

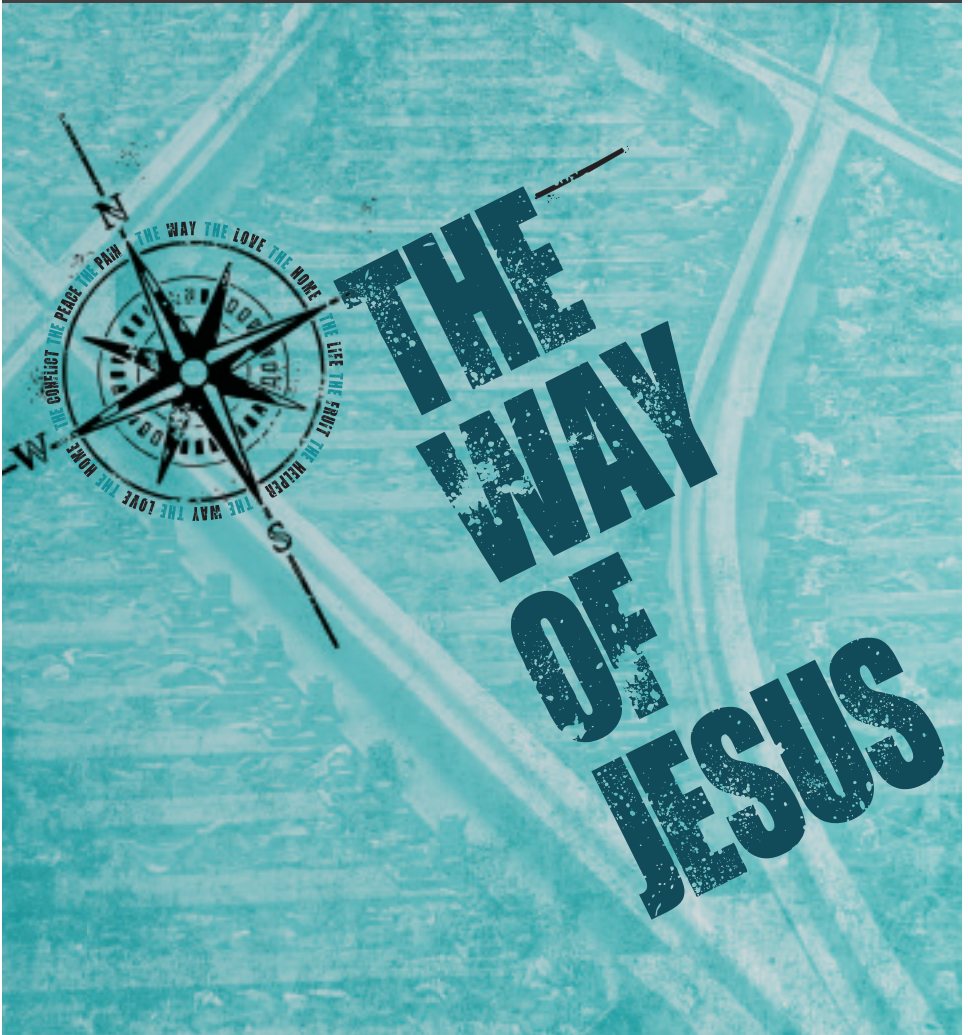
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MAY 25 - 29, 2020



MONDAY

John 14:15-21

The final words people speak before they die are said to be some of the most important words they ever speak. We are in a series looking at the final words of Jesus to His disciples before He dies. They are important truths to build our lives on.

Many probably do not remember the TV series *Time Machine*. I remember watching it and thinking: “I would love to go back in time and meet Jesus. He would know exactly who I am. We would go on a walk and He would explain everything to me.” Or have you thought: “I wish I was a part of the New Testament Church. They had it all together”?

The problem is that the New Testament Church did not have it all together; they had every problem we have. And those disciples with Jesus did not get what He was saying. It wasn't until after the Holy Spirit came into their lives on Pentecost that they looked back, remembered His life on earth, and put two and two together.

That same Spirit is available to each of us today, enabling us to apply the words of Jesus to our lives—if only we would learn to listen and obey Scripture with baby steps. My problem is that I do not like baby steps. I want to see the big picture and then I want to walk on my own—in my timing, doing things myself and in my power. Can you relate?

Jesus calls me to learn to trust the promptings of the still small voice of the Spirit. This takes practice. This is something we grow into. This is something we do better during some seasons of our lives than others.

After Jesus' baptism when the Spirit descended upon Jesus, He was led into the wilderness where He was tempted to do things the world's way (Luke 4:1, 2). But Jesus' response over and over was to trust in the Father, to rely on the Father. We, too, learn to do this when we give up trying to be obedient on our own, to act on our own, and when we are worried more about who we are in Jesus. Like Jesus, our first priority, our goal, should be to seek His face and to do His will each day, through the power and presence of the Spirit in our lives. Are we taking time to seek Jesus, to rely on His Spirit's power?

