

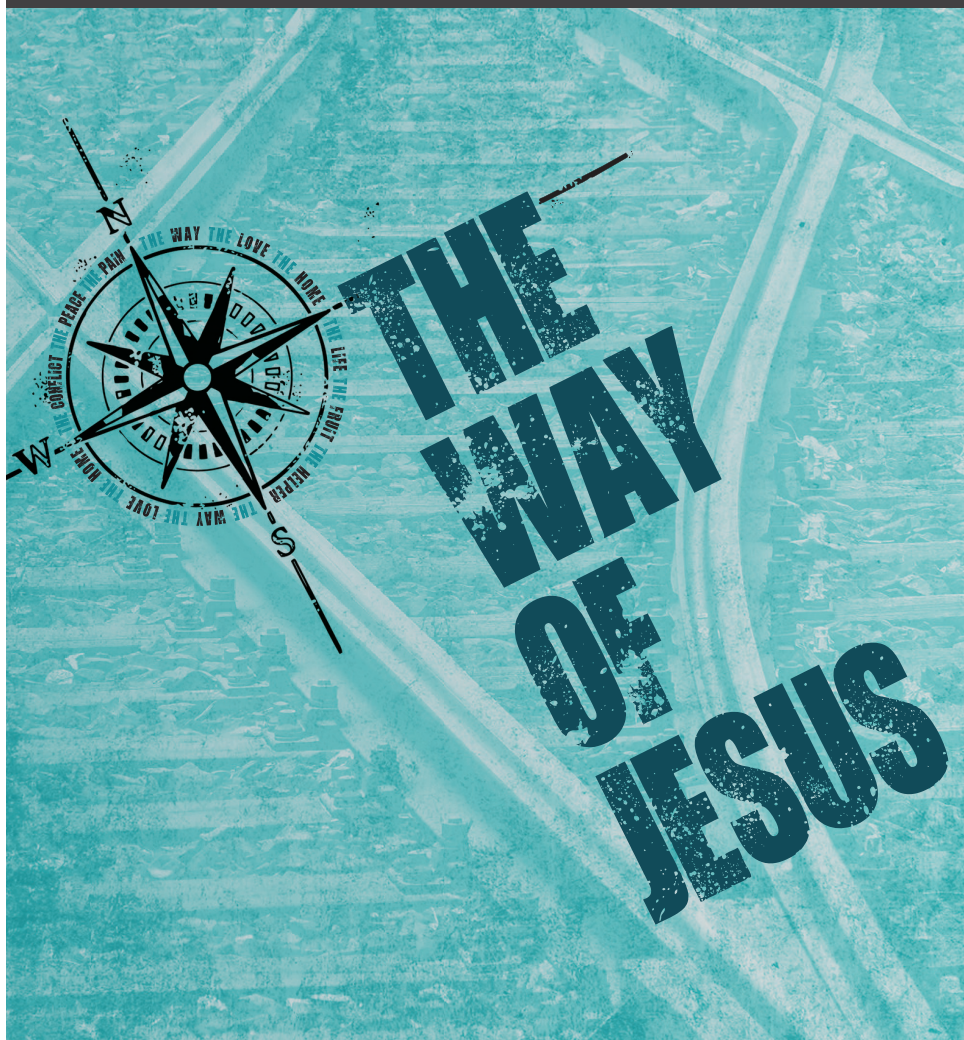
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

JUNE 15 - 19, 2020



# MONDAY

**John 1:14, 12:24, 15:5, 8; Galatians 3:16, 4:4**

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## **Jesus is the Vine and Jesus is the Seed.**

God loves fruit and harvest and babies—He loves grown-ups, too. In the beginning God spoke, saying to mankind, “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*” (Genesis 1:28). And we have.

Jesus is the most fruitful and productive person ever. First, Jesus is the vine and has many branches. His life-giving sap gives life to the branches who bear fruit. Without Jesus, we can do nothing. But joined to Him, we can bear lots of fruit. And God is glorified in our bearing much fruit. In this we are Jesus’ disciples.

Second, Jesus is the seed. Jesus is the best seed that ever was and ever could be. The challenge for this phenomenal seed is that the soil of mankind’s hearts is not the best. It has a toxicity to it. It tends to be unreceptive. Best seed, poor soil. Heaven had to do a cost-benefit (risk-reward) analysis, after which God sent Jesus His Son into the world in the form of a baby.

