

GLENKIRK CHURCH



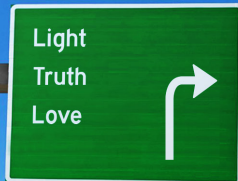
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

OCTOBER 14 - 18, 2019

## WALKING IN THE TRUTH

SERMON SERIES 9/8 - 11/24



# MONDAY

## 1 John 3:10, 11; Galatians 5:22, 23

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Unless one is a botanist, it is difficult to distinguish a tangerine tree from an orange tree. Only when a tree bears fruit can one tell what type of tree it is. So too with Christians. The evidence that we are “walking in Truth” is the fruit of the Spirit: *“love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness and self-control. Against these there are no restricting laws”* (Galatians 5:22, 23).

It is the first fruit of the Spirit—love—that distinguishes a child of God from a child of the devil (1 John 3:10). We are called to live a life of love. *“This is the message you have heard from the beginning. We should love one another”* (1 John 3:11). We know that we can’t fully love as God has asked us. Why are we called to do something clearly impossible? That is the question we will study this week. What are the implications of this rather audacious statement?

As followers of Jesus, loving one another is a goal toward which we move, even though no one can reach this goal completely on earth since we all sin. We live in tension between sin and perfection, between hate and love, between imperfection and future perfection. Our identity as God’s children gives us confidence to keep pressing forward in obedience to God as we await His coming.

God is the source of unconditional love. *“See what great love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God”* (1 John 3:1). The one who is in a right relationship with God taps into the source of love. God’s unconditional love flows like water pouring out of a faucet. Trying to attach a hose to a spigot while water is rushing out is difficult. Getting

the hose “in right relationship” with the spigot means not getting soaked. Using the “appropriate connecting unit,” one can attach a hose to the spigot. In relation with God, that connecting unit is Jesus Christ and His life of self-sacrificial love.

Tension occurs when we are influenced by culture’s self-centered life. “Do not be surprised ... if the world hates you” (1 John 3:13) because God’s light and love shown through you will reveal the world’s self-centered lives.

## QUESTIONS

Have you experienced God’s unconditional love? How do you show that love to others? Have you experienced the tension between culture’s self-centeredness and God’s love?

## PRAYERS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD HOMEWORK HOUSE

Pray for the safety of Neighborhood Homework House (NHH), which was recently burglarized—pray for recovery efforts. Recently there was a report of an attempted child abduction across the street. NHH would generally like a hedge of protection for its students, parents, volunteers and staff.

# TUESDAY

**1 John 3:12; John 15:4-5; Romans 6:12-14; Romans 10:9-12; 2 Corinthians 5:21**

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A Christian one who is following the Truth is one who does righteousness. This does not mean living without sinning, rather being in a right relationship, properly connected to God. The word *righteousness* means “integrity, honesty, justice, treating people fairly or showing God’s love.”

Tension arises when we really want to love others, but we also want to feel secure and are reluctant in making ourselves vulnerable. It is not easy loving as Jesus loved. Jesus said: “*Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. ... If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:4-5). Remain/Continue in Him.

We may try doing good, loving others, being honest, and doing what is right. Jesus says that the only way to live a good life is to remain close to Him, like a branch attached to a vine. Apart from Christ our efforts are unfruitful and useless. When you bear much fruit, God is glorified. God is glorified when people come to a right relationship (following the Truth) with Him and begin bearing fruit in their lives.

God’s love flows through us. We are channels of God’s unconditional love. If God’s love is like a water gushing from a faucet, we have the privilege, in Jesus’ name, of taking that cold and refreshing water to people who are thirsting for Truth and a genuine relationship (fellowship).

The truth about loving people comes from Christ's sacrifice, revealing God's love to us and calling us to demonstrate that same love to others. John writes in a negative manner: Those not loving their brother/sister are not children of God (1 John 4:20-21). The obvious implication is: *"Children of God love their sister/brother not just with words but with deeds"* (1 John 3:18).

Tension: How do we live a life of love in a culture urging us to live for ourselves? By daily reminding ourselves that Christ exchanged our sins for righteousness and by having a right relationship with Him. When we are in a right relationship with Christ, we can be in a right relationship with others, demonstrating the transforming power of God's love. God offers to exchange His righteousness for our sin.

## QUESTIONS

How do you take the "water" of God's love to others? How do your actions say you love others? How generous are you with your time?

## PRAYERS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD HOMEWORK HOUSE

Many NHH students experienced meaningful spiritual growth over the summer as they participated in several faith formation pieces, including sleep-away camp, day camp, and VBS at Glenkirk. Pray they continue to grow in their relationship with Christ.

# WEDNESDAY

**1 John 3:16-18; John 3:16; John 15:12; Matthew 25:45**

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Read John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16. What are the similarities? What are the differences? *“God so love the world that He gave His only son”* (John 3:16). *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us”* (1 John 3:16). What are we called to do in both Scriptures? *“Whoever believes in Him (accepts God’s gift of forgiveness), shall not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). *“We ought to lay down our lives for our sisters/brothers”* (1 John 3:16).

In response to God’s love—Jesus’ giving His life for us—not only do we believe this is true and accept God’s forgiveness and Jesus’ love, but we are called to love others with that same type of love. Jesus said: *“Love one another as I have loved you”* (John 15:12). *“By this we know what love is: that Christ lay down His life for us”* (1 John 3:16). Jesus said: *“When you did it to the least of these, you did it unto me”* (Matthew 25:24).