QUESTIONS

Am I worried more about what I do and what I accomplish, or am I worried about who I am in Jesus, allowing the Spirit to “accomplish” His will through me?

PRAYERS FOR CRU CAMPUS MINISTRY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Pray for Chris and Christine Kernaghan, who work with college students in San Francisco with Cru, which seeks to provide an opportunity for college students to learn about Jesus in an authentic community that seeks both to care for itself and serve the city of San Francisco.

TUESDAY

John 14:15-21; Matthew 5:1-16, 38-48; 6:19-34

One of my problems is that, like the early disciples, I am so sure of what Jesus should be doing that when He says He is going to die, I too say, “No, Lord, that is not what you are supposed to be doing.” But it is. God does not do things according to the world’s ways. In fact, the ways of God are often counterintuitive. God *is* working in the world, but by kingdom standards and ways. Jesus came, living in God’s kingdom while on earth, showing us how to live in that kingdom, asking us to live in that kingdom. To do that means that we need to completely put the ways of the world aside. We need to learn how to live all over again—by kingdom standards.

God’s kingdom is not a place called “heaven,” detached from “earth,” but the rule of “heaven coming to birth on earth.” And thus, the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, for example, are meant to be a means to blessings, as much as they show us the kind of people through whom the kingdom will come.

The Sermon on the Mount lays out the behavior, the lifestyle through which the saving rule of God will be brought to bear upon the world: through the poor, the persecuted, those who mourn and thirst, those who “turn the other cheek,” those who go the second mile and allow someone to strip them of both shirt and cloak. In this way, these people demonstrate that they truly are “children of the Father.”

What Jesus wants us to know is that He is setting loose a new sort of power, the power of self-giving love. How do we live in this love? We cannot do this on our own. We need the very presence and power of the Holy Spirit within us. We do it out of His enabling power as we learn to trust in Jesus and Father God alone to take care of us.

In reality, as a result of the promised Spirit that was poured out on Pentecost, the Spirit of Jesus Himself, Christians now, remarkable though it may seem, are in a better situation even than the followers of Jesus during His lifetime.

The world does not naturally see anything good coming from weakness or death. But when we trust in Father God’s kingdom power present, we are assured that He can overrule all things, even death, to the end that His glorious kingdom comes.

The question is: Do I live by the counterintuitive ways of the Spirit, or am I seeking Jesus to give me the means to live in worldly ways?

QUESTIONS

In what ways might you need to change your perspective as to what is important? What you are living for?

PRAYERS FOR CRU CAMPUS MINISTRY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Pray for peace for the graduating seniors who won’t attend a commencement ceremony and don’t have much potential for immediate employment.

WEDNESDAY

John 14:15-21

The last three verses of the section (vv. 19-21) that we are studying this week present a wonderful circle of promises that are ours because of Jesus being with us by the Spirit. We are told that:

- We will “see” Him, plain to the eye of faith.
- We will live with His new life.
- We will know the deepest theological knowledge of all: that He and the Father are “in” each other and that we are “in” Him and He is “in” us.
- We will be joined to Jesus and the Father by an unbreakable bond of love.
- This, in turn, leads back to where the sequence began: He will show Himself to us.

Recently I read a seminary paper that sought to define the Gospel in 500 words. It stated that “the Gospel is not just the story of one man who was obedient to the Father. It’s not the story about a man on a mission. It is the continuation of the first word in Genesis and keeps going with my story today. The Gospel is a story of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit from beginning to end. The perfect God, the perfect relationship invading time and space to make me right with Him ... The Gospel is knowing that I am

free. It’s knowing that I have life eternal. It’s knowing that even when I don’t have anyone around me, I have a Father who calls me daughter. It’s knowing that I am loved enough that Jesus makes a way for me to know God as a Father. It’s knowing that I am not alone, and I am surrounded by the Spirit; and when I don’t know what to say, the Spirit is praying for me. It’s knowing that I am covered by the perfect, triune God ... The Gospel is God’s story, and since He reached me, it’s my story. It’s the story that runs through my veins and propels me to love and share this truth I know with the whole world.”

This is the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus makes in these verses. This is the vision I am called to live into: a oneness with God, becoming a part of God’s story. How often, though, do I instead ask God to be part of my story. Do I regularly participate in the oneness I have with the Trinity?

QUESTIONS

If someone asked you what the Gospel is, what would you say?
Is your life a display of the Good News? What does it look like to be truly “alive” in Jesus?

PRAYERS FOR CRU CAMPUS MINISTRY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Pray for the availability of students. They have Zoom call-fatigue from online classes, but Chris and Christine still desire to have personal connection as they disciple and lead them.

