

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

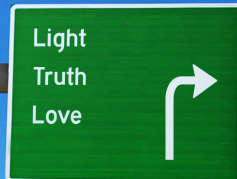
The DEVO

NOVEMBER 11 - 15, 2019

WALKING IN THE

TRUTH

SERMON SERIES 9/8 - 11/24



MONDAY

1 John 5:1

“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.” (1 John 5:1)

A paraphrase of 1 John 5:1 in *The Living Bible* says it like this: *“If you believe that Jesus is the Christ—that he is God’s Son and your Savior—then you are a child of God. And all who love the Father love his children too.”* John says, *“Every person who believes...”* Believes is a powerful word here. In Greek, it means “faith, to entrust, to commit to, trust.”

Being a Christian isn’t just saying a prayer a while back with no relevant outward change taking place. It is a day-by-day-relationship with the One who died in your place, transforming you as you spend time with Him. Where are you at with your belief? Are you “all-in” sold out, trusting in Jesus daily?

Throughout this letter, John has been talking about being born of God. In 1 John 4:7 he says, *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”* Now he explains the *how*: We are born of God when we put our trust in Jesus and believe in the saving work of the cross. We believe that He is the Christ, the Promised Deliverer.

According to our ECO Tenets (What we believe), “All humanity participates in the fall into sin. Those who are united through faith with Jesus Christ are fully forgiven from all their sins so that there is indeed a new creation. We are declared justified, not because of any good that we have done,

but only because of God's grace extended to us in Jesus Christ. In union with Christ through the power of the Spirit, we are brought into right relationship with the Father, who receives us as His adopted children. Jesus Christ is the only Way to this adoption, the sole path by which sinners become children of God."

John gives this truth: You are a child of God, born into His family. All children of God are born of Him. He has us apply this truth by saying that if you love the One who gave you new birth, then you should love the other people He gave birth to as well, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We must believe and receive, but it is God who calls us, the Spirit of God who touches us and transforms us.

QUESTION

Do you have a transforming belief in God? Do you trust Him and are you committed to Him? Is your faith a "sold out" kind of belief as a child of God?

PRAYERS FOR PASTOR BEN YU

Pray for Pastor Ben Yu who will be teaching a survey of the Book of Romans, three hours a day for five days, at the Ministerial Bible School in Mandalay, Myanmar, November 11-15.

TUESDAY

1 John 5:2-3a

“This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands.” (1 John 5:2-3a)

Love is what marks a true believer in Christ. Often Christians question themselves as to whether they have a genuine saving faith. John offers some simple tests or evidence of a true believer: one who loves God, loves God’s Son, Jesus (our Savior and Redeemer), obeys His commands, and loves God’s children.

In his sermon, Dr. Bob Utley said, “Eternal life has observable characteristics.” Salvation is not a ticket. It is not a fire insurance policy. It is an intimate relationship with God. Eternity is not the goal for some day, but for Christ now.

What are some observable characteristics of a life of love? Think about someone mature and sincere in his/her faith. What qualities do you recognize? Joy, peace, gentleness, patience, endurance, self-control? Love for others, sacrifice, service over self? When you embrace truth, there will be fruit and observable spiritual traits.

God wants to transform you from the inside out so that friends, family and acquaintances want to know how you have joy and peace in the midst of suffering. How can you forgive? Why are you different?

Not just because you go to church on a Sunday, but by the way you love. Living in His light and love offers the world a view of God, His forgiveness, and His grace.

A tragic, yet beautiful story played out recently when a Dallas off-duty police officer walked into Botham Jean's apartment, mistaking it for her own, then shot and killed her neighbor. She was convicted of murder and sentenced to ten years behind bars. The brother of the victim read an impact statement in court, saying he forgave her for killing his brother, then hugged her and said, "I think giving your life to Christ would be the best thing that Botham would want you to do." (According to FoxNews)

In John 13:35 Jesus says, "*Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.*" (NLT) In the New Testament we have new commands. Love God and love one another. As true believers we are to obey these commands.

QUESTIONS

Sometimes it's easier to love God than His people. Have you been hurt, offended, overlooked or wronged by another believer? Luke says that if you are sinned against by others, rebuke them; if they repent, forgive them—over and over if needed (Luke 17:3-4). Is there anyone you need to talk with and forgive?

PRAYERS FOR PASTOR BEN YU

Pray for special anointing by the Holy Spirit so that he can teach in the Spirit's power. Pray for rapport, wisdom, sensitivity, and love for the students as he will be teaching students who come from a different cultural background than people in the U.S.

WEDNESDAY

1 John 5:3-5

“In fact, this is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John 5:3-5)

Love is an action. Loving God is keeping His commands. The beautiful thing is that it's not really difficult. When we love our spouse well or our children, we want to serve them and take care of them. When raising children, we want to keep them safe, healthy, and able to live their best lives. We set bedtimes so they can be rested and grow. We put on sunscreen because the alternative is a stinging sunburn. It is the same for God with us. He knows what is best, and the commands in God's Word are there to save us from heartache, trouble, or worse. It's instructions for the best possible life from the Creator Himself.

God's commands are not burdensome because:

1. They are good and make our life easier.
2. We want to please God.
3. They are not legalistic (rules/works) or religious rules.
4. We love God (acts of love are easy & natural).

