

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JANUARY 11 - 16, 2021

SHATTERED MIRRORS

SERMON SERIES

Jan 3 - Feb 14

MONDAY

Philippians 2:5-10; Mark 6:1-6

Jesus joined the human race.

Is equality a value in the kingdom of God? Does equality matter? To answer these questions, let's start with Jesus.

If we were to have visited Nazareth in Jesus' time and asked about Him, the reply might well have been: "You mean the carpenter's son, whose younger brothers are James, Simon, Jude and Joseph? He hangs out a lot at the synagogue and the scriptorium library, I think." Yes, that's Him. Later such familiarity bred contempt with His acquaintances, and Jesus moved on.

He was known to hang out with sinners and tax collectors. Rumors spread and some were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus. Unfavorable reports reached the ears of temple authorities, who withheld their approval of Him and what He had to say.

Jesus humbled Himself and became a human being, equal in all respects to us, except, unlike the rest of us, He never sinned. Like us, He had needs to be met, and His Father met them (sometimes through others). Like us, He was tempted in all respects; but unlike us, He never yielded to temptation. Like us, He had to trust God for everything—for food, clothes, people to come to Him, direction/guidance,

and strength to endure people's foolishness and the religious leaders' persecution.

Truly, Jesus was the second Adam who showed what a human being is created to be. The ground is level at the foot of the Cross. We dare not imagine ourselves as less (or more) in need of God's saving grace and mercy than anybody else. Paul had the right idea when he claimed to be the chief of sinners. But look how God tapped Paul to be His chief apostle.

QUESTIONS

When you look at Jesus, what do you see Him doing? How did Jesus demonstrate an equality of treatment to all people? How was Jesus out of step with His culture? How was He in step with His culture? How can we learn to be more like Jesus in treating people equitably?

PRAYERS FOR BRANDON & KENDRA KERTSON— CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

Brandon and Kendra Kertson serve as Chi Alpha missionaries seeking to make disciples among university students. Please pray for the mental health issues present most often in people ages 18-25. With the pandemic we have only seen an increase in depression, anxiety and even suicide on our campus. Pray that Chi Alpha can continue to be a consistent presence that points people to Jesus and holistic healing.

TUESDAY

Isaiah 53:1-5; John 1:10-18

Jesus blended in. He was one of us, and as a result, we can relate to Him.

Jesus both attracted and repelled people. People both did and did not recognize Him for who He was/is. Sure, people liked His miracles. He fed them supernaturally, and they were hungry for more. But He also had several strikes against Him in some people's eyes. He was from Nazareth; could anything good come from there? Yes, as it turned out. He spoke with a Galilean accent, which did not go over well in Judea or with Judean visitors to Galilee. His inner circle mostly spoke the same Galilean dialect as He did.

“He had no beauty or majesty to attract [people] to Him; nothing in His appearance that [people] should desire Him. He was ... a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” (Isaiah 53:2-3)

“He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.” (John 1:10)

Even so people followed; they gave Him a chance. But when His teaching got difficult or didn't make sense to them, they often left—so much so that only a few remained. Peter was one of the few. “Are you too wanting to go?” Jesus asked. Peter replied, “Where else would we go? Your words are special; we will stick around” (John 6:67-68 paraphrased).

And so, the multitudes followed Jesus provisionally—provided He came through for them. This also explains the fickleness of the crowds between Palm Sunday and Easter. Palm branches and shouts of “Hosanna” at the beginning of the week and “Crucify Him” at the end.

We think if we had been alive then, it would have been different for us. But would it? Or even, is it? Do we follow Him provisionally?

QUESTIONS

What convinced you to follow Jesus? How could you renew that commitment today? Be alert to His nudges.

PRAYERS FOR BRANDON & KENDRA KERTSON— CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

Pray for our student leaders as we continue to try to imagine creative ways to connect with new students in an online-only environment this year. Pray they would continue to be winsome to reach out as the Spirit leads them even after long days of online classes.

