

## **Snap!**

*Ezekiel 18<sup>1-4,25-end</sup>; Psalm 25<sup>1-8</sup>; Philippians 2<sup>1-13</sup>; Matthew 21<sup>21-32</sup>*

*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 2<sup>5</sup>]*

WWJD? became a fashion statement – it appeared on jewellery, on clothing and on other branded products. WWJD? is a powerful question and, for a while at least, it captured the imagination of some in our society.

The challenge from Paul is even more direct than WWJD? It is that we become like Jesus. The King James Bible was even more direct, **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus**; or the NIV, **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus**; or William Barclay. **Try always to have the same attitude to life as Jesus had**; or the Jerusalem Bible, **In your minds be the same as Christ Jesus** – all of these are less passive than our translation and underscore the point that it isn't about 'letting' something happen, but of actively pursuing it. Then when people see us and they see Jesus they shout, SNAP, because they see the same thing, the same person. How?

### ✘ **How we regard ourselves:**

The community leaders in Jerusalem wanted to know about Jesus' credentials: who authorised him, so that they could promote him or run him down according to party lines. Jesus simply refuses to play this game. We, too, should avoid being controlled by what other people think.

**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit; look not to your own interests** be like Christ who **did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited**; who **took the form of a slave**; and **became obedient**.

It is the sin that has beset the human race since the serpent set a human opinion against what God said! That same arrogance questions God's very existence as well as his decree; it challenges the veracity of his law and the nature of his care; it tests God rather than recognising that God will judge us and not against our standards, but against perfection.

Look in the mirror – how much like Jesus are we?

### ✘ **How we regard others:**

More uncompromising stuff from Paul – **in humility regard others as better than yourselves; [look] to the interests of others**. If we are looking for a counter-cultural message, this is it. Just in case we don't get the point, we are told that Jesus expressed this most fully when **being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross**.

Hunt Emerson is working on a window for us for the blank window on the South Aisle. When I saw the draft of the panel where Jesus is sitting with children, the thing that struck me most was how he captured Jesus' eyes. Our challenge is to look at others with Jesus' eyes – where **love, compassion, sympathy and joy** are not just present but evident.

### ✘ **What we allow God to do:**

I heard a preacher say, *If God doesn't lift you up, for goodness sake, don't try to lift yourself up!* For all sorts of reasons known best to ourselves – whether we feel inadequate; or unloved; or unnoticed; or angry; or whatever – we are guilty of trying to lift ourselves up.

As far as Jesus is concerned, when he had let go of ambition or human power and gave himself up for the sake of others, then (and only then) it says, **therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father**.

As far as we are concerned, when we are done with what others think (as in authority) we are promised a **God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure**. Would we rather please ourselves or please God?

We don't become like Jesus by sitting in Church (or even at home) and waiting for it to happen. It begins with how we view ourselves and then how we treat others and how open we are for God to work in us!