

LIGHT

IN THE DARKNESS

Philippians 2:1-8

BIG IDEA

When the darkness of the pandemic, political unrest, and racial tensions emerge the church is called to reveal light in the darkness.

ICE BREAKER

Darkness and sin creates confusion. Satan loves confusion. At times we turn on each other in the confusion. Paul, in Philippians 2:2 urges: “Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”

1. In times of hardship like a pandemic we lose our illusion of control. It is in these times that we can more easily see our lack of dependence on Christ. Share with the group what have you been observing about yourself? Allow Christ to draw you to a new dependency upon Him.

NEXT STEP:

Serve! As we empty ourselves of pride and personal ambition we are humble and we have fresh energy to serve. Even if you can't be out due to the virus you can serve. 5 years from now what do we wish we'd done today? Let that question motivate us.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Phil 2:1-2. “...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” God is urging for a deep unity and until this happens our joy is not complete. If we will be a church that is healthy we must get this. If I think I am thinking better than everyone else this is poison. How is your grumbling and disputing related to your fears of this virus?

2. In Philippians 2 we see these words: empty, humble, serve. Christ emptied Himself of power and selfish ambition and He served. What does it mean to empty myself of power? First, I let go of grudges. Second, the person I feel competitive with is no longer a competition. Selfish ambition speaks of a competition between us. I have to win the argument. I position myself as a more important person. How could you be free to serve your spouse, family, and others as you empty yourself, humble yourself and seek to serve?
3. Mike Post, a doctor from our church, served as a doctor in New York helping covid patients in intensive care during this pandemic. When he was asked what his fears were going to work there he stated that he was not afraid of getting covid but he was afraid of being inadequate. He stated: "It's usually when I try to do things in my own strength that I feel inadequate." Share with the group what you have tried to do in the last day, week, year, or decade in your own strength. What helped you to realize that you were doing this? Consider reading Psalm 91 together as a group and reflecting on the invitation to rest in God.
4. Mike also shared that he learned that God is present in the low points. In the darkness he doubted God's calling. He doubted God's presence. In these dark times he saw God would faithfully show up. Share both the doubts you may have had with God during this pandemic as well as how you have observed Him to be faithful.
5. When I move toward powerlessness and humility I can listen instead of "telling" and exalting my opinion. Whose opinion is God inviting you to listen to?

NOTES AND QUOTES

These six aspects inform our decision making in our lives during an epidemic and beyond: spiritual, economic, social, civic, mental health, and physical health.

Here are some thoughts on these six aspects:

-How do we measure loneliness, anxiety and depression?

-In regard to the social aspect: how much does it affect us not being together?

-The most important aspect is the spiritual. The greatest problem in our world is not covid 19, rather, our greatest problem is sin.

