

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Philippians 2:5-11.**
- B. Thank you for being so patient in our arrival to Decatur. I want our stay to be long and spiritually profitable. Thank you for the warm welcome.
- C. Our scripture reading today is so very important. Midst Paul's letter of joy he speaks of how X came to earth, lived and died for us, and ascended back into heaven. What a story!
- D. In this lesson, I want to talk about who we are, what we can become, the power to change, and realizing the great eternal prize.

I. KNOW WHO YOU ARE: **LOOK IN.**

- A. See **Phil. 2:5-6.**
- B. Jesus "took stock" of Himself in His relationship to God:
 - 1. Jesus realized He was a spiritual being (we are too--made in His image).
 - 2. Equality with God was not something to be attained--Jesus already had it (JN. 1:1, 14; Col. 2:9).
- C. To begin our life with God, we too, must begin w/introspection. Before God can help us, we must first admit we have a problem (Jas. 5:16)! That's looking in! It's not all bad...
 - 1. We have been made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27).
 - 2. We subject to the weaknesses and temptations of the flesh (Rom. 3:10, 23).
 - 3. We are sinners, incapable of saving ourselves (Isa. 59:1-2; Eph. 2:1; 1Jn. 1:9).
- D. But the picture is not total gloom and doom. As Xians we have the power to make great changes! May we examine ourselves to see where we need to go and grow (Eph. 3:20)!
- E. As Xians, we are to have the same attitude of Jesus--who knew who He was.

II. KNOW WHO YOU CAN BECOME: **LOOK OUT.**

- A. See **Phil. 2:7.**
- B. Jesus chose the most effective form in which to enter the world to save the world--a servant.
- C. What are we desiring to become in our lives? Young people usually choose careers that are high-paying, high-exposure, and glory filled. Have you ever met someone who's ambition in life was to be a slave? Jesus chose to be a slave!
- D. There is nothing wrong w/improving one's station in life, but sometimes that means going "down the ladder," not up (Mt. 20:27).
- E. The potential is the greatest when we learn to empty ourselves (Gal. 2:20) and become a slave. The only way to be filled up with spiritual things is to first empty all the worldly things.
- F. We have the empowerment by Jesus Himself (4:13).
- G. As Xians, we are to have the same attitude as did Jesus--that of a servant.
When we look out, through the eyes of a servant, we can change the world!

III. KNOW HOW TO CHANGE: **LOOK UP.**

- A. See **Phil. 2:8.**
- B. Do you know what I see when I look up at Jesus on the cross--obedience.
- B. Jesus' key to success was obedience. There is no substitute for obedience. Jesus came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father.
- C. God has been obedient to us. He has never gave man second best (creation, X, Bible, church, etc.), He will not settle for anything less from us.
- D. In the time of Malachi the prophet, the priests were not giving their best to God. They were not living, teaching, or sacrificing acceptably (Mal. 2:5-9; 3:6-10). The test is not of God's ability to bless, but of our willingness to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.

E. As Xians, we are to have the same attitude as did Jesus--obedient to the will of the Father.

IV. **KNOW HOW TO REALIZE THE PRIZE: LOOK BEYOND.**

A. See **Phil. 2:9-11**.

B. To say that Jesus was rewarded greatly is an understatement. To sit in God's bosom, on His right hand (Heb. 1:3c), is the highest of honor.

C. The struggle is worth it! So keep your eyes on the prize, not on the journey (I enjoy getting to my destination, more than the journey getting there)!

D. Be sure to have your life focused on where it needs to be--heaven (3:20-21).

E. Paul was waiting for the upward call (3:14). He was ready to claim his crown (2Tim. 4:7-8).

F. Keep focusing on the spiritual eternal things (2Cor. 4:16-18).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. Four things from this passage:

1. Look in (with attitude of honesty about yourself).

2. Look out (with the attitude of a servant).

3. Look up (with the attitude of being obedience to God).

4. Look beyond (with the attitude and focus on the eternal prize).

B. These four things are a formula for positive Xian living.

C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.