

Responsive Reading

Philippians 2:5-11

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

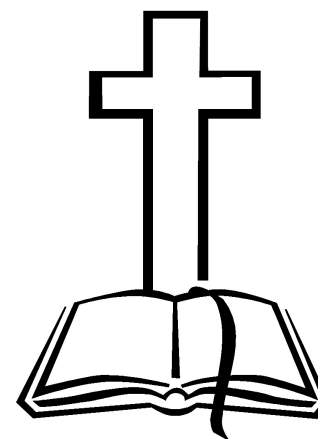
And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Worship Service



Pull the Cork!

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Closing Prayer

The Wilderness

by Jerry Johnson

O My Father, how You tower over me!
I, like a dingy wafting on a raging sea,
Look into Your boundless strength and love
And wonder how from You came me!

I cannot deny the difference that I see:
You in Your perfection and all the fault in me.
How here below to reflect the life from up
above?

It is more a foggy fiction than solid reality!

And so I wonder in this wilderness of I, myself,
and me.

Who can find the murderer in this self-wrought
mystery?

How long will I stumble through this ego-centric
waste?

UP! Be off! Away from ME and into HIM with
haste!

***Abide in Me...for apart from Me You can do
nothing.*** John 15: 4-5

***The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the
righteous man runs into it and is safe.*** Proverbs
18:10

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"Pull the Cork!"

Opening Prayer: Dear Father God, we are thankful for this opportunity to gather and worship You. Grant us understanding as we reflect on the Truth of Your Word. As Your children we ask that You train us in Your ways. Grant us forgiveness as we reflect on our failings and repent before Your throne. We are grateful for Your Mercy and Your Grace. We give You glory and honor. Amen.

Devotion:

Text: *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."* Luke 9:23-24

I invite you to use your imagination with me. I want to tell you a story to illustrate a very important principle in the Christian's life. For those of us who have put our faith in Jesus Christ, there are many lessons for us to learn. I will illustrate one of these lessons this way:

Let's think of people who do not believe in Jesus Christ as those who live on the land, going about hunting and planting and harvesting like all landlubbers. In comparison, we will think of those who believe in Jesus Christ as sailors. When they accept Christ as their Savior and Lord they are given a little rowboat with a little sail that has a Cross on it. On the seat there's a Manual to teach them how to operate the boat. Those who follow the instructions in The Manual (the Bible) find themselves heading out into deep water.

It is sometimes frightful and seems so dangerous to the poor little sailor so far out into strange seas. The further he goes the more dependent he becomes on the guidance of the maps and the teachings of The Book.

One blustery day, as the seas heave and crash about him, he reads a most disturbing and strange thing in The Manual: "To go where

"Pull the Cork!" continued

Jesus leads you must PULL THE CORK!" The startled sailor had seen the cork in the bottom of his rowboat, but he was sure it was nothing he need be worried with. But now The Book is saying "Pull the cork!" and let the threatening sea into the boat! That would be suicide!

Read our text again. At the very core of human nature is selfishness and pride. We all want what WE want when it comes right down to it. But Jesus Christ makes a demand of His Children that goes against all of what we are made of in the flesh: He wants us to surrender our will to His. As our example, in the Garden of Gethsemane, looking toward the agony of the Cross, Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father, *"If Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done"* (Luke 22:42).

There are probably people living with you here in this home who occasionally rub you the wrong way. There are probably people who work here who you have trouble getting along with. Often, we are the problem in difficult relationships because of our selfishness. There are probably things you know the Lord would like to deal with you about, but you hold Him at arm's length on those issues: Our selfishness refuses to admit that He knows better than we do what is best for His child! Consider where your pride and your wanting your own way are causing problems – and "pull the cork!" You will discover, because of His work in your life, you really are not a sailor anyway – you're a FISH! Contrary to the "normal" self-centered way of the world, true Christian maturity is marked by unselfishness and sacrificial love for others.

Closing Prayer: Father, please give us the strength to deny ourselves and follow You! We humbly ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.