

Second Hand Preacher 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time 10 1 17

Philippians 2:1-11

One spiritual practice that often gets overlooked is fasting. This is a self-emptying of all solid food from the body; often toxins leave as well and there can be a cleansing that can be good both physically and spiritually. When we take the time to deny ourselves, this can help us to focus. Gradually there is a shift from worrying about our lack of food to a real hunger for God. We become just weak enough to allow ourselves to submit to God's love and mercy. I struggle with using this form of spiritual practice, but when I engage in the fast, I never regret the action.

St. Paul in the first part of this passage gives the Philippians a way to live out their Christian faith. He reminds them to be giving and not to follow selfish ways. He teaches the amount of love and affection. Then in the second part of the passage he gives them the ultimate example of self-denying love. This was an ancient hymn, but the lyrics so beautifully describe Jesus Christ. Jesus gave all that we may know of his ultimate sacrifice. This put him in very high esteem, as when one bows or bends a knee, this denoted someone of great importance. Paul wanted to encourage the Philippians to have Jesus as the center of their lives.

This should be our goal as well. We are to love, honor, and have deep reverence for the one who causes us to bend and kneel. When we show reverence for Jesus, we are living God's plan to its fullest. We are all called to love God and others. We need to deepen our relationship with the one who sacrificed for us. We can do small sacrifices in order to imitate Jesus. Jesus loves us unconditionally and he longs for us to follow him.