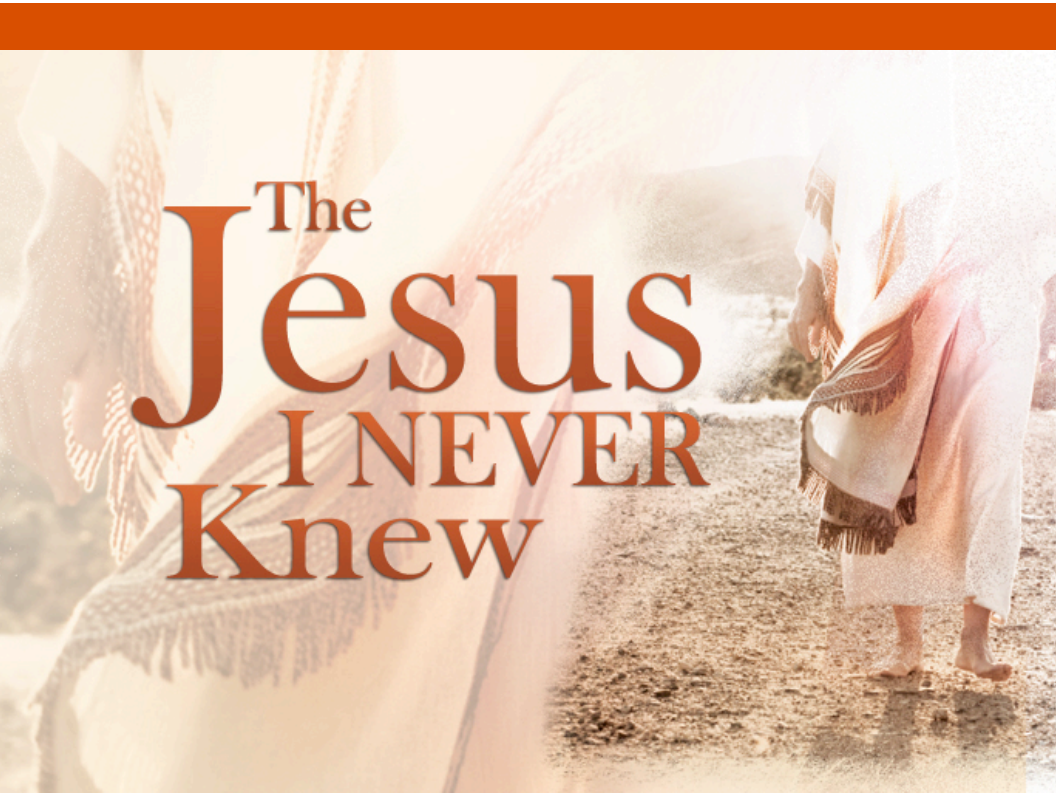


Weekly Devotional



The
Jesus
I NEVER
Knew

October 17-21, 2011

Prayers

Monday: Pray for those who are in need of work and for those who are struggling financially.

Tuesday: Pray for healing, both physically and emotionally, for those who are ill and/or injured.

Wednesday: Pray for wisdom and guidance for the young people in our church as they navigate their next steps in life. Pray that their lives would be examples of Christ to others.

Thursday: Pray for those who are struggling with strained relationships in their lives, that the Holy Spirit would change hearts and heal any emotional wounds. Pray for marriages, that they would be built on and continue to grow on Christ's unconditional love, and that they would be thriving examples to others of Christ's love for us.

Friday: Pray that our renovated youth room, the LOT, would be a place where God draws young people and influences their lives through examples of Christ in others.



Monday

John 2: 1-25



The wedding in Cana was like other weddings of Jesus' time. But it was not like weddings of today! There was no church service, and no minister to say that the bride and groom were married. The wedding ceremony was a big party!

On the day of the wedding in Cana, everyone was in good spirits. This was going to be a joyous celebration which could last as long as a week. Jesus and his disciples were looking forward to talking and eating with their friends.

