

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

MAY 18 - 23, 2020

SERMON SERIES

4.19 - 5.17

LIVING IN

Exile



# MONDAY

## Hebrews 3:1-6

*“But Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s house. And we are His house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.” (Hebrews 3:6 NIV)*

All of us who have given Jesus our primary allegiance are a community. We are members of the same family—God’s family. We are part of His household.

In receiving God’s gift of salvation, we have become gifts to one another because friendships are gifts. Sure, they need work, and often this includes forgiveness.

But how is the household at Glenkirk working for you? Do you feel at home here? Do visitors who attend feel welcome?

Because it’s His house, Jesus may have something to say about it. And because of that, prayers to Him are in order. Jesus can open doors of relationships, especially in His own house. He is faithful in and to His house. He is faithful to you.

Sometimes our secondary allegiances (i.e., to a political philosophy or a social status) get in the way of being of one mind. But here again, Jesus can help us because we are all a part of His house.

If anybody can handle secondary or tertiary differences, it should be we who know and love Jesus. In fact, this is how others will know that we are His disciples because we love each other (John 13:35).

## QUESTIONS

During these times of “sheltering in place,” what creative ways have you discovered to maintain relationships and reach out to form new relationships?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for Pomona Hope, whose mission is to work towards transforming the city where all people can find a hope for the future. Pray for wisdom for when and how to be able to slowly reopen the programs, and pray that students, volunteers and staff would remain safe and healthy as they do so.

# TUESDAY

## Matthew 21:12-17

*“My house shall be called a house of prayer.”* —Jesus (Matthew 21:13 ESV)

Author Catherine Marshall admitted to getting serious about prayer in times of sickness and crisis. I am no different. I too became serious when my marriage was falling apart and when I was given notice of a termination at my job. It wasn't until 18 months later that a new job opened up—a fulfilling job lasting 16 years until my retirement. And God healed my marriage also. Of course, God wants us to be part of His praying house, but not just at times of “trial and reality.”

According to J. Edwin Orr, prayer has been the key to all the great revivals, including the First and Second Great Awakenings in America. And we are to be a house of prayer for all nations/ethnicities/people groups, many of which are still not “reached” with the Gospel.

Recently Glenkirk had a five-week sermon series on the Lord's Prayer entitled “Teach Us to Pray.” We learned that in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus invites us into this prayer life (Sermon on March 1, 2020). “When Jesus gave His disciples this prayer,” N. T. Wright says, “... He was giving them part of His own breath, His own life, His own prayer.” Jesus is a prayerful person, and He wants us to be prayerful people.

As a rote, legalistic exercise, prayer can be a dead thing. But for Jesus, it was a living, life-giving connection to His Father in heaven. And it can

be that for us, too, with the help of His Holy Spirit. It is that kind of prayer Jesus is talking about.

Jesus said to His disciples at the close of their three-year training session, “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24 ESV).

Once when I was sick with hepatitis (and relapses) for almost one year, my wife was “sick and tired” of it. We got down on our knees on either side of our bed and asked God to heal me. As we prayed, suddenly my wife looked up and said, “You're healed.” What? “How do you know?” “I just do.” And she was right. For the first time in almost a year, the next blood test came back normal.

We need to pray. We are Jesus' house of prayer.

## QUESTIONS

What is one occasion in your life when God showed up in answered prayer like that?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray that God would provide volunteers for us in the summer (if open) and fall, despite potential COVID-19 fears. Pray that God would use this crisis to create a spirit of service in folks, not of fear and withdrawal.

# WEDNESDAY

## John 10:7-18

*"I am the door."* —Jesus (John 10:9 NIV)

Jesus has a house. His house has a door. Jesus is the door. Like Nicodemus in John 3, one of the hardest things for me, maybe the hardest, was finding the door to God's heart/house. When I found it, it was a "pure gift." Before it happened, the Bible was dead words on a page to me. After it happened, the words of the Bible were alive and "leapt off the page." It was the Holy Spirit making the words come alive. The Bible contains the invitation to enter into Jesus' house by the door.

If Jesus is the door, we should knock on His door (Matthew 7:7). Jesus says, *"Knock and the door will be opened to you [the one who knocks]."* Another door is mentioned in Revelation 3:20—the door of our heart: *"I [Jesus] stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person."* In this case, Jesus is the One knocking, and we are the ones opening the door for Him to come in.

Jesus is not only our Savior from something but to something—**from sin but to membership in His household.**

- Those who receive Jesus are given the power to become His children (John 1:12).
- Those who look to Jesus will be saved (John 3:14).
- Those who call on Jesus will be saved (Romans 10:13).
- Those who hear and believe God's Word will be saved (Romans 10:9).

Jesus is the One who gets our faith going. He makes faith happen—giving us faith to ask, seek and knock in the first place.

- He is described as the Author of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).
- Jesus invites us to seek Him (Jeremiah 29:13) and His kingdom (Matthew 6:33).
- He rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).
- Jesus invites us to come to Him (Matthew 11:28).
- The Holy Spirit and the Church invite us to come to Him (Revelation 22:17).
- Jesus promises to never turn anyone away who comes to Him (John 6:37).

Granted, we are talking about a great miracle; but if Jesus is the entry point to the kingdom of God (and He is), ask Him to help you and He will usher you in.

## QUESTIONS

What has been your experience of seeking and/or finding Jesus?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for Pomona Hope's finances moving forward. They are doing just fine right now, having lost a few donors but also gained a few new ones. In the short term they are fine, but they are not sure if their donors or grantors will still be in place to support them in the long term.

