

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JULY 22 - 26, 2019

A close-up photograph of a succulent flower with green and purple-tinted petals. The image is overlaid with several semi-transparent geometric shapes: a large green triangle on the left, a large blue triangle on the right, and a central white circle. Dotted lines in yellow, orange, and white connect various points on the flower and the geometric shapes.

IN COMMON

SERMON SERIES

June 2 - July 28

MONDAY

Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 2:8-10

Consider Yourself Commissioned

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). Ever wonder what those good works are for you to walk in? Jesus told His disciples what some of those good works are when he gave them the Great Commission (something we share *in common*): Go and make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Trinity; teach them to obey all that I have commanded you.

Jesus didn't just send them (John 20:21); He promised He would go with them until the job was done. World evangelization is a tall, tall order; but Jesus is our commissioner. Our senior partners in this enterprise are none other than God our Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. God directs us and resources us (Philippians 4:19).

Doug Coe is a leader of a ministry to people in government in Washington, DC. He became acquainted with Bob, an insurance salesman. Bob became a Christian and began to meet with Doug to learn about his faith. Bob said, “I think I'll pray for Africa.” Doug thought that Africa was too big. Pick one nation in Africa, he suggested. “Okay,” Bob replied, “How about Kenya?” Doug agreed Kenya would be good and added, “If you pray for Kenya every day for six months, I will give you \$500 if nothing special happens. And if something special does happen, you give me \$500.” Bob agreed.

Nothing happened ... for awhile. Then, Bob was at a meeting sitting at a table when the subject of orphans in Kenya came up. “Why are you so interested?” the lady wanted to know. Bob explained, and the lady said she was the director of the largest orphanage in Kenya. Would he like to go and visit? Yes!

During his visit, he was moved by what he saw and realized they were short of medicines and pharmaceuticals. Returning home, he wrote letters to pharmaceutical companies, suggesting that they donate unused medicines to the orphanage in Kenya, which they did—thousands of dollars’ worth. (Ortberg 2019)

QUESTIONS

We too can pray and see special things beyond what we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). *Prayer changes things.* What are you praying for?

PRAYERS FOR THE CHINLE MISSION TEAM

Pray for the Chinle Mission Team to have energy and to be an example of God’s love as they serve the Navajo people. Pray that many children feel welcome while attending Vacation Bible School as they learn about the Lord’s goodness and understand that God wants the best for them always.

TUESDAY

Matthew 9:37-38; Mark 11:17; John 15:16

Pray

“Prayer is the first domino—in regards to the Great Commission.”

—Keith Carey, Global Prayer Digest Editor

It was God’s idea to make the world and the people in it. It was God’s idea to redeem the world and the people in it. To do this, He sent His Son Jesus to make disciples, which Jesus began to do. Having conquered death and the grave, Jesus commissioned His followers to partner with Him, His/our Father, the Holy Spirit, and other disciples in making even more disciples of all people groups (nations, ethnicities). Prayer invites God into the equation. Prayer makes a difference. Jesus commanded us to pray (Matthew 9:38; Luke 18:1).

Many stories tell of the value of prayer. One story is about J.O. Fraser of the China Inland Mission, assigned to the Yunnan Province of southwest China. Fraser learned Chinese, but then he became friends with a group of Lisu tribesmen, who spoke Chinese only haltingly. As his friendship deepened, he began to learn their language in order to better communicate the gospel to them.

As J.O. Fraser shared the gospel, it seemed to fall on deaf ears—the Lisu culture being steeped in placating gods whom the people feared. Discouraged, he returned to England for furlough. Once in England, he began to share his burden with churches. He felt compelled to

raise up bands of praying people to pray specifically for the Lisu people—for God to break through the adversary’s hold on them. Throughout the British Isles, churches and prayer groups took up the challenge.

Meanwhile, back in Yunnan Province and across the border into Burma, strange things were happening. First one, then another stood up to the fear of not worshipping their idols. The prayers back home seemed to act like rain on the seeds Fraser had planted. (Taylor; Crossman) A people-movement ensued to such an extent that today the Lisu are a Christian people. The story of the Lisu’s turning to Jesus and prayer’s part in it has inspired prayer for other groups throughout the world with similar results.

It is helpful to be reminded that Jesus has been and is now praying for us (Hebrews 7:25).

QUESTIONS

What story of answered prayer have you heard or experienced? Why not share it with someone?

PRAYERS FOR CHINLE MISSION TEAM

Today the team teaches the children that God is with them when they are afraid. Pray that their hearts are open and that they understand God’s peace and presence. Pray that the women’s group will receive the daily messages to pass on to their families. Pray also that the men’s group will gain some knowledge of God’s truths.

WEDNESDAY

Acts 2:38-41; Romans 6:3-14

Be Baptized

Baptism is prominent in the Great Commission for a reason (Matthew 28:19). Peter heard that commission and a few days later on Pentecost Day, 3,000 were baptized and added to the church—he did not procrastinate!

Baptism is connected to the Holy Spirit and the kingdom of God (John 3:3-12). Baptism is about dying to the old self and coming alive in Christ (Romans 6:3-14). It is the transferring from death to life (John 5:24), from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13).

Baptism is a New Testament sacrament. It reminds us of Israel's passing through the Red Sea, leaving Egypt in the rearview mirror. It is like an ID card, identifying us as a member of Christ's Body—the Church. In many cultures of the world, people pay a price for such identification.

The following story illustrates these truths. A knock on the church office door in Sibul, Sarawak, in eastern Malaysia (north Borneo) revealed a shy teenage boy named Patrick. Missionary Pastor Brian Newton, who was about to go on his first furlough back to England, opened the door. "Yes?" Brian asked. "I want to be baptized," Patrick replied.

