

# LIFE GROUP Discussion Guide

Northend Church

## THE HEART OF JESUS: The Opposition

Philippians 2

A NOTE TO LEADERS: These questions are to guide your conversation. Don't be rigid about getting through every last one. Be sure to spend time on the application part.

### OPEN:

1. What were some of your initial feelings and thoughts about this week's sermon?
2. What does "normal" mean when it comes to life? Read the excerpt from Sunday's sermon (see attached) and discuss "normal"? What other biblical stories/heroes of faith come to mind that show real people? Why does scripture include all these people?

### DIG:

- 1) Read Philippians 2:1-8

*Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

*6 Who, being in very nature[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

*7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

*8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself*

*by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

- 2) How are we able to live into verses 1-4? What are key parts of Christ's example to us (v.7,8)?
- 3) Thinking more about this, what does it take to be a servant? What gets in the way of truly serving selflessly? What is your greatest struggle in that regard?
- 4) Mike said that you can be forced to serve someone, but humility is a choice. What does it truly mean to be humble? How's that working for you? Why is being humble so difficult for us (v. 21)? What do you think it was like for Jesus to leave heaven and become human? To take on himself all the sin of humankind?
- 5) The roadmap to a life of servanthood and humility begins with never forgetting. Share your thoughts on the following areas to never forget:
  1. God is at work: Phil 2:12-13. How do you see God at work around you? How do you join him in that work?
  2. People are watching: Phil 2:14-15. How do you engage people who think, believe or act differently than you? Do you regularly engage with people far from God who need an example. Share how that is part of your life. If it is not something you do, why not?

3. Your Life Has a Purpose: Phil 2:16. Do you believe that? What is God's purpose for you? How do you know it? How are you living into that?

#### **APPLY:**

- 1) Timothy and Ephaphroditus were great examples of disciples who fully gave themselves to whatever God called them to. They showed up, as Mike pointed out. If we are to follow Christ's example and become examples/disciples for him, we need to be open and available to serve his kingdom with humility. Where do you need to grow in this area? What is your commitment to that growth?
- 2) Consider this statement by missiologist Caesar Kalinowski, "Discipleship is an all of life venture not a missional/outreach project once in awhile." How is Paul and Jesus calling you into this? How then shall we live?
- 3) What is one specific way you can imitate Christ this week as his example?

#### **PRAY:**

Take some time praising and glorifying God for his grace, mercy, power and protection. Include time to pray specifically for each person and their walk with God, that they may be filled with the confidence and power of the Holy Spirit to develop into an all of life disciple. Conclude however the Holy Spirit leads you.

#### **Sermon Excerpt:**

*"Cain is jealous of Abel and kills him. Lamech introduces polygamy to the world. Noah the most righteous man of his generation gets drunk and curses his own grandson.*

*Lot, when his home is surrounded by residents of Sodom who want to violate his male visitors, offers instead that they can have sex with his daughters. Later on those daughters get him drunk and get impregnated by him – and Lot is the most righteous man in Sodom.*

*Abraham plays favourites between his sons Isaac and Ishmael; they're estranged – angry, and they are still mad at each other in the middle east today.*

*Isaac plays favourites between his sons Jacob and Esau; they're bitter enemies for twenty years.*

*Jacob plays favourites between Joseph and his other eleven sons; the brothers want to kill Joseph and end up selling him into slavery. Their marriages are disasters. Abraham has sex with his wife's servant then sends her and their son off to the wilderness at his wife's request. Isaac and Rebekah fight over which boy gets the blessing. Jacob marries two wives and ends up with both of their maids as his concubines as well when they get into a fertility contest.*

*Jacob's firstborn son, Reuben sleeps with his father's concubine. Another son, Judah sleeps with his daughter-in-law when she disguises herself as a prostitute She does this because she is childless since her first two husbands – both sons of Judah were so wicked that God killed them both and Judah reneged on his obligations to her. These people need a therapist. They are not the Waltons. They need Dr. Phil, Dr. Laura, Dr. Ruth, Dr. Spock, Dr. Seuss – they need somebody. Feel any better about your family and your situation."*