Everyone born of God overcomes the world! What a promise! The Greek word for overcomes is *nike* (just like the sporting goods company), meaning “conquest, victory or means of success.” Overcoming doesn’t mean that we will be free from struggles, tears or the need for prayer. It means that through Christ who gave His life on the cross, rose again, and overcame the world, our victory is founded on faith in Christ. This is now our birthright as believers born of God. We have victory as sons and daughters, co-heirs with Christ. Faith is the key to overcoming and victory. Amen to that!

When we say we have faith and believe, it is one thing to have head knowledge. It is quite another to know God and live fully surrendered to Him. Charles Spurgeon said, “Look at any Greek lexicon (dictionary) you like, and you will find that the word [faith or believe] does not merely mean to believe, but to trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with, and so forth; the very marrow of the meaning of faith is confidence in, reliance upon.” This reliance upon Jesus each day enables us to overcome temptations and pressures of this world.

QUESTIONS

If love is an action, how are you loving God and loving others this week?

PRAYERS FOR PASTOR BEN YU

Pray for Ben’s personal health and stamina as he has to deal with jet lag, the tropical heat, and humidity for quick adjustment to teaching through a Burmese interpreter who will translate Ben’s teaching sentence-by-sentence. Pray for protection from the attacks of the enemy.

THURSDAY

1 John 5:6-8

“This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”
(1 John 5:6-8)

John is proving that Jesus is fully God and man. According to most commentaries, the water most likely references Jesus’ baptism and the blood His crucifixion.

John’s letter was intended to correct wrong thinking among Christians. The culture was filled with gnosticism, the belief that the body was evil, but the spirit was good. They affirmed Jesus was divine but had trouble believing Jesus as being human in the flesh since they considered the body to be bad. Today we suffer from just the opposite heresy. In our society, we are very comfortable with human Jesus, but less so with divine Jesus. We make Jesus our buddy, not giving the reverence and respect that He deserves as our God, Creator of heaven and earth.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus was baptized since He had no sin and did not need to repent? It was to identify with sinful humanity and become part of us. The same is true of the cross. He chose to give His life on the cross, stand in our place for our sin, and take our punishment.

When we believe in Jesus, we receive the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:16 says, *“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”* There are three that bear witness to who Jesus is: the Spirit, the water

and the blood and these three agree. “A priest was always ordained by sacrificial blood, cleansing water, and oil that spoke of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Jesus also had these three witnesses to His priestly ministry.” (Charles H. Spurgeon)

The Father-Spirit-Son, one God working together since the beginning, are shown clearly in Matthew 3:16-17: *“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My Son,whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’”*

John makes it clear to the Christians of his day and to us that Jesus is God’s only begotten Son AND fully human, baptized and crucified ... our risen Savior.

QUESTIONS

When you envision Jesus, do you see Him more as God or as man? Do you find yourself uncomfortable with either? Does knowing He is fully both give you peace?

PRAYERS FOR PASTOR BEN YU

Pray for Ben to experience great joy in ministering to the students, that the Spirit will work through Ben in a powerful way to bless, encourage, and inspire the students.

FRIDAY

1 John 5:9-12

“Anyone who believes in the Son of God has [God’s] testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.” (1 John 5:10)

We believe witness testimony in our courts, and those are from mere fallible men and women. How much more should we believe the testimony of God and what He says about His Son? John does not want us to believe on blind faith, but have superior witness testimony—God Himself!

Refusing to believe God, denying His truth and testimony, is calling Him a liar. In Josh McDowell’s book, *More Than a Carpenter*, he says, “Jesus claimed to be God, and to him it was of fundamental importance that men and women believed him to be who he was. Either we believe him, or we don’t. He didn’t leave us any wiggle room for in-between, watered-down alternatives. One who claimed what Jesus claimed about himself couldn’t be a good moral man or a prophet.” He was either the Lord, a liar, or a lunatic.

The testimony is that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. John 3:36 says, *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

We all know John 3:16. John's message to Christians of his day and now is that we have assurance and hope in Jesus, not by anything we can do. It does not hinge on our performance on a good day versus a bad day. Eternal life is a gift from God through Jesus. Living as disciples of Jesus, obeying Him, loving God and others is living out our eternal life right now.

In John Ortberg's book, *Eternity Is Now in Session*, (hope you're reading it!), he says, "But human beings are in the process of 'turning into' something—something wonderful or something wicked—all the time." He also says that following Jesus is not a static religious identity but a dynamic calling that constantly invigorates and challenges us. It's not about who is saved and "in" and who is not saved and "out." It's about being disciples of Jesus and working out our salvation every day.

QUESTIONS

It has been said, "We all worship something." Who, what or how are you choosing to worship today? Will it be ... God, His creation, worship through music, gratefulness, the Psalms?

PRAYERS FOR BEN YU

Pray for the students whom Ben will be teaching and for their traveling safety. Pray they will stay healthy during the school term and will have a spiritual hunger for the Word, along with discipline to apply themselves fully to their studies. Pray the students are deeply touched by the Spirit.

Sources

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- *ECO Constitution: Essential Tenets, Polity, and Rules of Discipline*, 2018.
- Pastor Paul Le Boutillier. Calvary Chapel Church in Ontario, Oregon. Sermon on 1 John 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXWRYCF-8TQ>
- Dr. Bob Utley, Retired Professor of Hermeneutics (Bible interpretation). Bethel Church in Washington State. Sermon on 1 John: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnBDXOyiSYM>
- Charles H. Spurgeon's quotes are taken from https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-1Jo/1Jo-5.cfm?a=1164002



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