



**St John's United Church of Christ
Pastor's Lenten Devotion / Prayer for
The Fifth Week of Lent**

Dear St John's Family,

Our Lenten reflections often take us to thoughts and prayers for God's wisdom on how we live as Jesus' disciples. This week's reading touches on the attitude of a follower of Jesus. It's also good common sense for those who wish to succeed in life.

Our reading is from Paul's letter to the Philippians chapter 2 verses 5-11. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Several years ago there was a ground breaking book, *Good to Great*, business writer Jim Collins explored the difference between some companies he defined as “good” companies, and other companies he defined as “great” companies. His question was “what are the differences between good companies and great companies?”

One of the startling answers turned out to be that in all the great companies, the leaders shared at least one trait; humility. To use his language, when things were going well, the great leaders looked out the window and saw the “team” succeeding, when things were not going well, the leader would look in the mirror and see himself or herself, and ask “what am I missing?”

When the apostle Paul looked at Jesus, the first thing he saw was Christ’s humility. It must have taken Paul’s breath away to realize that the Messiah, the very Son of the Most High God, had humbled himself on behalf of sinful humanity. The greatest person who ever lived, lived as a servant to others.

My first job out of college was in a commodity brokerage company in Chicago working as a clerk. During my time there I saw many brokers come and go. Many of them would boast to potential customers of how good they were and how much money they could make for the clients. In reality they were trying to get people to give them their money to trade with in some very risky investments that got the broker commissions but without the best interest of the investor in mind.

But there was one broker in the office who was quite different. He was kind and respectful to clients and to the staff. He helped out with any need in the office including

changing the light bulbs and making the coffee. He was a quiet servant. And yet, he was also the most successful person in the office while looking out for the client's best interest.

He was truly a person who impacted my life for the good. I'll never forget him. How about you? What are some of the people in your life that left you with a lasting impression that you would like to emulate?

For the apostle Paul, that person was Jesus, who although he was the Son of God, humbled himself for the good of all to the point of giving up his life for all humanity... "so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

As we reflect on our commitment to Christ during this season of Lent, how is the humility of Christ being lived in you and in I?

Prayer: Dear God, may we earnestly seek to have and to live "the mind of Christ" to all. Forgive us our sins, shortcomings and self-centeredness. Open a pathway to our free choice to live, love, and serve as true followers of Jesus. Amen.

It has been a joy to bring you these five Lenten devotionals. Until we meet again....keep looking up!

Sincerely,

Pastor Jeff