

## **Joy in Disguise – Questions for Reflection**

### **Chapter One - Shared Affection**

1. Who are the people, living or dead, to whom you are bound?
2. Who are the ones who have borne witness to you and shaped your life as a Christian?
3. Who first introduced you to Jesus or made the gospel real to you?  
How did that happen? Was it verbal witness, personal example, or some combination?
4. Who continues to do so now?

### **Chapter Two - Shared Proclamation**

1. How has the gospel been most effectively proclaimed to you?
2. What were (and are) the qualities that made it effective? What grabbed your attention and helped you to listen?
3. What made you open to hearing the gospel, receiving its message?
4. How is Jesus challenging you to share in the ministry of proclamation?

### **Chapter Three - Shared Suffering**

1. How is Jesus inviting you to embrace the cruciform life?
2. In what ways have you experienced suffering for the sake of Jesus? Do those sufferings in any way mirror the baptismal renunciations?
3. How has that suffering bound you to your fellow Christians? (Or has it?)
4. As you have responded to the suffering of others, how has that affected your relationship with them?

### **Chapter Four – One Heart, One Mind**

1. How have you experienced conflict in the body of Christ? What effect has it had on your faith?
2. What strategies have you employed to resolve conflict? Were they effective?
3. When you deal with Christians with whom you have significant disagreements, how have you been able to remain in relationship? Or have you?
4. How is the Lord challenging you to seek unity today?

### **Chapter Five – Downward Mobility**

1. How has our culture's concern for "upward mobility" impacted your vision of Christian life and ministry?
2. How would "downward mobility" express itself in your life, in your work, in your ministry? How would it affect your relationships in the body of Christ?
3. Who in your life has most powerfully lived out the self-emptying that Paul describes in the hymn in Philippians 2?
4. What scripture verse would you like to see inscribed on your tombstone?

### **Chapter Six – Synergy**

1. Where in your life do you most need to seek unity, to build bridges? At home, at work, in your church, or in some other setting?
2. What is the necessary step that you must take to build bridges? How might you stretch yourself for the sake of the other?
3. How do you resist?
4. Can you think of a time when you experienced Jesus acting supernaturally in your life? What are the marks or signs of Jesus' presence in your life?

### **Chapter Seven – Light and Darkness**

1. Paul's warning about "murmuring and arguing" has a painfully contemporary feel. How do you deal with that tendency in your own life?
2. How do you articulate your identity as a Christian and as a child of God? What is distinctively Christian?
3. How is Jesus challenging you to hold the word of life—and to pass it on?
4. How has God surprised you by enabling you to see the presence of Jesus in unexpected persons or situations?

### **Chapter Eight – Knowing Jesus**

1. Paul describes his former life as embodying "confidence in the flesh." What is your equivalent? What do you rely on?
2. How have you come to know Jesus? When did his name become more than just a word to you? How did he move from being a historical figure to a living and contemporary Lord?
3. How have you experienced the power of the resurrection in your life?
4. In what ways have you been able to see in your own sufferings the sufferings of Jesus himself?

### **Chapter Nine – Growing in Jesus**

1. What spiritual disciplines have been most helpful in assisting you to grow as a Christian?
2. How do you find yourself resisting growth? What gets in the way and makes it difficult for you to invest yourself in spiritual disciplines?
3. What are the significant markers in your spiritual journey? When have the "turning points" occurred? What facilitated them?
4. Who in your life has modeled a pattern of spiritual growth? How have they encouraged and challenged you?

### **Chapter Ten – Dual Citizenship**

1. Some of Paul's opponents worship a false god ("their god is the belly"). How are you tempted to substitute something in place of God?
2. Who do you mark as an example of Christian living? Who are the "living gospels" in your life?
3. What are the signposts of your citizenship in heaven? The reminders that you have a permanent home elsewhere?

4. However imperfectly, what are the ways that you see Jesus face-to-face in your daily life?

### **Chapter Eleven – Be Gentle**

1. How have you experienced Jesus' gentleness in your own life?

2. Who has modeled gentleness for you? Who has shown you how to be gentle with others, even with the most difficult people?

3. Can you think of a time when someone was gentle with you, when perhaps you least deserved it?

4. What are the situations now where Jesus is asking you to be gentle? To cut others some slack?

### **Chapter Twelve – Pray**

1. What tends to trigger anxiety in you? How do you experience the interior distractions that anxiety generates?

2. What enhances your ability to bring your concerns to the Lord in prayer? What gets in the way?

2. Book of Common Prayer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 815.

3. Can you think of a time when you experienced the "peace of God, which surpasses all understanding," despite outward circumstances?

4. What challenges do you face today as you seek to claim God's peace?

### **Chapter Thirteen – Think**

1. When your mind is free to "float free" (e.g., when driving alone on an uncrowded road), what do you find yourself thinking about?

2. What is the best way for you to be intentional about your thought life? How do you see to it that your spiritual input includes "whatever is true"?

3. Can you think of a time when you were able to make a connection between the faith as it resides in your heart and an action that you performed? How did you make that connection?

4. The Philippian Christians had Paul as their model of discipleship. Who is yours?

### **Chapter Fourteen – Give**

1. Can you think of a time when God provided for your needs when you least expected it? How, in doing so, did he surprise you?

2. What new expression of generosity may be God's invitation to you today? How is he stretching you to give?

3. How have others been generous to you?

4. How is Jesus asking you to "dance" your way into new and deeper discipleship?