Birthing is a major part of being fruitful. Jesus was born into the world and grew in stature and wisdom (Luke 2:52). Both Father God and the Holy Spirit have been involved in this plan and process from beginning to end. Jesus planted seed with His words and deeds that germinated

and bore fruit in people. As the good seed He is, Jesus died and was buried in the ground, and so He bears much fruit, which continues to the present day. The story of the fruitfulness of Jesus continues.

## QUESTIONS

According to John 15, our fruitfulness depends not on our focus on fruitfulness, but rather on our connection to Jesus the Vine. How is your connection to Jesus the Vine?

## PRAYERS FOR SCOTT BOSS AND FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

Pray for Scott Boss, serving with Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), whose vision is to see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

# TUESDAY

**John 15:1, 2, 6; Ezekiel 47:7-12; Revelation 22:1-2; Galatians 5:22-23**

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## **Jesus' Father is the Vinedresser.**

God is a great agriculturalist. He has a green thumb. In the beginning He made the trees, plants and flowers. He landscaped and planted the Garden of Eden—mankind's first home (Genesis 1:11-12). In the future, there will be great tree-lined irrigation projects according to Ezekiel and John's revelation talk (Ezekiel 47:7-12; Revelation 22:1-2).

Many of Jesus' parables were farm stories. One such story was about an unhappy landowner who was not getting a good return on his investment. Finally, the landowner ran out of patience. He fired his workers and turned over His farm to a different set of workers who would produce for Him its proper fruits (Matthew 21:33-43).

In another story, the owner of a tree was going to get rid of it because it had no fruit. "Please," said the gardener, "let me care for it and fertilize it just one more year and see if it might still bear fruit." Isn't this just like God who gives people second chances? (Luke 13:6-9)

When God's Spirit gets ahold of a person, the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, kindness and self-control appear. That's a miracle!

Jesus said His Father is the vinedresser. God really cares for and attends to His vine. He prunes it so it will bear more fruit. Dead branches He clears away.

The writer of the book of Hebrews asks, *“How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live? ... God disciplines us for our good that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it”* (12:9-11). Isn't that what we want—*“a harvest of righteousness and peace”*? I'm pretty sure it's what God wants.

## QUESTIONS

What times in your life do you thank God for now, but at the time, it was very difficult to be thankful?

## PRAYERS FOR SCOTT BOSS AND FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

Pray for Scott's transition into the Area Director role. There is a lot of foundational work that needs to take place in the midst of this uncertain time.

# WEDNESDAY

**1 Samuel 1:16, 27-28, 2:5; John 11:40-44; Ephesians 2:1-10**

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*“Then God remembered Rachel; He listened to her and opened her womb.” (Genesis 30:22)*

Don't be fooled by apparent barrenness or weakness—not even actual barrenness or weakness. God delights to work in the blank spaces. He created the world and the stars out of nothing. His strength is made perfect in weakness.

Jesus told the church at Sardis, *“I know your deeds; you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead”* (Revelation 3:1). But remember: Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:40-44), so He can raise us from the dead. In fact, He did already. It was when we were dead in our trespasses and sins that He made us alive in Him and seated us with Him in heavenly places, giving us an agenda of good works which He has prepared for us to live out (Ephesians 2:1-10).

Remember, God often uses barrenness as a starting point of fruitfulness. It happened for Rachel, who was Jacob's second wife. Leah, his first wife, had babies; Rachel had none. In her heartache, Rachel told her husband, *“Give me babies or I die”* (Genesis 30:1). God heard her cry and opened her womb—not one baby, but two: one named Joseph, the second named Benjamin. From Joseph came Caleb and Joshua; from Benjamin came Paul.

What God did for Rachel, He also did for Hannah. He gave her a baby named Samuel. And Hannah gave Samuel back to the Lord. And look what the Lord did with Samuel—he became a great prophet who anointed David to be king of Israel. What God did for Rachel and Hannah, He will do for us. He will use our barrenness as a starting place and make us fruitful for His glory. *“More are the children of the barren woman than of her who has a husband”* (Isaiah 54:1).