Yes, weddings were important events, announced well in advance and celebrated by the entire village. In some respects weddings were the chief celebrations enjoyed in the year. When Jews reflected on what heaven or the arrival of the Messiah would be like, they thought about banquets, and the wedding banquet was the foremost model that came to mind.

I think it's safe to say that Jesus' daily schedule was full. After all, he was on a mission to save the world, the greatest mission in history! Yet he took time out to attend a wedding and take part in its celebration. We may be tempted to think we should not take time out from our "important" work for social activities, but these occasions should be a part of our lives, our mission. I invite you to look at the Glenkirk Church calendar of events. There are many opportunities to meet people and develop friendships. Jesus didn't wait for a social event to come to him! He took the initiative and went to the event. I encourage you to be proactive and plan to attend events designed to help you integrate into the life of the church.

Tuesday

John 2:1-12



When Jesus, his disciples, and his mother went to a wedding, an embarrassing thing happened. The host of the wedding ran out of wine. Now that might not seem to be much to you and me. If we go to a party and our host runs out of food or drink, we just order more to be delivered or make a quick trip to Ralph's, Von's, Stater Brother's or Albertson's. In Jesus day this was not an option. The party would be over if the host ran out of food or drink. This would be very embarrassing.

So, when Jesus' mother, Mary, turns to him for help she was probably not thinking Jesus would perform a miracle. Tradition says that Joseph, Mary's husband, was dead, so she was use to asking her son for help.

It is important to understand that Jesus performed miracles according to God's will (John 5: 19, 30, 7: 6, 8: 25) and not in response to any person's wish or need. Although Mary is an unwitting helper in this first miracle, Jesus does not act at her bidding. He distanced himself from her (v. 4) indicating that his ministry would be according to "his hour." Jesus' response may seem rude and without compassion, but there is something more involved. In this passage Jesus meets the need, but he does more. Compassion alone might provide wine, but Sovereign grace does more; it reveals God in what is done and confirms the disciples faith in Jesus.

I remember a Sunday School teacher telling me when I was a child that whatever I do, do it for the glory of God. God, through his Holy Spirit wants to impact our entire life, not just certain parts. Does your life reveal God to others? Jesus performed miracles not to draw attention to himself for human praise but rather to reveal God the Father. I challenge you to live your life so that people see Christ in you. Jesus himself said in John 8:54 "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me."



Wednesday

John 2: 1-12

The Gospels record thirty-five miraculous signs performed by Jesus. In the Gospel of John, each miracle was a sign intended to point people to the truth that Jesus is the divine Son of God come down from heaven. These signs were remarkable actions that displayed the presence and power of God.

Some (not me!), have wondered why Jesus would “waste” his powers on performing a miracle of providing wine for a wedding celebration, a party! This miracle (and indeed all the miracles recorded by the other Gospels writers) demonstrated God’s great love for people and his concern for their individual needs.

In this passage the disciples (those who had been called thus far), were following Jesus for their own reasons. Others may have been questioning who Jesus was and were following him to find out. John says that when the disciples saw the miracle they then believed in him. This miracle revealed how Jesus would go about his ministry-- helping others, speaking the Word of God with authority and being in personal touch with people.

I have asked myself the questions, “How can I serve the Lord?” and “What does God want me to do?” The specific answers to these questions will, to some degree, vary from person to person, but the answers will always be in the context of helping others, speaking the Word of God with authority, and being in personal touch with people. If this is indeed how Jesus went about his ministry, are we called to something different? I don’t think so. We are all called to ministry. A simple way to define the term ministry would be anything one does for others as a servant of God that is consistent with biblical principles.

Church is not simply a waiting room to rest in until the heavenly chariot carries you to heaven. God wants you actively involved in ministry in His name.

