



Sunday 18th March 2018

10. GOD the greatest risk taker

We have our last study in the risk takers series.

Take the opportunity within your group to share some of the challenges that have come through the series.

Is there a particular character [Daniel; Epaphroditus; Abraham; Joshua; Esther; Mary (Mother of Jesus); Paul; Peter] that has particularly spoken to you?

Alan, in introducing God as the greatest risk taker, questioned whether it is right to talk about God taking risks! **John Piper** offers us something to ponder when he comments that God can take no risks. "And the reason he can't is because essential to the meaning of risk is ignorance. You have to be ignorant in order to take risks...Risk assumes ignorance about what's coming. God cannot take a risk because he has no ignorance about what's coming."

God was 'risky' in creation for there was the potential for everything to unravel due to sin, which it did. We can see something of the challenge of risk as the Godhead agree together for 'the Word to become flesh and dwell among us' in order for the answer to be given to the broken world where the chaotic forces of evil have been released bringing division, disaster, disease and death.

Take briefly the parable of the **Prodigal Son (Luke 15.11-32)** – in what way do we see the Father embarking on 'risk taking' in his attitude and action towards his wayward son.

The great celebration hymn of Christ – Philippians 2.1-11

It is as we consider Christ we are challenged by his example and there is the expectation that we should follow in his steps.

Note in **v.1-5** the reason why Paul is celebrating Christ – and it is in order that our lives would match the qualities of Christ's life. Consider some of the statements as to how we are to regard one another in order that we might have an effective witness into our community.

- *being like minded*
- *having the same love*
- *being one in spirit and purpose*
- *doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit*
- *in humility consider others better than yourselves*
- *not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others.*

We are called to live out our 'in Christ' status that we have as believers. As Paul says in 2 Cor 5.17 '*If anyone is in Christ they are a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come.*'

THE SEVEN STEPS DOWN THAT JESUS TOOK v.6-8

Take a few moments to reflect on one or two of the steps that Jesus took.

I have deliberately not given any specific questions!

1. Jesus, *being in the very nature God did not count equality with God something to be grasped.*
2. Jesus, *made himself nothing.*
3. Jesus, *taking the very nature of a servant.*
4. Jesus, *being found in appearance as a man.*
5. Jesus, *humbled himself.*
6. Jesus, *became obedient to death.*
7. Jesus, *even death on a cross.*

The steps down lead us to the cross as the pivotal point of God's sovereign saving purposes.

THE SEVEN STEPS UP THAT JESUS TOOK v.9-11

Again ponder some of the steps of exaltation.

1. Jesus, *exalted to the highest place.*
2. Jesus, *given the name above all names.*
3. Jesus, *every knee shall bow.*
4. Jesus, *in the heavens.*
5. Jesus, *on the earth.*
6. Jesus, *under the earth.*
7. Jesus, every tongue confess ***that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.***

How does such a passage enable us to grasp a greater awareness of Easter?

Do you really see yourself as part of this big story? Maybe there is a challenge in v.12 where we are called to '*work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*'

FOR YOUR OWN NOTES: