

Thursday, July 2, 2020

Dear Members, Friends, and Guests of Desert Hills Lutheran Church,

First things first, I fixed the clothes dryer. I felt like going out and doing a dance in the street even though all I did was put the new control board in. I'm pretty sure that a monkey could have done it, but I don't have a long line of fixing successes, so I'm high-fiving myself.

Next, I'm loving the clouds and possible rain. Rain in the desert is almost always good as long as not too much falls at one time.

Today I am recording a 4th of July sermon. I even found a patriotic tie. I'm hoping it will be a quiet 4th for all of us, though I'm not holding much confidence in that. If one hates the country and wishes for it not to be reformed but instead transformed or even destroyed, then one's hatred could reach epic limits on the birthday of this nation. I'll be writing to you again on Saturday so I pray it will be quiet in the country.

The continuation of Philippians: in Chapter 2: 5-11 there is a most amazing poem. Biblical scholars are not sure if Paul wrote it or if he heard or read it and included it in his letter to the little church in Philippi. It is amazing. Verse 5 is an introduction: "*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.*" Paul wants all Christians to have the mind of Jesus. Is that possible? Paul seems to think that it is. In verse 6: "*who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited.*" Paul believed that right from the start Jesus was equal to God but never exploited it. He had the power but didn't use it. How different Jesus is from those in our world who have power and exploit others with it. Jesus takes on the persona of the suffering servant in Isaiah 40-55. In verse 7: "*but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,* Jesus took the form of a servant. In His life Jesus repeatedly said, "I did not come to be served but to serve others." This is the new human being that Jesus introduced to the world in his life, death, and resurrection. Then comes the centerpiece of the poem, verse 8: "*He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.*" God in Jesus willingly gave his life to take on sin so that we could be set free.

How can this make a difference on this Thursday? Jesus showed us the pattern of living as Messiah, as King Jesus and he invites us to believe in Him and then live like Him, as servants to others. Not a bad assignment for the day. Live like our King.

Blessings,

Pastor Martin