

TIME OF REFLECTION

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn believed the Soviets “paid Christianity the ultimate compliment by trying to kill it, while Americans have offered it the ultimate insult by seeking to domesticate it.”

~Ralph Wood, scholar and writer, in *Solzhenitsyn and American Culture*

Q. 27. *Wherein did Christ’s humiliation consist?*

A. Christ’s humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Q. 28. *Wherein consisteth Christ’s exaltation?*

A. Christ’s exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

~Westminster Shorter Catechism (1647)

“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

~Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), Baptist minister and civil rights activist

“The central miracle asserted by Christians is the Incarnation. They say that God became Man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this. Just as every natural event is the manifestation at a particular place and moment of Nature’s total character, so every particular Christian miracle manifests at a particular place and moment the character and significance of the Incarnation. There is no question in Christianity of arbitrary interferences just scattered about. It relates not a series of disconnected raids on Nature but the various steps of a strategically coherent invasion—an invasion which intends complete conquest and ‘occupation.’ The fitness, and therefore credibility, of the particular miracles depends on their relation to the Grand Miracle; all discussion of them in isolation from it is futile...”

~C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) in *Miracles*

Jesus “was born in poverty and died in disgrace and thought it well worthwhile.”

~Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), writer and poet

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Christmas Song” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Philippians 2:1-11 (NIV)*

¹ Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.