

## The Orchestra of the Church Philippians 2:1-11

In California, a pastor was driving near his church one day when he came up behind a very expensive sport car with a strange bumper sticker. He read "I Am A Generic Christian." He was so curious about that bumper sticker that he followed and pulled into the car and asked him about the meaning of his bumper stick. "What is a Generic Christian?" The man replied, "Well, I want to go to heaven, so of course I want to be Christian, but I don't want to get involved in any congregation or any denomination or any specific church or group or label. I just call myself a 'Generic Christian.' The guy wants to go to heaven by walk and by him-self without any help of transportation which is community.

Last Sunday I talked about church as car which is needed for travelers. The church is also a community of faith. This morning, I'm going to talk about church again in another perspective. One of my dreams of this church is to have an orchestra in Faith United Methodist Church. I see church as an orchestra. Orchestra is not sound of single instrument. It is the total sound of harmony of various instruments. Orchestra produces a magnificent powerful music. Its basic theory of orchestra music is the harmony. Without harmony we can not think about the great music.

Today's scripture reading Philippians 2 is a part of Paul's letter to the Christians of the Philippians church. And he recommends them be harmonious. "If you have any encouragement, any comfort, any fellowship, any tenderness, and any compassion in church life then be like-minded people, having same love and one in spirit and one in purpose. That is what I wanted." Paul said. He wanted the Philippians church to be imitated Christ.

The basic theory of harmony is not a quality of single sound of instrument but the tuning in instruments on the absolute sound and play in various sounds cording to the music. Any of noted orchestra can not perform music without tuning in the beginning. Before a concert start, the first violinist comes out and stands in front of the orchestra members and makes sound his or her violin and then all instruments tune and fix their sound on the violin. After that the director of orchestra comes out and directs the music.

As the same way Paul directs us that all Christians should tune his or her heart and mind in Christ's heart and mind. We heard two stories in scripture readings; Gideon's story in Judges and Jesus' story in Matthew. Two stories told us in common that the great figures in Bible tuned their hearts on God's will before doing something great.

Gideon recruited thirty two thousands soldiers among Israelites to fight against Midian military. In compared with the Midian military allied with the Amalekites, thirty two thousands are much smaller in numbers. However, Gideon was ready to battle to Midian army with thirty two thousand soldiers. But the Lord said to Gideon, you have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. So Gideon cut down number twenty two thousand men, remaining ten thousand men.

But the Lord said to Gideon again, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and will sift them for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go, but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.” Thus, Gideon selects three hundred men among ten thousand men. Three hundred are who fit to God’s will. With these three hundred men Gideon defeated the Midianites and conquered their land. The power is not the numbers but the fitted to God. This is the point of this story.

The other story in Matthew 14: 22-33 is the story of Jesus who saved Peter and other disciples who are the troubles on the water. Jesus let his disciples go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land. And the disciples were on the boat in deep water buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. They were in big trouble on the water. But, when Jesus gets into the boat, the wind died down.

This story tells us that Jesus went up on a mountainside by himself to pray alone after he had dismissed crowd. He needed to pray to find God’s will. Jesus’ power and mighty was that came from God. On the same way, on any occasions, cling to Jesus is the way of saving life. Cling to Jesus is tuning to Him. Without Jesus, anything is not meaningful in church life. Our life is in tuning in Jesus.

For the tuning to the will of God, first of all we need to find out who are. First of all, to know who we are is to find our identity. To know who I am is to know whose I am. I was put on earth not by accident but for a purpose. I’m deeply loved by God. I am accepted by him. He has a plan for my life, and because he puts me here, I’m significant. And because he put you here, you are significant.

Secondly, you should know whom you’re trying to please. You can’t please everybody, because by the time one group becomes pleased with you, another group gets upset with you. Even God doesn’t please everybody, so it’s foolish to try to do something that even God doesn’t do!

Jesus knew whom he was trying to please; it was a settled issue with him: “I’m going to please God the Father.” And the Father relied, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well please.”(Matt.3:17)

When you don’t know whom you’re trying to please, you cave in to three things: criticism (because you are concerned about what others will think of you), competition (because you worry about whether somebody else is getting ahead of you), and conflict (because you’re threatened when anyone disagrees with you).

If I seek first the kingdom of God and his righteous,” then all the other necessary things of life will be added unto me (Matt. 6:33). This means that if I focus on pleasing God, it will simplify my life. I will always be doing the right thing – the thing that pleases God –regardless of what anybody else thinks.

I'm enjoying watching Olympic game in Beijing. The opposite side of this global, in China, the Olympic game is holding now. We didn't know about China, except Chinese food until the Olympic game is holding. The China has about five thousands year old history. Their language, culture, custom, medicine, and systems are quite different from us.

But we should know that somewhere, we do not know, on the globe there are many people who put their efforts on developing technology and changing life. When we go the Wall Mart we realize that all the goods in the stores are made in foreign country. The all goods that made in foreign countries are good in quality that we can not make with cheap labor in United States.

We should realize that there is diversity in our society. In the Bible, Romans 12:3-8, "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each members belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. Somehow, we are all connected. Even if, there are differences in religion, race, class, gender and culture and languages we are all connected. The unity in diversity is the harmony and power.

I dream that Faith United Methodist Church plays real orchestra music of peace and justice and gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. This is the church's performing music.

I don't know what your problems are, but I do know this: You can bring them to God and put your confidence in him, and he will help you. I don't know what your worries are, but I do know this: You can bring them to God and place your confidence in him, and he will help you. I don't know what your sins are, but I do know this; you can bring them to God and trust him, and he will help you. I don't know what your opinions are, but I do know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. You see, we can have confidence in the map, Bible, we can have confidence in the car, church, and most of all, we can have confidence in God's guidance.

After step out presidency, Bill Clinton and his wife Hilary were out driving in the country one day. He noticed that they were low on gas, so he pulled off at the first exit and came to a seedy, dilapidated little gas station with one pump. There was only one attendant working the place, so the former president of United State pumped his own gas. But as he did so, he noticed that his wife Hillary was carrying on an animated, friendly conversation with the gas station man. When the two conversants saw Bill looking at them, the gas station attendant walked away seemingly embarrassed.

Bill paid the man, and he and his wife drove away. As they moved out down the road, Bill asked Hillary if she knew the gas station man. She said, "Know him? Indeed I do. We were very close in high school. We dated seriously and even talked of marriage."

Well, Bill could not help himself. He swelled up with pride, and he just had to brag a bit. "Boy, were you lucky I came along, because if you had married him you would be the wife of a man who pumps gas in an old dilapidated service station instead of the wife of the president of United State.

To this Hillary replied, “My dear, f I had married him, he would be the president of United State, and you would be pumping gas!” This story is not real one of course. I made this story for fun.

But it carries with it serious point, namely that we are what we are because of our relationships with Christ our Lord. We are not boasting ourselves but boasting Jesus Christ our Savior. We are called to play the music of the gospel of Jesus, not of ourselves.