

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

SEPTEMBER 16 - 20, 2019

WALKING IN THE TRUTH

SERMON SERIES 9/8 - 11/24



MONDAY

1 John 2:6

“Those of us who aspire to live in Jesus are to live as He lived.”

—1 John 2:6

How did Jesus live? And how can we live like that? Reading and studying the gospels helps us to understand how Jesus lived.

First, Jesus lived in fellowship with and in union with His Father in heaven. And we are invited to live in fellowship and in union with Jesus and our Father in heaven, too (1 John 1:3). When we abide in Jesus (John 15:5), we are living like Jesus.

Already in 1 John, we have learned that to be in fellowship with God who is light, we must walk in the light (1:7). That is, we must learn how to be honest and transparent with God (and one another). God helps us do this difficult thing by giving us His promise of forgiveness and cleansing (1:9). And Jesus Himself is our Advocate before our Father in heaven (2:1).

Second, Jesus loves people. This love—the love of God has been poured into us by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:5). When we love *“the least of these,”* we’re really loving Jesus (Matthew 25:40). Loving people can be a challenge, but Jesus and His Spirit enable us to love the people in our lives and those He brings across our path.

Third, Jesus overcame the trials in His life through prayer and living dependent on His Father and the Spirit. And we learn to be victorious

and to be overcomers in our trials in the same way. We have the same resources Jesus had. Yes, Jesus had trials. Near the end of His earthly life, He told His disciples, “*You are those who have stood by me in my trials*” (Luke 22:28). Jesus is able to give us the victory in our trials (Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 15:57).

Living in the kingdom of God means (1) fellowshiping with God, (2) loving people, and (3) overcoming in trials. Sample prayer: Lord Jesus, draw me closer to You. May I be a catalyst for others to draw closer to You, too. Thank You for the faith You give; may it come through the tests and trials life brings my way. Thank You.

QUESTIONS

What is one aspect of Christ-likeness that you would like to see in your life that is not there now or that needs to grow?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS CHILDREN’S RELIEF HAITI

Pray for Three Angels Children’s Relief Haiti that serves at-risk families and orphans through a faith-based school program (315 students preschool through sixth grade), an orphanage with 13 babies providing 24/7 care and support, medical and dental clinics that provide services to the community, and a farm with a sustainable food program.

TUESDAY

1 Corinthians 11:1

“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1 NKJV).
—Paul

In what ways did Paul imitate Christ? And what are the lessons for us?

First, Paul was an exceedingly thankful man. He wrote to Timothy the things he was thankful for. He thanked Jesus for giving him mercy beyond measure in forgiving his past, being once “*a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man*” (1 Timothy 1:13). He thanked Jesus for giving him grace beyond measure in choosing him to be His apostle to the non-Jews. He thanked Jesus for giving him strength and for believing in him to accomplish his purpose” (1 Timothy 1:12-14). If you are wondering how Jesus was a thankful Savior, hold that thought.

Second, Jesus was all in when He came to share with us the uncertainty and unpredictability of life. Jesus stuck with His Father’s leading to the point of dying on a cross. When Jesus told Paul, “Go to Damascus. There you will be told all that I have assigned you to do” (Acts 22:10), he did. And all God assigned him to do, he did. Like Jesus, Paul went all in.

Third, having thrown off “*everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles,*” Paul ran with perseverance “*the race marked out for [him], fixing [his] eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. For the joy set before Him [Jesus], He endured trials and the cross*” (Hebrews 12:1-2). Paul had a joy set before him, too. It was “*to grasp ever more firmly the*

purpose for which Jesus grasped [him]" (Philippians 3:12, Phillips). It was *"the prize for which God had called [him] heavenward"* (Philippians 3:14, NIV).

As for Jesus being thankful, it is no doubt an understatement to say Jesus was thankful for His Father in heaven, for the Holy Spirit, for His disciples, for the people God gave to Him (John 6:37), and for the unfolding fulfillment of the divine plan.

QUESTIONS

What is the joy God has set before you? What is your "thankfulness quotient"? Jesus went "all in" on us. This should make us want to go "all in" on Him. Are we doing that? Does anything need to change for that to be true?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS CHILDREN'S RELIEF HAITI

Pray for peace in Haiti, a country that has been plagued with ongoing economic and political issues for several years. Pray for a resolution to the underlying conflicts, as well as for safety and protection for the Three Angels compound and its workers.

WEDNESDAY

Genesis 45:2, 50:1, 17

“Joseph wept.” —Genesis 50:17

Joseph was favored by his father, Jacob, sold by his brothers as a slave into Egypt, slandered by Potiphar’s wife, jailed for deeds he did not do, forgotten by the butler whose dream he interpreted favorably, elevated to the second highest position in Egypt, and reunited with his family. After his death, his bones were carried to the promised land for burial.

Because of some similarities in character, Joseph is considered an archetype of Jesus. How was Joseph like Jesus?