"Well now, are you ready to be baptized?" Brian quizzed Patrick to determine his readiness for such a step. Brian found him to be

ready, so he hesitantly baptized him—hesitantly because Patrick was from the Melanau tribe—a nominally Muslim group living to the north toward the coast.

While on furlough, Brian left the Sibuhay Church in the charge of a senior missionary, Ray Cunningham. Arriving in England and knowing the story of J.O. Fraser and the Lisu people (see yesterday's devotional), Brian had some prayer cards printed featuring the story of Patrick and handed them out to churches and prayer groups he visited.

Months later stories began drifting back from Malaysia of unusual happenings in Patrick's home of River Ud Town. Fifty people wanted to be baptized, and the senior missionary determined 34 were ready. Who would baptize them? None other than Patrick, under the supervision of missionary Pastor Cunningham. The church would grow to 200 and Patrick became the pastor, later attending Lawas Bible School. (Newton)

QUESTIONS

From Pentecost until today, the Church continues to grow by baptism. When were you baptized? If you haven't been baptized, why not do it?

PRAYERS FOR CHINLE MISSION TEAM

The children are learning about thankfulness and God's enduring love, especially during life's changes. This is an important message for the Navajo whose lives are always challenging, unsteady, and constantly changing. As the team does a walk into Canyon De Chelly together today, pray that they will be strengthened and grow in fellowship.

THURSDAY

Isaiah 6:8; Zechariah 4:10

Be Available

Mark was Barnabas' cousin. He went with Paul and Barnabas on a mission trip. Then Mark bailed. From Paul's perspective that didn't work out (at first). But today we have the Gospel of Mark, which is often the first book translated in any given language because it's the shortest, the most straightforward, and the "simplest" gospel story of Jesus.

William Cameron Townsend was a student at Occidental College when he signed up to be a colporteur, distributing Spanish Bibles in Guatemala for a summer. A Cakchiquel Indian asked Cameron, "If your God is so smart, how come He can't speak my language?" The question haunted Cameron and led him to take up the challenge of learning how to make the sounds and write them down in order to learn the science of linguistics (phonology and grammar) and of translation (orthography and semantics).

"Uncle Cam," as he became known, would go on to start a school of linguistics—the Summer Institute of Linguistics and a mission called Wycliffe Bible Translators, which has translated and published the New Testament into over 1,000 languages. Today Wycliffe operates all over the world, especially in Africa, Asia, and Papua New Guinea. It is one of the largest mission agencies in the world. (Brinneman; Wycliffe)

Praying for people in missions, giving to mission projects, and going on short-term teams are all ways of making yourself available. “Taste and see,” the Psalmist said, a verse that applies to the Great Commission as well as the gospel of the kingdom of God. God will expand your heart and multiply the little you think you have to give, like Jesus did with the loaves and fishes the boy offered Him to feed 5,000 men, not including women and children, and like He did for John Mark and Cameron Townsend. God takes our fractions and multiplies them by His infinity. (And in case you think all these stories are only about men, check out Ruth Tucker’s *Guardians of the Great Commission: The Story of Women in Modern Missions.*)

“God has not given us a spirit of fear or timidity, but of love, and of power, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

QUESTIONS

In what way have you made yourself available for the Great Commission? In what ways are you considering making yourself available to support missions in the coming year?

PRAYERS FOR CHINLE MISSION TEAM

Today’s lesson is the resurrection story, a message of hope and joy. The children are given an opportunity to accept Jesus. Pray that their hearts are open and that God’s power would guide them to Himself.

FRIDAY

Matthew 28:19-20; John 15:10

Be Obedient

The Great Commission includes these words: “... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” What does **obedience** have to do with the Great Commission, the gospel of Jesus, or the kingdom of God? This question is worthy of more than one day’s devotional—it is worth a lifetime of enquiry and application. John Ortberg wrote a primer on the subject: *Eternity Is Now in Session*. For today let’s concentrate on four questions.

Question one: What does Jesus say about obedience? Jesus said, “As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commands and remain in His love” (John 15:10; see also John 14:21, 23).

Question two: Why would we not “obey everything” Jesus commanded us? We might think it impossible to do so. We might think we are saved by grace and not by works (Ephesians 2:8). But as Tim Peck’s recent sermon pointed out: We don’t work for our salvation; we work out our salvation “with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). Obedience has nothing to do with earning God’s salvation; it has to do with working out the gift of salvation we have been given. Dallas Willard is quoted as saying, “God is not opposed to effort, but to earning.” (Andrews)

Question three: Has misunderstanding caused us to skip over these words in the Great Commission? According to Dallas Willard, “Yes.” He wrote a whole book entitled *The Great Omission*, claiming the church has omitted these words of Jesus to obey all His commands and not given them their due attention.

Question four: What are the commands of Jesus? George Patterson, a conservative Baptist missionary, sought to start a church-planting movement in Honduras. But first he had to figure out what constitutes a church. What makes it different from a club or any other organization? From Scripture, he determined that a church is a group of people who obey Jesus’ commands. He boiled Jesus’ commands down to seven: (1) believe/repent, (2) love God and people, (3) pray, (4) give, (5) be baptized, (6) take communion, and (7) witness/make disciples. (Patterson)

QUESTIONS

Glenkirk Church has many mission opportunities: Chinle, YWAM Brazil, Birmingham, Glad Tidings India, and more. How have you supported these mission projects or plan to participate in them in the future by praying, giving, and going?

PRAYERS FOR CHINLE MISSION TEAM

As the team closes today, pray that the truths which have been taught to the children and women will plant themselves in their hearts and minds and transform their days. Pray they will dwell on God’s greatness and power and feel His presence daily. As the team leaves Chinle to return home, pray for safe travel.

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