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In a discussion with our Parish Nurse, Chris Erickson this past week, she said that adults can only focus for seven minutes at a time. That raises some questions. In a telephone conversation with my sister about our focus lasting just 7 minutes, she asked me, “Then why does a sermon last 20 minutes?” I don’t know!

Two weeks ago I went on a trip to California, staying at my sister’s house. I went to see family: my son Andrew and his girlfriend Justyne, Grandson Milo, my Father, sister, brother, nephews and niece. Of course the highlight was seeing my grandson, a little being. Next month Milo will celebrate his first birthday. His mother has come up with a birthday theme – Milo for President! Isn’t that cute? Well, it seems perfectly normal to me since Milo sounds like a politician already – we can’t understand anything he says – he’s easily distracted by any noise in the room – and he whines and cries for things he wants. Milo for President!

But he’s just this little child, this little being, learning about himself and those around him. There was something in him I saw which really touched my heart. He was playing with his two cousins, both girls, one age 4 the other just shy of 2 years. When they get together, the girls smother little Milo with their attention.

They hand him one toy after another. They touch him and hold him and then they start kissing him. I was quite surprised to see this innocent intimacy. It appeared to overwhelm this little being of a baby.

Obviously, all three children have been well-loved by their parents and they know hugging and kissing. Just when I thought he had had enough, Milo began to lean into his cousins, quite on his own initiative. It was cute, sweet and loving, and well, I was so proud. I said, “Now, that’s a Phillips’ for sure! He could be President!

But where did that innocent display of love come from? What makes you and me and little Milo tick? What is our being; our nature; our personality? Being is the concrete existence of self. But, I also believe that our being is only in relationship to others and to God: All of us are sons or daughters and that’s the beginning of our relatedness with others. We are also children of God.

Rene Descartes, known as the father of modern western philosophy wrote, “I think, therefore I am.” We think, we are! Who and what we are has much to do with our thoughts. And we think a lot!

According to noted psychologist, Daniel Kahneman, author of *Think, Fast and Slow*, an average adult in a typical day has 50,000 thoughts! 50,000! Even if that is only partly true, it is staggering.

**No wonder** we lose concentration and can’t focus for more than 7 minutes!

**No wonder** we forget what we were just thinking about.

**No wonder** we get distracted in life.

Of these 50,000 thoughts how many are positive, supportive, encouraging, building up someone you love? Day in and day out 50,000 thoughts is going to lead us in a host of directions. Over the past month we've been averaging 600 or more people in this worship service. That's 30 million thoughts we produce in a day. No wonder one person wants to do this in church and another wants to do something else.

We may forget who we are, the children of God created in God's being of love; called to serve, welcome, heal, worship and love, the sermon themes shared by Pastors Larry and Diane and myself the past five weeks. We may forget what we're doing and where we're going. We may even find ourselves in a place we don't want to be whether we're 65 years of age, 70 or older.

Last week in our Presbytery meeting our keynote speaker, Dr. Heath Rada, current Moderator of the General Assembly, talked about God's being is love. We know this from the first letter of John, chapter 4 which says "God is love. we love because God first loved us."

Psalm 8 says we are a little lower than angels. Sounds divine to me. We are created in God's image, which is divine in and of itself. How does God remember

us, that he is mindful of you and me? Much like this psalmist, I want to know God remembers me.

He crowns you and me and little Milo with glory and honor. How great is that! Do you ever feel you are crowned with glory and honor? Did you ever realize your self-esteem isn't just self, there's God in that equation – in God's world, our esteem is God-derived! God holds us up – a little lower than angels, but very, very special indeed. God wants us to have self-esteem.

### **Read Col. 3:1-11**

To be hid with Christ is to be dead to sin, because you are united with Christ in his death of the Cross. And to have the power of one raised with Christ. One good way to be dead to sin is to continually serve God, welcome others, bring healing to others, worship together, and love one another. When we do these things, people begin to see Christ in us, not us performing Christian duties. Once our old self is gone, the new self, the transformed self, the person God truly created us to be, begins to shine through and blossom. Perhaps it's always been there since our childhood.

The Apostle Paul is talking about our condition; our personhood being changed, our nature, **our being is changed!!!** We can't do it by ourselves. We need the power of the risen Lord to help us change from the old self to the new,

from a self-centered person to one who opens their arms to the community; to serve in ways, perhaps, we haven't even thought through.

Closing: If we are a little lower than angels and if we are crowned with glory and honor then God infused in us self-esteem! Not self-centeredness but self-esteem, which allows us to be hidden in Christ. God wants us to do the work of Jesus Christ. - Serving, Welcoming, Healing, Worshipping, and Loving. And today being; **Being** Christ-like. When we do those things we've talked about the last five weeks, we are being a loving, beloved community and that makes a difference. Amen.