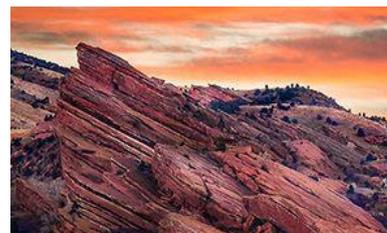




Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

September 15, 2021

DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus...”

(Philippians 2:5)

Did You Know?

- The early church was unanimous in its testimony that **Philippians** was written by the apostle Paul. The many personal references of the author fit what we know of Paul from other New Testament books.
- It is evident that Paul wrote the letter from prison (see 1:13-14). Scholars debate about which imprisonment it might had been. According to the NIV Study Bible, the best evidence favors Rome as the place of origin and the date as 61 AD.
- Paul's primary purpose in writing this letter was to thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him upon learning of his detention in Rome. However, he makes us of this occasion to fulfill several other desires:
 1. To report on his own situation;
 2. To encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and to rejoice – regardless of circumstances;
 3. To exhort them to humility and unity;
 4. To comment Timothy and Epaphroditus to the Philippian church;
 5. To warn them against the Judaizers (legalists) and antinomians (libertines) among them.

(The NIV Study Bible; Philippians)

Personal Insight

I am glad that there are quite a few musicians among us; and besides them most of us appreciate music in its complex, inspiring and uplifting nature. If you had ever been a part of a choir or a band, you may remember the joint effort to bring the beautiful harmony to the audience! I can also recall that especially in a choir, you should blend in instead of standing out for the sake of the perfect melody. This takes humility and a willingness to work together with others.

Apostle Paul says that in a community of faith our aim is also working together for **“having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.”** (Philippians 2:2) In this case the driving factor is not the love of music, but the love of Christ. When we all experience what it means to be so loved by God that **“he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”** (John 3:16) we may be moved to accept our differences and **“in humility value others above yourselves”** (Philippians 2:3). This attitude doesn't take away our own value, but enables us to be united for the sake of the beautiful harmony of God's love.

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Like a Symphony

Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Philippians 2:2

READ [Philippians 2:1 – 11](#)

I surprised my wife with concert tickets to listen to a performer she'd always wanted to see. The gifted singer was accompanied by the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, and the setting was the matchless venue at Red Rocks—an open-air amphitheater built between two 300-foot rock formations at more than 6,000 feet above sea level. The orchestra played a number of well-loved classical songs and folk tunes. Their final number was a fresh treatment of the classic hymn "Amazing Grace." The beautiful, harmonized arrangement took our breath away!

There's something beautiful about harmony—individual instruments playing together in a way that creates a bigger and more layered sonic landscape. The apostle Paul pointed to the beauty of harmony when he told the Philippians to be "like-minded," have "the same love," and be "one in spirit and . . . mind" (Philippians 2:2). He wasn't asking them to become identical but to embrace the humble attitude and self-giving love of Jesus. The gospel, as Paul well knew and taught, doesn't erase our distinctions, but it can eliminate our divisions.

It's also interesting that many scholars believe Paul's words here (vv. 6–11) are a prelude to an early hymn. Here's the point: When we allow the Holy Spirit to work through our distinct lives and contexts, making us more like Jesus, together we become a symphony that reverberates with a humble Christlike love. – By **Glenn Packiam**

REFLECT & PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for saving me. May Your Spirit transform me into Your image. In my attitude and actions, help me to take on Your humility and sacrificial love. May it result in a greater unity with other believers in my life. Amen.

Who could use some encouragement from you today? How could you put the interests of others above your own, just as Jesus did for us?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

When Paul asked readers in Philippi to consider the humility of Jesus (Philippians 2:5–8), he used a word that describes the attitude of those willing to be counted among servants. More importantly, he wanted them to remember that those who live in the spirit of Jesus do so in the awareness that He first humbled Himself for us. It wasn't a new thought. Long before, the prophet Isaiah had described a mysterious "Servant" as being despised, rejected, and familiar with pain and suffering. Before alluding to this person's true honor and glory, the prophet went on to anticipate that He'd be held in such low esteem that people would find it hard to even look at Him (Isaiah 53:3). So too now, those who lower themselves for the good of others in the spirit of Jesus express the humility of our Savior who is "in very nature God" (Philippians 2:6). – By **Mart DeHaan**

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