Neither Joseph nor Jesus wavered in their trust in God. Both were tempted to believe Satan’s lie that God cannot be trusted. But the shield of faith quenched all of Satan’s lies (Ephesians 6:16). Both availed themselves of the eternal promise: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.”* In all his ways, Joseph acknowledged God, and God directed his paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Joseph loved his brothers. That is why Joseph wept (45:2). He was overcome with emotion. His forgiveness of his brothers was an outgrowth of his love. And his love for them showed that he was living in the light, where nothing could make him stumble (1 John 2:10). Jesus loves us, has forgiven us, and is *“not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters”* (Hebrews 2:11).

What was intended for evil, God intended for good “to save many lives” (Genesis 50:20). For Joseph, it was the salvation of a family and a nation. For Jesus, it is the salvation of the world (John 4:42).

The Psalmist summarized Joseph’s story like this: God “sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, he was laid in irons. Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him” (Psalm 105:17-19, NKJV).

Whatever you are going through, God can be trusted. And He can help us love each other and even those outside of our circle. Prayer is a good starting place.

QUESTIONS

Do you believe God can use you redemptively like He used Joseph? Or do you struggle to believe that you are an integral part of His plan? You are part of His plan, you know.

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS CHILDREN’S RELIEF HAITI

Pray for the students at Three Angels Christian Academy as they finish up their summer break and head back to school. Petition God for their safety and a clear path to learning throughout the year.

THURSDAY

1 John 2:10

“Whoever loves his brother and sister has the light of life, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.” (1 John 2:10)
—John the Apostle

Here is one of the greatest promises in the Bible. But it is conditional. The problem is ... each of us has people in our lives who are impossible or difficult to love. And we may even be one of those hard-to-love people.

Once upon a time my wife faced this dilemma. She was 10 years into our marriage, and for her the flame had flickered out. Kaput—she was done. Her Christian marriage counselor gave her an assignment. “Go get alone with God and hear what He has to say.” She found a picnic table in a wooded area and sat down. After a while she asked God, “Can I go now?” Here’s how the inaudible, marriage-saving conversation went, according to her:

Wife: Can I go now?

God: Not yet.

Wife: What do you want me to do?

God: I want you to love your husband.

Wife: I can’t.

God: Well, I love him.

Wife: Yes—but you’re God!

God: I tell you what—if you will begin to do loving things for him, then loving feelings will begin to come again.

She began to follow this suggestion and has continued to do so for 43 years. His words held true. Just thinking about this interchange makes me realize how much God blessed both of us that day!

Jesus seems to specialize in impossible situations, doesn't He?

Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27).

QUESTIONS

What do you need to hear from God today?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS CHILDREN'S RELIEF HAITI

Pray for the preparation of the staff and teachers for the 2019-2020 school year. Ask God to protect teachers and staff from ongoing turmoil in the country and to give them an even larger desire to love and care for their students.

FRIDAY

Acts 7:60

“Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” (Acts 7:60) —Stephen

Peggy Covell, the daughter of missionaries to the Philippines, volunteered to work at a camp of World War II Japanese prisoners of war located on the border between Colorado and Utah. “Some three weeks after her first visit, one of the men asked, ‘Why are you so kind to us?’ ‘Because Japanese soldiers killed my parents,’ she answered.” (Prange, Chapter 25) At first, she had hated her parents’ killers. But knowing her parents, she became convinced they had forgiven their executioners, even as they were being killed. Could she do less? She would honor her parents by doing what they would have done.

This story came to the attention of Mitsuo Fuchida, lead Japanese pilot at Pearl Harbor, who participated in the war crimes trials following World War II. He “assumed that Japanese in American prison camps must have suffered atrocities equal to those for which Japanese were being tried and convicted.” (Prange)

Jacob DeShazer was a downed American pilot who suffered two years in a Japanese prison in China. A Bible was circulating through the camp, and he had the opportunity to read it, finding faith in the process. He became a new man and promised God to return to Japan as a missionary if he survived. He did survive and returned

to Japan. His story found its way into a Japanese leaflet, “I Was a Prisoner of Japan.” Mitsuo Fuchida was given a copy, and he read it. (Prange, Chapter 26)

Fuchida was thunderstruck by these two stories of forgiveness and love. It prompted him to purchase a Japanese New Testament, which he eventually read, and it changed him. One thing led to another, and he became an evangelist, visiting and spreading the gospel in Japan, especially in prisons. What an unusual career path for him!

Peggy Covell’s and Jacob DeShazer’s stories remind us of Jesus who said, “*Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing*” (Luke 23:34), and Stephen, who said, “*Lord, do not hold this sin against them*” (Acts 7:60). Both Paul and Mitsuo Fuchida were listening.

QUESTIONS

Who does God want you to show His love to? Is there someone you need to forgive?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS CHILDREN’S RELIEF HAITI

Pray for funds to purchase the needed books for the school year. Pray that the need will be met as God puts it on people’s hearts to provide the funding for books that will help the children to learn.

Sources

- Prange, Gordon W., *God's Samurai: Lead Pilot at Pearl Harbor*, London: Brassey's Military Books, 1990, 199-209. (Chapter 25's title is "Where Does This Love Come From?" Chapter 26 contains Jacob DeShazer's story and interaction with Mitsuo Fuchida.)