THURSDAY

John 20:21-22; Acts 2:1-21

This Sunday we celebrate Pentecost, the day of the “Birthday of the Church,” so to speak, the day the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples in the Upper Room. But John mentions the Spirit being given earlier. As we continue to read in Acts and the New Testament, we see that there seems to be multiple fillings of the Spirit. I used to question: Do I have the Spirit?

In 1 Corinthians 12:3, Paul says, “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” If one studies the Greek in the Acts passages about being filled with the Spirit, we discover the verb “filled” is not a one-time occurrence but actually denotes an on-going filling of the Spirit. When we come to a saving faith in Jesus, it is the Holy Spirit already working in us. The question really is: Am I allowing the Spirit to continue to fill me?

Often I have sought more of an emotional experience, and I have come to realize that the real question is a dependence and empowering experience. Am I seeking to live out of the power of the Spirit? Do I seek the Spirit for guidance, direction, and empowerment to have my needs fulfilled, or am I trying to do all things out of my own power? It is easy to quench the Spirit’s work in my life. I do this through disobedience, busyness, faulty theology, lack of confidence, distractions, addiction to comfort, having a fear of critical reflection, expectations of instant change, and not taking time to regularly seek God in confession, prayer,

worship, study, and not responding to the Spirit’s prompting. I regularly ask the Spirit to continue to come into my life, enabling me to have oneness with the Father, empowering me, and guiding me.

One of the ways I miss the Spirit is with wrong expectations. I expect power and good feelings. But the work of the Spirit often involves convicting me of sin, making me more like Jesus, enabling me to be obedient, and empowering me to bear fruit for God’s kingdom work. The Spirit empowers me to become like Jesus, producing the fruit of the Spirit.

The Spirit comes like the wind; we cannot control it. He comes as oil to bring healing and anointing, setting us apart for God’s work. As fire, the Holy Spirit refines us, burns away that which is not needed in our lives. As rain, the Spirit refreshes and enables us to grow. The Spirit comes as a dove to bring peace. And the Spirit comes with tongues enabling us to pray, speak and understand.

QUESTIONS

The Spirit is often neglected or sought as an end in Himself. But the Spirit always points to the Father and the Son. Do you tend to overemphasize the Spirit or underemphasize Him? Do you seek His power and gifts, or do you rely on your talents and preferences?

PRAYERS FOR CRU CAMPUS MINISTRY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Pray for imagination for how to plan the fall semester. The Kernaghans are unsure if the fall semester will still be virtual or on campus.

FRIDAY

Acts 2:22-47; John 14:15-21

The day of Pentecost was marked by “tongues of fire.” Fire symbolizes the burning away of that which is not of God, bringing purification. The “tongues” are the enabling power of God so that people might personally hear God’s Word to them and respond. Jesus’ death and resurrection turned back the curse of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2. With the coming of the Holy Spirit, God has now turned over His work to His church, His followers, to continue to do the work of turning back sin and bringing in the kingdom of God.

Immediately after “the Fall” of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2, we discover example after example of the growth of sin in the lives of people until we read in Genesis 6:5: *“The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.”* In one sense the height of this is found in Genesis 11:4 where we read: *“Come let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves.”* The tower is called the Tower of Babel because God’s response was to come down and confuse the people’s language and thus scatter the people throughout the earth.

But then the whole tone of Genesis changes and God begins His restoration work. In Genesis 12 we read of God’s call to Abraham, saying that if Abraham would follow Him, God would bless Him and the whole earth would be blessed. The rest of the Bible shows how

this promise is being fulfilled. Jesus’ death took on the penalty of death that God had proclaimed in Genesis 2; and at Pentecost we see everyone hearing about God, each in his/her own language. The curse of Genesis 11 is being turned back. God is bringing unity. He is creating a new kingdom where there is no sickness or crying or pain, where God dwells with us in oneness and love.

In the Church, you and I are called to live in the power of the Spirit so that others might see Jesus in us, hear Jesus through us, and come to know Jesus themselves. It is significant that the disciples waited in prayer for the Spirit because the work needed to be done in God’s power and God’s ways, not theirs (or ours). But now having been blessed, they were empowered to bless others.

We too are called to go into each day having been on our knees so that we too might be filled and empowered. We are not to keep the blessing to ourselves; but as we learn to listen and be led by the Spirit, we are to take the blessing to others.

QUESTIONS

[Are you holding on to the blessings of God or taking them to others?](#)

PRAYERS FOR CRU CAMPUS MINISTRY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Pray for the Kernaghan family. Their kids are having a hard time with multiple meltdowns and cranky times, unable to play with friends (or people other than their parents), and tired of computer learning. Chris and Christine need patience and empathy to parent them well through this hard time, which is especially taxing on Christine’s health.

Sources

- N.T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus' Crucifixion* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016).
- Anonymous quote on Wednesday's devo is written with permission.

