

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JANUARY 13 - 17, 2020



Questions

FOR JESUS

SERMON SERIES

JANUARY 5 - FEBRUARY 23

MONDAY

Please begin today by reading: John 9:1-7; Psalm 107:19-21

John 9 holds important spiritual truths as Christians. The Lord brings blessings out of suffering; He teaches us to be cautious in our judgment of others; and He uses our difficult times to grow our faith.

In John 16:33, Jesus says: *“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in Me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”*

Jesus loves and knows us deeply with an understanding compassion. He is not an unreachable God, but our Savior who humbled Himself to be one of us. He had His heart broken; He became frustrated and angry because of people’s actions, suffering brutally; He died for sins he never committed. All for us. He gets us.

The book of Psalms is a collection of cries, prayers and praise. The authors of the Psalms experienced every struggle, heartache and fear imaginable. Bringing the Scriptures into your heart enables peace, hope and joy to permeate and heal in the midst of fear, doubt and hurt.

We learn far more about ourselves and the faithfulness of God when we are in the middle of a storm. We learn to rely on God to sustain us. When we are weak, then He gets to be our strength.

My parents moved to Arizona, in 2018. Days after the last box was unpacked, my parents were in the backyard when they heard two

explosions that sounded like fireworks. Then the smell of fire. Instead of going through the side door, as my dad usually did, he went through the house to find the garage on fire. His usual route would have led to where the blast began. God’s grace was already in motion. Thankfully they were home at the time. The garage was a loss and the house suffered smoke and water damage. Two faulty golf cart batteries had exploded, causing the destruction of Christmas decorations, inherited tools, and keepsakes from fifty years of marriage.

That evening neighbors gathered in the street, bringing food and water to my parents. In the days to follow, they were prayed for and cared for by these new neighbors. Though my parents were devastated and overwhelmed, they could see God’s sovereignty and grace. Most importantly, they had each other. Their house is now beautifully rebuilt with a sign from Isaiah 61:3, “Beauty from Ashes.”

QUESTIONS

Have you heard the saying: “A psalm a day keeps the doctor away”? Consider reading a Psalm a day for perspective, hope, and healing.

PRAYERS FOR UETS

Pray for the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary graduates, namely Volodymyr Khramykh, Andriy Shutkevych, and Oleksandr Ponomarenko, who are involved in pastoral or church-planting ministry in the frontline zone in Eastern Ukraine, which has been torn by the ongoing military conflict for the last six years.

TUESDAY

Please begin today by reading: John 9:6-7

“LORD my God, I called to You for help, and You healed me.” (Psalm 30:2)

Jesus heals a blind man with spit and dirt, performing a miracle. Not only did this man blind from birth now see, but later he believes in Jesus as his Lord. His eyes were opened, but more importantly, his spiritual eyes were opened. Jesus still heals today. He works in mysterious ways to mend relationships and heal hearts.

My family has always been my priority. I have given this season of parenting everything I am with intentionality and purpose. One of my sons was especially difficult to raise. He was determined, a high achiever, independent, and smart. He looked perfect on paper—a 4.6 weighted GPA, held offices in leadership, was the captain on his team, attended a small group and church. You get the idea.

At home my son was difficult to be around and treated me and his brothers poorly, lacking compassion and kindness. He would look at me as though he despised me. His tone and mannerisms were like that toward an enemy. My husband would try to mediate. Because my son had a good relationship with him, my husband always thought we both just needed to “get along.” He didn’t realize the depth and severity of our strained relationship nor the manner in which this son treated me when my husband was at work.

All of this tension and hurt came to a crescendo in my kitchen one January evening during his senior year, with my husband home to witness his actions. Over something I don’t remember, this boy’s full wrath was unleashed and his true colors were shown. I was devastated and heartbroken to a level I had never experienced. My husband’s eyes were opened and he became my protector and partner.

The pain I felt in my heart was unbearable. Days followed of being numb and raw. We found a Christian counselor and prayed a lot. On the drive home from counseling a few weeks in, my son turned to me and said, “I think God healed our hearts.” Counseling had been helpful, but nothing that was healing. We both realized our hearts had been healed in an unexplainable, miraculous way. Prayer is powerful and God is faithful. We never again had these issues and our relationship has remained warm and loving, even years later.

QUESTIONS

Is there a broken relationship in your life that needs the Lord’s healing and restoration? Pray and be open to the Spirit.

PRAYERS FOR UETS

Pray for UETS faculty; namely, Ivan Rusyn, Andriy Meleshko, and Kyrylo Proshko, who, in addition to their full-time ministry at the seminary, are involved in the process of planting new churches in Kyiv and its outskirts.

WEDNESDAY

Please begin today by reading: James 1:2-4; John 9:1-3

My husband was diagnosed with cancer fifteen years ago. I was diagnosed with cancer two years ago. We asked ourselves, “Did we do something wrong to both have this fate?” Our four boys asked if they are doomed!

We reconciled this by the many life lessons God taught us through these difficult seasons. In John 9:1-3, Jesus explains that these things happen so that the power of God can be seen. Trials grow our faith when we choose to trust God to be in control. He gives us peace and joy in the midst of suffering. Jesus said, *“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid”* (John 14:27).

Suffering has purpose. God uses these times to show us a bigger picture, purpose, and plan. We come out refined, stronger and filled with compassion. I like to say, our “faith roots grow deeply.” We are anchored and prepared for what storms life brings us in the future.

