



DIALOGUE AND DEVOTION

A monthly 9.00 am service exploring new ways to learn and new ways to worship

KEY VERSES FOR TODAY

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose.” Phil 2:12

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless.” 1 Thess 5:23



A CONFESSION FOR TODAY

God our Father we come to you somewhat aware that we have not been our best for you. We have not allowed your song to sing in our lives. We have justified ourselves and then ignored your will for our lives. **Father forgive us. Turn us around and enable us to be more like you.**

Too often we have behaved just as we wish, without thinking of you, without referring to you. We have been double-minded and weak in our thinking. **Father forgive us. Make straight our thinking and enable us to be more like you.**

We have been too focused on ourselves. We have failed you by what we do, and we have failed you by what we have not done, even though you have prompted us to act. We have been too preoccupied with ourselves selfishly doing our thing. **Father forgive us. Turn us outwards and enable us to be more like you.**

There are things in our lives we are not proud of, there are things in our lives we are ashamed of. There is angst and baggage, and behaviours that are just not good. **Father forgive us and heal us. Make us whole and enable us to be more like you.**

We want to start afresh, we need some help, we need your love. We want to be more courageous for you and we need some help with that too. We need your power. We want to take another step forward to being more faithful. We need your encouragement. **Father renew us and enable us to be a bit more like you. AMEN**

Listening and Prayer Pointers:

- Meditate and reflect on our two key verses above. What is God saying to you today?
- Listen and pray that God will reveal his ways for you in regard to this morning's teaching
- Pray that we are guided as we think about developing a new 9:00 service

An Overview

Working it out - Phil 2:12 shows us that becoming more like Jesus is a life's journey where we continue to co-operate with God and press onwards to bring our salvation to completion. This process of "sanctification" is to be worked out in our mind, body and spirit." (1Thess 5)

Minding the Gap - However, the more we mature in our faith the more we realise that this no simple straight line, nor does the increase or the improvement seem to come at the rate and the depth that we had first imagined. We experience a "gap" - A gap in our expectations, a gap in our experience and even a gap in our authenticity. This is made worse by the fact that as we progress, mature and get older, our capacities, energies, and ability to take on new ideas and change diminishes as the cycle of life hits the downward slope!

Falling Upwards - As we mature in age and stage, we become more familiar and more set in our ways - but we don't have to see this as a gradual decline. We can continue to experience a fresh encounter with God in mind, body and spirit ... BUT we need to discover a "Spirituality for the two halves of life." We can grow old GRACE-FULLY!

Excerpts from Falling Upwards by Richard Rohr

- *The second journey of life is a well-kept secret. Too few are aware of it or know that it is different from the journey of the first half of life*
- *The first half of life is discovering our song (our inner blueprint), the second half of life is allowing it to sing!*
- *We are a first-half-of-life culture largely concerned with building "success". Our institutions and our churches are almost entirely configured to encourage, support, reward and validate the tasks of the first half of life*
- *We spend our whole life climbing the ladder only to find when we get to the top, our ladder is leaning against the wrong wall!*

FALLING UPWARDS - THE PARADOX:

- *We do not want to embark on a further journey, as the old one feels familiar and safe, and it feels like going down - especially when we have put so much effort in to going up!*
- *The second half of life has more to do with integrity and purifying our intentions, and developing a growing honesty about our actual motives*
- *When we are weak...then we are strong! If there is such a thing as human perfection, it seems to emerge precisely from how we handle the imperfection that is everywhere - especially our own. What a clever place for God to hide holiness, so that only the humble will find it!*
- *You cannot walk the second journey with first journey tools -you need a whole new tool kit!*

DISCUSSION

- *What most resonates with you from this thinking?*
- *What does not sit so well with you?*