



# *The Westminster Pulpit*

Sermons Preached at Westminster Presbyterian Church  
3900 West End Avenue Nashville, Tennessee 37205-1899

## ***“Mind your own business?”*** **Sermon on Philippians 2:1-13**

Donovan A. Drake

October 1, 2023

You have heard it said, “Mind your own business.” I have heard it said, during my time as a pastor, “You must run the church like a business.”

I understand that there is church business. We pay our bills.

At this very moment, there’s an electric bill being generated by the lights, the pump that moves the water to the chiller, the air handler, the blower downstairs that pumps the air through the organ, watts, and kilowatts.

And, on the 28th of October, we’ll pay a \$12,000 electric bill.

The church must pay the electric bill. It’s just business.

I looked at the utility numbers, and I noticed that the pledge Beth and I made, even with an eight per cent increase, just might cover next February’s gas bill. But, can I say, “Yuck!” I don’t want to think of my pledge as paying a gas bill. Not when I’m giving money to a church.

So, it is easier for me to think we’re not here to pay the bills, but that we’re here to pay honor and glory to the God who powers this day, and that my pledge and your pledge give testimony to the light of the Good News that loves, heals, transforms, and saves the world.

That’s the business that Paul has in mind for the church.

### *Philippians 2:1-15*

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than

yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world.

If there's a business of the church that we must mind, it is that we must be of the same mind as Christ Jesus. Think about that as part of your pledge season, a pledge season that Paul wants to last your whole life. I want you to pledge to be of the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.

How can you do that? One of the struggles we have in life is trying to figure out what anyone else is thinking.

A woman at a gas station asked for my help, and I had to tell her - a woman with a lit cigarette in one hand, the same hand she was using to fill up her gas tank – to put out the cigarette and I would help her. In the back of my mind, I was thinking, "What are you thinking?"

You could do a whole dissertation on "what are people thinking" just by heading downtown, right? Look at the people. High heels on an electric scooter. "What are you thinking?" No helmet. "What are you thinking?"

Go the airport and head into one of the new restrooms. There's a long sink, and sections of the sink have three faucets. One stem emits bubbly soap, one stem water, and one stem is a jet air hand blower that looks ever so much like my kitchen faucet at home. On my first visit there, I found a handful of bubbly soap and cupped my hands under the stem that looked so much like my kitchen faucet at home. The air jet kicked in and life in the bathroom became a living snow globe. Bubbles everywhere. On my clothes, my glasses, the mirror, the guy standing next to me. He said in some colorful words, but I'll translate them into church talk, "What are you thinking?"

It is our quest to try to figure out what the other is thinking. We are great mysteries. And while sometimes we slap our foreheads in disbelief wondering what on earth someone was thinking, other times, we try to hold our heart together trying to figure out what we do not know.

When a friend is suffering, you offer "Do you need a meal?" "Do you need a ride to the doctor?" "Do you need me to say different words?" Are you helping or hurting? It's really none of your business to get into their business... so why is it that your heart is breaking?

We have such a hard time knowing what others are thinking. We hardly know ourselves. There are times when you can come to church hauling some burden or replaying some act of pure stupidity. And as part of the confession to God you take the insanity defense. "Lord, I don't know what I was thinking."

"Maybe I was tired. I don't know what I was thinking."

"Maybe it all seems so out of control, and I'm scared. I don't know what I was thinking."

"Maybe in order to feel better about myself, I'm trying to tear everyone else down. I don't know what I was thinking."

"Maybe I was trying to look strong and I'm a wreck. I don't know what I was thinking."

"Maybe I'm spiritually bankrupt, without a compass. Lost. I don't know what I am thinking."

We can't even mind our own business, let alone the business of others.

And oddly, Paul says that the remedy is "Be of the same mind that was in Christ Jesus."

It isn't YOU BE of the same mind as Christ Jesus. It's not a singular effort. Not one of us has the mind of God.

You see the business we're in here, it's God's business. And God's business is big business. We are to live God-sized dreams. It takes all of us. Paul writes to us in the Southern vernacular. "YOU ALL be of the same mind as Christ Jesus."

You do know that Jesus Christ - Jesus the Savior - wouldn't be Jesus the Savior without YOU ALL. Does that make sense? How can you be a Savior without having a YOU ALL? Do you ever think about that? Who are you going to save?

The definition of Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, the savior, depends on having us. Being in communion. Jesus has us in mind, you all! And it's a big you all!

"Go ye into every nation..." let's make this a big, you all.

"God so loved the world..." the whole wide world, you all.

"What can separate us from the love of God? Nothing!" It is for all, you all. We're in this together, you all!

So, the first step into the mind of Christ is that we need to be in the YOU ALL business.

So, if you're freezing someone out, ghosting someone, taking your toys and going home, if you're into winning the argument and being right all the time, if you're whining and grumbling, stop it! You all be of the same mind that was In Christ Jesus.

"Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not see equality with God as something to be exploited." Jesus could have stayed in heaven. But he humbled himself for you all. But what's heaven without you all?

Pretty nice, actually. I happen to know. I was fly fishing up in British Columbia. Gorgeous clear waters, that flowed over beautiful rocks, blue sky, and rim rock mountains. It's heaven, and I can't think of anybody better to be with, just me... But then after a while, you catch a big fish. You know what the problem is when you catch a big fish when you're the only one in heaven? You want to tell someone. You want to be with someone. You want to share the meal with someone. It's just like hitting a hole-in-one in golf. You feel pretty good for about two seconds, then you look around to see if anyone noticed what you just did. It's when you have a grandchild, and you want to show everyone that picture on your phone, you all! "This is my newest grandbaby!" It's a big YOU ALL thing!

There's no one to tell.

"I don't feel well." You cry out because you need someone, you need a savior, you all.

The mind of Christ says, "I need you all to get into my business. That's the prayer of Christ, and so we have a prayer.

"Lord, heal me... Lord have mercy on me... I don't know what I was thinking. Heal me so that I may be a healer, so that I may show mercy as you have shown mercy. So that I might live the God-sized dream and be about bigger things." Salvation. It's hard.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to do the will and work for his good pleasure."

"Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world."

It's the business of the church, you all. That's your business, now mind it. You all.