In God’s wisdom, He uses us to help others who are going through similar circumstances, never wasting our understanding. In Romans 8:28 Paul says, *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”*

In 2017, I went in for a routine mammogram. After a second mammogram and biopsy, I was told I had breast cancer. When I heard those words, I was in shock and disbelief. It felt like this was happening to someone else.

On the drive home from the doctor, this Scripture from James 1:2-4 played over and over in my head, *“Consider it pure joy my brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

Right then I knew I was about to be set on a path that was going to be rough, but I had a spark deep inside ... that pure joy ... because God has ALWAYS been faithful. He has brought good out of difficult seasons. This would be an adventure with new lessons to be learned. I knew God had never left me alone before ... He wouldn’t start now!

Just as in John 9, those around us are watching how we react to our suffering and pain, or even to a miracle. Will we choose to trust and have joy and peace?

QUESTIONS

[What have you learned about God from your trials?](#)

PRAYERS FOR UETS

Pray for 50 students coming soon to their session at the Central Asian Bible Institute established by UETS in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in 2016. The ministry of UETS in Central Asia is aimed at strengthening national churches by training and indigenous leaders who will serve God in the unfriendly Muslim environment.

THURSDAY

Please begin today by reading: Psalm 23

“He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His namesake.” (Psalm 23:3)

“We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” —C.S. Lewis

When we are in a crisis, our world stops as we know it. Things change and priorities shift. We go into “survival mode.” During these times God does His finest work. His presence and peace replace fear. God works in pain to bring joy and blessings even in suffering.

I would have never chosen to have cancer. My life will forever be altered because of it. Gratefully, I am cancer free now; but I live with daily bone pain and some hearing loss from chemo. There are scars from surgeries, medicine to still take, and fear that lingers. (What if it returns?) Suffering and trials allow us to see God up close, witnessing His faithfulness. Because of that, I would never trade this experience.

Blessings came as friends rallied by my side, praying, bringing meals, helping in tangible ways, sending cards and texts. The relationship between my husband and I grew stronger, more tender and compassionate. “He loved me well, attending all 12 rounds of chemo, every doctor appointment, and surgery. Then he cared for me afterward, which was intense. In our 28 years of marriage, we have never been closer.

I had asked one thing of God before going into chemo: If He would not remove this cup, then please be my strength and grace each day. He gave it faithfully like manna ... just enough for one day. I needed to rely on Him again for the next day ... and He did not disappoint!

When making decisions, I prayed and relied on God for peace and He gave it. When I should have been afraid, I felt carried by the prayers of my friends and family ... buoyant as on a rough sea.

I felt depleted and overwhelmed at times. My relationship with the Lord and investment made in Bible Study and worship, gave me a store house of promises from God to draw from to get me through. Truth echoed in my heart and mind. It restored me. Praise God for the way He uses pain to grow our faith and trust. We are never the same, and I am grateful.

QUESTIONS

What difficult or painful situation are you dealing with right now, and what blessings or joys have you experienced in the midst of it?

PRAYERS FOR UETS

Pray for a full-scale program for army chaplains at UETS and students and graduates of the seminary; namely, Ihor Brodin and Oleksiy Sukhov, already serving as chaplains. When the war in Donbas broke out six years ago, there was no legislation regulating the status of frontline priests, and the official introduction of the chaplaincy in Ukraine came in 2017.

FRIDAY

Please begin today by reading: Ephesians 2:11-22

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:13)

“The real problem is not why some pious, humble, believing people suffer, but why some do not.” —C.S. Lewis

Being a believer in Jesus does not give us a smooth path, as I’m sure you know. Life is unpredictable. Just when we think we have it all together, something takes us out of our comfort zone. It may be a difficult relationship or loss of a loved one, an unexpected job change or a diagnosis that changes our world as we know it.

Nothing surprises God. He remains in control, never leaving or forsaking us. If we consider our trial with joy, we shine for Jesus and others see this hope, peace, and trust we have in the Lord. God can work in us to draw in those who need Him desperately.

My husband had cancer when our four boys were young. During a major surgery, where we were at USC Keck for a week, his sister came to stay with our boys. She is an amazing person—educated, successful job, happy marriage and family. The only thing lacking was faith. We had many conversations, but only seeds were planted.

The day of my husband’s surgery went smoothly ... until in recovery he went “code blue” and stopped breathing. I called my sister-in-law and

began the prayer chain. She witnessed the power of prayer, as he recovered in not 24-plus hours as I was told, but only 3 hours and with no damage. Well, if you know him, that could be debatable!

Friends delivered meals sent cards, and dropped off food baskets—all to care for our family while we were in the hospital. My sister-in-law continued to see the family of God in action.

My husband’s attitude was peace-filled. He said if God wanted to take him home to heaven, he was good with that. If God chose to let him stay and be restored, that was good too. The confidence and peace he had in God was what his sister was missing, and she realized it.

Not long after my husband recovered, his sister, her husband, and their three children chose to give their lives to Christ. My husband has said that if he went through cancer to save his sister, then it was well worth his suffering. God is able to use our circumstances for good, showing the world His glory. Amen!

QUESTIONS

When others see you going through a difficult time, what would they learn about Jesus because of your attitude and actions?

PRAYERS FOR UETS

Pray for extending the existing students’ dormitory so that it could hold another 100 people a day. The project is aimed at enhancing the academic process and quality of programs, making the seminary financially self-sufficient, and reinforcing the seminary’s ministry to churches and those in need.

Sources

C.S. Lewis. *The Problem of Pain* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1940).



Glenkirk Church | 1700 Palopinto Ave. Glendora, CA 91741 | 626.914.4833
www.glenkirkchurch.org |  @GlenkirkChurch |  Facebook: GlenkirkChurch