In loving one another, we love God. We also begin experiencing God’s transforming love when we experience God’s love through another person. “Tender Loving Care (TLC)” comes through a parent, a Deacon’s ministry of prayer, cards and phone calls, visits delivering food, providing transportation, listening to each other. It is not only the Deacons, Elders, and Staff who are called to love; all of us who have accepted the Truth and invitation to walk with Jesus are called to love.

In Colombia, South America, a family's home burned down to the ground. They were not Followers of the Truth (Christians). Members of a small Presbyterian Church named Nazareth invited them into their homes. The family was given clothes and meals, and the children were cared for as the parents began a new start. The result was that the family experienced God's love through those who followed the Truth, Jesus Christ. In gratitude, they accepted God's love of forgiveness and became Followers of Jesus Christ. (G. Lee Stewart)

Not everyone whom we love will respond as that family did. Yet, we are called to love, even if there is no result. Love is thinking of the other person and expecting nothing in return.

## QUESTIONS

What does "abiding in Christ" mean? How does it relate to Paul's expression "in Christ"? What's the critical difference between being "saved for good works" vs. "saved by good works"?

## PRAYERS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD HOMEWORK HOUSE

NHH is currently serving almost 150 students and their families. There is room for about 50 more students. Pray for discernment and wisdom as NHH finishes up its enrollment season, and pray for guidance as staff members and volunteers reach out to families who might need NHH services.

# THURSDAY

**1 John 3:19-22; Matthew 7:7; Romans 8:1; Hebrews 14:9-13**

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*“This then is how we know that we belong to the Truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His presence whenever our hearts condemn us.”*  
(1 John 3:19)

Sometimes we don't love others the way we think we should. We think, “I am not loved, so how can I love others.” Guilt may grip us when we think we are not doing enough in showing Christ's love. How do we escape the gnawing accusations of our conscience? It does no good to ignore them or to rationalize our lack of behavior.

Our nature is to respond more passionately to the positive actions of those we like: to our children when they are on good behavior as compared to when they drive us crazy; to our spouse when we are showered with love by him or her; to employees who treat us with respect. That is natural. However, that is not unconditional love.

We must set our hearts on God's unconditional love and believe God loves us in spite of ... When our hearts condemn us, let us remember and affirm that God knows our motives, our situations, as well as our actions. God's voice of assurance is stronger than any accusatory voice of our conscience. If we are in Christ, He will not condemn us. *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1). *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God,*



*cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God. For this reason, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:14-15).*

Therefore, if we are living for the Lord but feeling we are not good enough, let us remind ourselves that God is greater than our conscience. *Love is not an emotion. It is a decision.* When we don't feel loved or find it difficult loving someone else, let us remind ourselves of God's unconditional love. May it flow through us, even when we don't feel like loving.

If our conscience is clear, we can come to God without fear, confident that our requests will be heard (Matthew 7:7).

## QUESTIONS

How do you know you belong to the Truth? What links obedience to love to belief?

## PRAYERS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD HOMEWORK HOUSE

This year NHH enrolled eight seniors, well above its average. Senior year is a very exciting time. Pray for the capacity to stand alongside these students who will be, among other things, navigating their post high school lives.

# FRIDAY

**1 John 3:23-24; John 20:31; Act 16:29-32**

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As we journey with Jesus, walking in the Truth, we are called to a radical life of love. We wrestle with how to live so that others will know who we are and who we are following. Love is the evidence that we are saved (made right with God). Love means putting others first and being unselfish. Love is action, not just an emotion—showing others that we really care; we are not just saying it.

In summary, Jesus is the source of unconditional love. He gave His life for us. God's unconditional love flows through us. Loving one another demonstrates our love for God.

Tension often occurs between what we are feeling and what we are pursuing. Living in love is not easy. However, we can breathe a sigh of relief; we are connected to the Source of unconditional love. Love and right relationship are interconnected. Jesus loved. When we remain in Him, we will bear the fruit of love.

“The Truth about loving people starts with Christ's death and resurrection (sacrifice), which reveals God's love to us and calls us to demonstrate that same love toward others.” (Pastor Tim Peck)

*“This is [God's] command: to believe in the name of [God's] Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as [God] commanded us. Those who obey [God's] commands live in [God], and [God] in them. And this is*

how we know that [God] lives in us: we know it by the Spirit [God] gave us” (1 John 3:23-24).

“These [things] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). “What must I do to be saved?” ... Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household” (Acts 16:29-31).

Believing and acting means we are made right with God. Believing means patterning our lives after Christ’s, becoming more like Him by uniting ourselves with Him. When we are living like Christ, we will love one another. May our neighbors say of us, “Look how they (Christians) love each other and us.”

“Christians will, sooner or later, be called to show the love of Christ in the midst of sickness. *Perhaps we will minister out of Christ’s love in a time of swine flu.* If so ... [the] best prescription is written in John 3:16.” (A. Mohler)

## QUESTIONS

Do you know your neighbors? Are they followers of Jesus (The Truth)? Do your neighbors know you are a follower of Jesus? If so, how?

## PRAYERS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD HOMEWORK HOUSE

NHH’s mission is to partner with the parents of at-risk Azusa students. Staff members and volunteers would like prayer as they continue to link arms with parents, having the shared goal that these children will thrive and succeed.

## Sources

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- Dr. Timothy Peck, Senior Pastor, Glenkirk Church, Glenkirk, CA
- G. Lee Stewart, a Presbyterian Missionary in Colombia, South America
- R. Albert Mohler: “Love in a Time of Swine Flu.”  
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- *Serendipity Bible for Groups: New International Version* (New York: Serendipity Literary Agency, 1989).