Thursday

John 2: 12-25

The Temple in Jerusalem was the organizing center of Jewish life in the first century. It was the center of government, judicial law, religious life, and taxation. Here was set the moral, religious and political tone of the country. The Temple was the basis of Jewish religious and national pride. The Jerusalem Temple structure dazzled visitors (Mark 13:1).

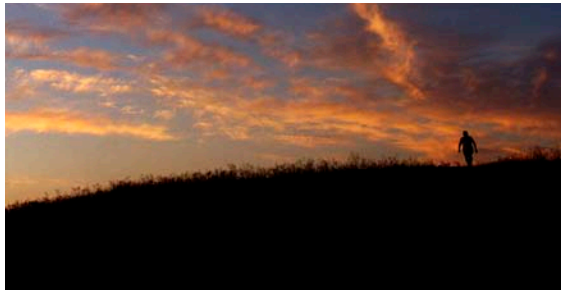
Therefore Jesus' activity described in our passage of scripture was not merely upsetting, it was outrageous! He was in the center of public life and made a very public protest.

Jewish law stipulated that weapons could not be brought into the Temple, and a whip was classified as a weapon. Temple police (particularly at festival time) were charged with keeping public order. Hence, Jesus probably did not bring a formal whip into the Temple but instead gathered material inside the temple to make a home-made whip. If he had brought in anything else, I expect he would have been arrested.

Jesus saw the Temple as his Father's house. But the religious leaders of that day were turning it into a place primarily for business and money changing. It had become no more than a marketplace. People had created an environment that, in essence, put a price on what God intended to be free! This marketplace atmosphere made it difficult for people to worship, and worship was intended to be the main focus of the Temple. No wonder Jesus was angry!

When I was twenty years old, long ago in a galaxy far away, a friend of mine and I backpacked through most of Western Europe and Scandinavia. We had our EuroRail passes and a two man mountain tent. We had a wonderful adventure. Many sermon illustrations from that trip! I remember well seeking out the great cathedrals I had seen only in books and movies. What impressed me was the sense of "awe" I had from simply entering these marvelous structures. My attention was constantly drawn upwards. It was inspiring.

Most of the church structures we see seem to pale when compared to the great cathedrals. What they do have in common is their purpose as houses of God designed for worship. Glenkirk's sanctuary's reason for existence is to facilitate worship to bring honor and glory to God. I know we can experience God anywhere, but I also try to remember there is something very special about worshipping God in His house.



Friday

John 2:12-25



The cleansing of the Jerusalem Temple is a troubling and important story. If left on the historical level, it is easy to see the temple as corrupt. Much more is going on here. Jesus came to the center of Jewish life and did something outrageous! He made a harsh judgment on what motivated the people who occupied the temple.

Our society has intentionally separated church and state; and their domains appear completely distinct. Yet it is not so simple. For one thing, secular society does indeed promote a sort of religion that is a brew of patriotism, self-sacrifice, tolerance, and openness. Any visit to Washington's National Cathedral will at once show how a country can baptize its national interests in religious rhetoric.

We are all participants in society. We are to respect it, yes, but also to be a witness for God's interests. To be salt and light. We need to be agents for change and be angry with things that anger God. When our society or government does something that is wrong, we have to be willing to move to action.

John 2: 23-25 assures us that Jesus knows entirely what is going on inside of us and our churches. We are people who want to be in charge of our lives and manage all of our relationships with God. Why is it so difficult to kneel before God and listen, and then proceed to live our lives according to his direction?

I encourage you to come each week to worship in the sanctuary located at 1700 Palopinto Ave. I also challenge you to understand that worship does not end when you depart the sanctuary. We are called by God to worship as a way of life! We need to stop thinking in categories that cut up our lives as "private" and "public", "inward" and "outward."

We do not stop being Christian after we conclude our worship time in the sanctuary. We should depart to live our worship, to celebrate God's goodness, to rely on the skill called forgiveness and practice hospitality to strangers.



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