

## God At The Center (Philippians 2:5-11)

When we read Philippians 2:5-11 it is almost as though we are looking into the center of God's heart. We "see" the heart and mind of God that is behind the cross as we are brought into the decision making process of the Son of God. We catch a glimpse of the truth of what it means to be God (and, therefore, to be the people of God!).

Paul makes it clear that God is no distant, transcendent only, God for Himself! He is no self-glorifying tyrant, no self-contained, self-for-self subject. He is love in action. He is Life for others. This is such a contrast with earthly kings or rulers and their seizing, grasping, taking way of life. He does not exploit His deity or His status for personal gain, voluntarily choosing instead to empty Himself, to pour out His life for the god-less. Instead of choosing self-acquisition, He chooses self-expenditure for the sake of others. He opts for a descent rather than an ascent - taking increasingly "degrading" positions for our sake - human... slave... death on a cross.

If this is what it means to be God, Paul says, then we also know something about what it means to be the people of God. It is not a privileged position, a place of status or arrogant superiority. We are to be cooperative agents with His heart and mind. He never took selfish advantage of His oneness with His Father and neither can we. The nature of our union with Christ is sacramental. We are, as Christ, called to convey, to reveal the very nature of God Who is for others. We are an emptying, humbling people! The Christian life, life in union with God, is not a platform for display, a launching pad for self-glorification... it is something to "pour out". The true Christian self is the poured out self.

Jesus veiled the glories of heaven to come and serve us, didn't He? Dare we veil the glories of oneness with Christ, of the exchanged life, of our union with God... to "go and do the same" (Jo 17:18; 20:21)? What would that look like? It would look like a bonds slave - a servant who volunteers to pay the price so others go free. We may want to be teachers, reformers, rebukers, fixers. It seems God wants us to be as He is... servants.

How about it? Would we spend 12 - 15 years in relative obscurity, in silence, doing menial work, listening to what we know is not always correct... waiting, submitting, humbling, emptying... all the while seeing no visible results... for 2 - 3 years of potent, God-breathed ministry? Would we count the 15 years as a waste? Count ourselves as too good for that? Not if God is at the center. Not if living means Christ. For that was His heart and mind - it was exactly what He did for us!



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### *Praise Reports & Prayer Requests*

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Please inform us of any changes to your address



# BITS and PIECES

As of this month, CCF will no longer be mailing out CD's of our messages. We will keep recording and you can still listen to and download them as well as burn your own CD's at [www.stevepettetitmessages.com](http://www.stevepettetitmessages.com). Message outlines will also be available at that site. We know this is difficult for some who do not have such capabilities. We do not fully know whether or not we will be able to distribute CD's in the future. In the meantime, make a connection with your grandkids, find a teenager at your church and ask them to do you a favor - it may be the beginning of a new (and profitable for all) relationship!

No matter, a great big "Thank You" to Jim & Janet Lake who have faithfully kept them going out for so long. I know its been a blessing to so many.

Which reminds me - OIC has never been a "one man show." There would be no ministry if that were the case. There are always prayer warriors, financial supporters, encouragers, "door openers", facilitators, wise guides, accountability partners, mentors - all a family, all sharers in common with Christ who is our Life. Thank you to each and every one of you!

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## ALACHUA, FLORIDA WINTER RETREAT "Shaped By The Cross" - Feb 14-16, 2014

*Feel free to call us to see if space still available*

# CALENDAR

### FEBRUARY

2,9,16,23 CCF  
11 Alachua Study  
14-16 **\*\*One In Christ Retreat, Alachua, FL\*\***  
25 Ocala Study

### APRIL

4-6 Titusville, FL (772-563-0430)

### MAY

23-25 Dalton, PA (607-625-4612)

## PRAISE and PRAYER

-  Our Ministry family
-  Our inner and outer supply
-  CCF pastor search
-  Conferences and retreats