# THURSDAY

## Galatians 6:10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

*“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*  
(Galatians 6:10 NIV)

Ever since the birth of our granddaughter, coming up on six years now, we have been a household of six across three generations, living literally on top of each other. To live like that well requires love, forgiveness, prayer and Jesus at the center. You and I have been born again into a family like that, only much, much larger. And we are different members, oh so different, but members of one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Living together in the Body of Christ well requires learning some things. And Jesus is our teacher.

There are so many good books to help us. One especially helpful book is *Practicing the Presence of People: How We Learn to Love* by Mike Mason. Yes, it is a spinoff of Brother Lawrence’s *Practicing the Presence of God*. According to the author, “God never wanted a clockwork universe; He wanted us to experience excitement and surprise.” (103) This includes people—all different kinds of people.

“To embrace unknowing is to descend from the mind into the heart. ... The more we embrace unknowing, the better we shall know and be

known. It is hard to become intimate with a know-it-all. Intimacy depends not on knowing but on vulnerability and trust.” (139)

“Love means identifying exactly what people need that I can give and giving it. ... The will of God is what you can do, not what you cannot.” (142, 143) “Is our goal to match wits with others or to mix spirits? In the house of communion everyone shines.” (163)

Being an integral part of Christ’s Body, a member of His household, a citizen of the kingdom of God, is something the Holy Spirit is teaching us how to be and do. Perfect people need not apply. We need to live in pre-forgiveness, both toward others and toward ourselves. Otherwise, who will take even baby steps? Go ahead—take those baby steps God is inviting you to take, “*doing good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers*” (Galatians 6:10).

## QUESTIONS

What steps will you take today to focus on other people by taking an interest in them and demonstrating God’s love for them?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for provision for the families of Pomona Hope, especially those without documentation.

# FRIDAY

## Matthew 12:22-30

“... no city or house divided against itself will stand.”

—Jesus (Matthew 12:25 ESV)

Jesus’ house is not a divided house. The kingdom of God is not a divided kingdom. However, we live presently in a politically divided society. Early in his ministry here at Glenkirk, Pastor Tim Peck urged us to go out to lunch with a friend who thinks differently about politics than we do—to listen and ask sincere questions, to be heard, and to answer sincere questions. Both Peter (1 Peter 3:8) and Paul (1 Corinthians 1:10) urged believers to be of one mind. Sometimes I wonder *how* it can be possible, or even *if* it can be possible.

The notion of forgiveness and pre-forgiveness again comes to the fore. Can we forgive people for everything—for anything (real or imagined)? Even when they do not confess to doing something? And do not apologize for doing it? That almost seems far-fetched and unrealistic and, therefore, impossible.

Don’t you think, however, that this is really important to God? “Nothing grieves the Triune God more than people who will not work at relationships.” (Darrell W. Johnson) And Jesus prayed very near the end of His earthly ministry that we would be one with Him and with our heavenly Father and with one another (John 17:11, 21).

If anyone can pray perfect prayers, it is Jesus. And He did, and He does (Hebrews 7:25). We need to lean hard into His promises by obeying their implications.

## QUESTIONS

Ask God in prayer who to be “of one mind” with this week and how to do this.

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for the students’ well-being, education, and mental health through this crisis. Pray that they would return when Pomona Hope is able to reopen.

# SATURDAY

## Matthew 7:24-29

*“Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [When] the rain fell and the torrents raged ... the house did not fall because its foundation was on a rock.”* —Jesus (Matthew 7:24, 25)

Jesus has a house, of which we are a part. And Jesus is not only the door of His house, but He is also the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11). How does this work in practice? How do we apply it in our lives?

At the close of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes the answer clear. For example, He tells us: *“No man can serve two masters. ... You cannot serve both God and money”* (Matthew 6:24). He goes on to say, *“Look at the flowers of the field and the birds of the air. Your Father clothes and feeds them. And He will do the same for you”* (6:26-29 paraphrased). Trust Him. This is the way Jesus Himself lived; and when we follow Jesus as His disciples, we will live that way, too.

George Mueller’s story of faith in God to take in orphans in Bristol, England, illustrates this principle. Although this story developed step by step, “eventually, there were five new buildings, with 110 helpers taking care of 2050 orphans” who were well clothed and well fed. All this came about by praying to God alone and not appealing to people to provide. (Marshall) This principle of praying to God privately comes

from the same chapter in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says to His followers: *“When you ask the Lord in prayer, go into Your closet and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father who hears what you ask in secret will reward you openly”* (Matthew 6:6 paraphrased).

Because we are part of His house(hold), He expects us to live this way, don’t you think? These sayings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are among the secrets of living in the kingdom of God that Jesus openly shares with us in the Gospels.

## QUESTIONS

What has been your experience of these principles—praying to God in private and trusting Him to supply all of our needs—as you follow Jesus?

## PRAYERS FOR POMONA HOPE

Pray for the staff during this time. They are doing their best to support the Pomona Hope families remotely by arranging online one-on-one tutoring for students, checking in with parents frequently, and connecting families with resources in the community as they become aware of these needs.

## Sources

- Tim Peck, “Starting with God” (Sermon on March 1, 2020), <https://www.glenkirkchurch.org/sermon/march-1-2020-starting-with-god/>
- N. T. Wright, *The Lord and His Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997).
- Mike Mason, *Practicing the Presence of People: How We Learn to Love* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 1999).
- Darrell W. Johnson, *Experiencing the Trinity* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2002), p. 53.
- Catherine Marshall, *Beyond Ourselves: A Pilgrimage in Faith* (New York City: McGraw-Hill, 1961), pp. 74-81.