## QUESTIONS

Where in your life/world is there barrenness (unfruitfulness), where “nothing seems to be happening”? Pour out your heart to God in prayer (like Rachel and Hannah did) for the matters that are “going nowhere.” Believe God can make these matters come to fruition. This is what He does.

## PRAYERS FOR SCOTT BOSS AND FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

Pray for Scott Boss as he navigates things like a funding base, an area board, and staffing. Pray for discernment and for God to lift up the right people to run alongside him in the effort to see hearts impacted by Jesus through each athlete’s sport.

# THURSDAY

**John 15:16; Joel 2:25**

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*“I will restore the years the locust has eaten.” (Joel 2:25)*

When the locusts come, they not only eat this year’s crop, they eat up years of crop-making ability. It is a culture-wide, years-long, debilitating destabilization. So when God promises to restore the years the locust has eaten, it is a very big thing He is promising!

Habakkuk, another prophet, also recognized God’s heart in this when he wrote, *“Though the fields do not produce nor the sheep reproduce, yet will I praise the Lord ... He makes my feet walk on high places”* (Habakkuk 3:17-19 paraphrased). Habakkuk is concerned about a lack of fruitfulness, but he is willing to wait on God for it to happen (see Isaiah 40:31).

Jesus came as a fulfillment of God’s promise through the prophet Joel. Jesus took a dying and dead religion and breathed life into it, to such an extent that His gospel and His movement has circled the globe, and it hasn’t stopped. He is still at work.

One of the most amazing stories illustrating the fulfillment of these promises in Joel and Isaiah is the story of the “peace child” among the Savi people of Papua New Guinea/Irian Jaya, where Don and Carol Richardson took the gospel in 1962. There was one problem—this warring



people could not grasp the gospel story. They considered Judas the hero of the story because of his superior ability to betray his master.

But sown into that culture, which was revealed to Don and Carol through prayer and circumstance, was the custom of one warring group giving a “peace child” to its enemy as a token of peace. The life of the child was held as a sacred trust by both groups. No one dared harm the “peace child.” When the people learned that Jesus is God’s “peace child,” they turned en masse to follow Jesus and His gospel. Judas was no longer the hero, but the greatest villain.

Years have shown that Jesus appointed the Richardsons to “... *bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in [Jesus] name*” (John 15:16).

## QUESTIONS

What in your life has “the locust” eaten that you would like to see restored? Ask God how this promise relates to you.

## PRAYERS FOR SCOTT BOSS AND FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

Pray for continued favor with the school campuses and administration.

# FRIDAY

**John 15:8; Galatians 6:7-9, Matthew 7:7-8, 17:20; Luke 6:38**

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*“Whatever a man sows that he will also reap.” (Galatians 6:7)*

*“With the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”  
(Luke 6:38)*

Jesus did not defy the law of sowing and reaping; Jesus defined it. At an unpropitious time, Jesus came. At a time when He dare not come, He came—when King Herod was on the throne. *“Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap” (Ecclesiastes 11:4).*

Because Father God sowed His Seed (His Son) in the earth, we can sow our tiny mustard seed of faith in Him. Yes, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).*

Jesus established a six-point pattern of sowing and reaping for His disciples to follow and which He Himself practiced:

1. Ask
2. Receive
3. Seek
4. Find
5. Knock
6. Doors open

God primed the pump by giving us Jesus. Jesus primed the pump by giving us the Holy Spirit. And so we can prime the pump to those in our pathway. Because of all this, we can afford to live the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) and do to others what we would have them do to us. We can start the ball rolling. We can offer the little we have and trust God to multiply our fractions by His infinity. This He did, and He does. It is the pattern of fruitfulness that God initiated. God is glorified in our being fruitful. This is how His disciples follow Him.

## QUESTIONS

As Jesus' disciples, the Holy Spirit nudges us to courageously sow His seeds of love and encouragement to others. Where and who is He nudging you to invest in today?

## PRAYERS FOR SCOTT BOSS AND FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

Pray for new and swift momentum, as FCA lost a lot of it from the COVID-19 shutdowns.

## Sources

- Don Richardson, *Peace Child* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light/Regal Books, 1976, 3rd Edition).



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