**Word of God – Word of Life**

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus

Philippians 2:1-13

Paul’s Letter to the congregation at Philippi is the most upbeat of all his letters. It reflects an intimate relationship between the people and the apostle woven with confidence, affection, gratitude and joy. An excellent way to begin listening for God to speak through our core passage is to read the entire letter in one or two sittings. It also might be wise to spend 3 or 4 days with the passage without turning to the reflection prompts below.

The Sunday morning Adult Forum for March will be an opportunity for a communal listening to this amazing passage. We will be able to “unpack” the following comments and questions:

* Twice in verses 1 – 5 we are encouraged to be of the “same mind.” Given that diversity in spiritual gifts, backgrounds, even perspectives is a blessing, what might it mean to be of the same 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.*Think of some ways that you could live this out at BELC. Can you imagine a congregation where this is widely practiced?
* *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus…* Read Mark 10:42-45 for another insight into the mind of Christ
* Most scholars believe that in 2:6-11 Paul is quoting or adapting a hymn.
* Contemplate the mystery of what it was for the co-Creator of the universe, the Lord of glory to empty himself in the stable, in Galilee, at Gethsemane, and on the cross. *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord…* (John 10:17-18a).
* Jesus, as God’s beloved Son, was always highly exalted. This hymn affirms that Jesus, the crucified and risen one, is this same eternally exalted Lord, exalted now in and through his humanity, sufferings, and resurrection.
* Read verses 9 – 11. It is in our hearts, our witness, our lives of loving service, our prayers and worship that we fulfill these words.
* In verse 12 Paul offers himself as a teacher and example of responding to Jesus emptying himself. Can you think of someone who has served you in this way?
* *…work out your own salvation with fear and trembling…* What is meant by this? Perhaps returning to the Transfiguration passage offers a hint. The call of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-8) is another possible example. Of course there is Paul’s own encounter with the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. What do these words suggest to us today.
* It is interesting that Paul turns immediately to the working of God to counter any suggestion or hint that the working of salvation is anything but a gift of grace. Any response, effort, struggle we make towards Jesus who emptied himself for our sake is God working in and through us.
* Can you think of ways this passage might be misused?

In our Lenten mid-week worship we will be exploring aspects of our brokenness and how God has and is responding to our broken lives, relationships, communities and world. Connecting the ways our lives are broken with Jesus’ willingness to empty himself could significantly enrich our Lenten journey. We did not purchase a special Lenten devotional this year so that reading our Word of God.Word of Life may become your Lenten discipline.

May God bless our every effort to hear and to discuss God’s Word of Life and to receive every day and hour the unconditional love freely offered in Jesus, our foot washing Servant King. You can find it at bethlutheran.org/pintable’s.