

Sermon Title: One Love

Text: Exodus 17:1-7; Philippians 2:1-13

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Place: Kingston Springs United Methodist Church

Season: 15th Sunday after Pentecost; Proper 21; Ordinary 26

Main Point: When we open our hearts to living love in compassion and sympathy with each other, God (who is among us) gives us the same mind that was in Jesus.

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Paul's words to the Christians at Philippi reminded him of an early Christian hymn that describes the very nature of Jesus. But they reminded me of a very different anthem: [play opening lines of Bob Marley and the Wailers *One Love*.]

♪ *One Love, One Heart*

♪ *Let's get together and feel all right*

♪ *Hear the children crying (One Love)*

♪ *Hear the children crying (One Heart)*

♪ *Sayin' give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right*

♪ *Sayin' let's get together and feel all right*

This song is somewhat of an anthem for people across the Caribbean region - people who are descended from slave populations. It is the theme song for a liberation movement that spawned followers in the Rastafarian way of life - a peaceful, laid-back way of life trusting that God will provide. It has also set many party people dancing. [Disclaimer: my endorsement of Marley and reggae does not suggest that you quit your jobs and smoke illegal weed.]

Marley's song calls the people to unity: "One Love, One Heart, Let's get together and feel all right." It is that same 'One Love' that Paul is asking the Philippians to have among themselves in the face of terrible adversity.

Theologians have tried to use the hymn that Paul quotes to prove the nature of the divinity Jesus as Christ. But many current scholars would contend that Paul included the hymn lyrics to remind the people of the Christ that we should have the same mind with - the same love that we should live as Christians.



In keeping with that thought, I don't want to over-theologize the message this morning. The Christian life is difficult enough to live because it calls us to run counter to our culture. It calls us to give up our own ambitions and take on those of a savior who lived

long ago. For the Philippians, this means holding on to a faith that causes the Jewish people to ridicule them and the Roman government to persecute them to imprisonment and death.

I feel that Paul is reminding the Philippians and us as we read these words that our unity as Christian people comes from constantly seeking to be of the same mind as Jesus. Marley's song may actually capture Paul's meaning better than the English translation. The word Paul uses to call us to be of the same mind has a sense of being of one soul - our very essence, the source of our passions and desires should be identified with Christ. One love, One heart, lets get together and feel alright.

Paul focuses on humility and compassion for others as the fruit of having one love, one heart.



I think that we cannot will ourselves to have one love, one heart with Jesus Christ. As much as we may want it, we are not able to overcome our own interests in favor of the interests of others. I fully agree with the founder of the methodist movement when he preaches that God, and only God, working within us brings us to the perfection that is Christ.

Someone once advised Mr Wesley, in a moment of his doubt, that he should preach faith until he had faith, then because he had it, he would preach faith. Confusing? Yes. But Paul may be giving us a way to seek the one love, one heart of Christ.

So we first step to having the same soul as Jesus is to act like we have it. Seek to look to the interests of others, not your own. Seek humility by considering the possibility that others may be better than yourself at some things. Even Christ took on the image of the most humble of human beings. As we act like we have the soul of Jesus, God will make it so.

This is a passage to bookmark - Philippians 2:1-13. This is a passage to pull out when you start feeling the stresses related to your ambitions. In these hard times, we find that others are in heavy competition for the same jobs we want, for the very money in our pockets. This is a passage to pull out when the storms of life are rushing up at us. Seek the same soul as Jesus Christ - One Love, One Heart, Let's get together and feel alright. Amen.