**Ebenezer Baptist Church**

**Small Group Discussion**

**Sermon Title: The Courage to Learn**

**Date: March 12, 2023**

**Speaker: Reverend Dr. Rapheal Warnock**

**Texts: Philippians 2:5 - 11; 3:4 - 11 (NRSV)**

***2: 5****Let the same mind be in you that was[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%202&version=NRSVUE#fen-NRSVUE-29380a)*] in Christ Jesus,* ***6****who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped,* ***7****but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human,* ***8****he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.****9****Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name,****10****so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,* ***11****and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

***3:4****though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:****5****circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;****6****as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.* ***7****But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.****8****What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ****9****and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%203&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29431a)*] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.****10****I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,****11****and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

**Sermon Summary**

Reverend Warnock used our text to identify the “Courage to Learn” in the revelation of Christ’s incarnation. The writer Paul, provides the context as he faces the end of life. Knowing all that he knew as a credentialed Hebrew and zealous Pharisee, Paul denounced his pedigree declaring, he simply wanted “***to know*** *Christ and the power of his resurrection … Phil 3:10”*

Likewise, we were reminded life consists of series “lessons” that we must be willing to learn so we can ***know*** God and God’s plan for our lives. Such lessons must be learned despite how scary or challenging they may appear. Yet, some people as illustrated in Plato’s *Allegory of the Caves (a must read),* fear truth, rather embracing lies and deceptions.

The preacher recounted his own academic transcript revealing the major teachers he’d studied, only to announce that these experiences weren’t fulfilling in his quest to find truth in God. Like Paul, Reverend Warnock, summarized his academic career by determining, God’s people should strive for a “thinking faith”, by having the mindset of Christ as revealed in Jesus’ incarnation outlined in the text. We learned the following about Jesus:

1. He Emptied Himself – vv6-7 - *he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness. We learned Jesus encapsulated his divinity into human flesh so that all that believe on him might take on his divinity.*
2. He Humbled Himself – v8a - *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself. We learned humility takes courage while arrogance is a sign of fear.*
3. He Offered Himself – v8b - *by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross! We learned Christ’s offering himself resulted in salvation for the world.*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What experiences have you had with “emptying” yourself in the service of God?
2. Describe a life changing lesson that’s brought you closer to God.
3. How does the sermon change your perspective on humility?
4. In what ways have you learned to offer yourself or sacrifice for others? How do you feel in retrospect?
5. What are your greatest obstacles for learning new things? How do you overcome them?