Jesus who walked this world as one of us. Our efforts to help build God's kingdom need to firstly be founded on an awareness of who God is and what God has done for His kingdom. God's great grace has shown us Jesus Christ in how to live the law of life fully and obediently – in love. God's great grace has delivered Jesus's death for the penalty of our sins. God's great grace has triumphed over sin, evil and death itself. All of this for our redemption and restoration. It calls for our awareness and acceptance of these truths in our lives.

**ALIGNMENT**

Our awareness of these truths calls for a rearrangement of our attitude. Our mindset adjusted from the old selfish way to the new selfless way. The way modelled by Jesus Christ. The way meant for us as well. The mindset of Jesus Christ is our goal – our aim. The gratitude which we understand for all God has done for us – in us – needs to shape our attitude and ultimately our behaviour.

**ACTION**

The mindset of Christ calls and compels the church – the body of Christ – into service for Him. We serve Christ and Christ's kingdom needs. Thus we are kingdom bound for the future but living in the present

This gratitude leads to a servitude of God and for God.  
In this world and in the world yet to come.

AMEN and AMEN