WEDNESDAY

John 8:1-15; 3:17

Jesus did not pass judgment on anyone.

The Gospel of John tells of the story of the woman caught in adultery. No mention of the man who was caught at the same time. When Jesus confronted the male accusers, giving permission to those free from sin to cast the first stone, everyone dropped their stones and departed. Only Jesus remained. Only Jesus had the right to pass judgment and cast a stone. He did neither, saying, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Here is an echo of the Old Testament story of Tamar caught in adultery by Judah, her father-in-law. It turned out that Judah was the male participant in question. Oops! Judah dropped his charges and his prescribed penalty—death (Genesis 38).

That’s the thing about being equally guilty of sin. We dare not judge if we do not want to be judged (Matthew 7:1). And as Paul said, we are guilty of the very things we accuse others of doing (Romans 2:1).

Jesus said, “If anyone hears My words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47).

We have been recruited as Jesus' partners in His endeavor to communicate and persuade people of the gospel in a loving and winsome way and not to pass judgment on our fellow sinners.

How did the man Jesus do this—refrain from passing judgment? It wasn't the job He came to do; His job was the salvation and reconciliation of mankind. He defended His Father's honor not by "fighting fire with fire," but by trustful obedience. He rested secure in His Father's love. He had the resource of the Holy Spirit. And we too can refrain from passing judgment on our fellow human beings through trustful obedience and by availing ourselves of the Holy Spirit's fellowship and partnership. In addition, we have Jesus and His continued intercession on our behalf.

QUESTIONS

Is not passing judgment on others essential for treating others equally? What can we do to follow Jesus' example of not passing judgment on others?

PRAYERS FOR BRANDON & KENDRA KERTSON— CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

Pray for our San Diego State staff who are leaving to pioneer new campuses in Hawaii and New Hampshire this next year. Pray for funds, favor and success. Also pray for new laborers to be raised up for San Diego State.

THURSDAY

Philippians 2:1-5; John 4:4-41

Jesus taught by example.

Jesus practiced what He preached. But it was Paul who wrote, “... *in humility value others above yourselves*” (Philippians 2:3). Did Jesus value others above Himself? In coming to earth, He put our needs first on His agenda. No sooner had Paul written those words when he added, “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*” (v. 5 KJV) who made the greatest act of humility by becoming one of us. He was born in a lowly manger and started life as a refugee from Egypt, growing up in despised Nazareth.

Jesus modeled treating others as equals by honoring “second-class,” outcast Samaritans. (1) He talked with the Samaritan woman at the well. Darrell W. Johnson asks: “Is not the woman at the well, who has had five husbands, and is living with a man who is not her husband, now being sought out by her true Husband?” And (2) Jesus made a Samaritan traveler on the road to Jericho the hero of His story that we call the “Parable of the Good Samaritan.”

Having such a mindset did not escape the notice of the religious authorities, who were threatened by it. “We know you have no fear of man, but speak plainly. You, Jesus, show no favoritism,” they said as they prepared to ask their entrapping questions, seeking to find fault

with Him (Mark 12:14). But it didn't work. "No man spoke like this man," other questioners reported back to their superiors (John 7:46).

If we linger with Jesus, we too can have His mindset. We can live like He did, confident in His love for us and equally confident in His love for others.

QUESTIONS

How will you treat all people equally, like Jesus did, today?

PRAYERS FOR BRANDON & KENDRA KERTSON— CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

Our mission is always to bless our campus with the tangible love of Jesus. With school being online, we have been seeking ways to do this in the community and online for those students not in So. Cal. Pray we would find good and meaningful partnerships to bless our community here and online.

FRIDAY

Luke 2:10; Luke 4:24-30

Jesus came to earth for all people equally.

The angel announced to Bethlehem's shepherds, "*I bring you good news of great joy that will be for **all** the people*" (Luke 2:10). Years later the townspeople of Nazareth were offended by their hometown hero (Jesus) when He told them the stories of Naaman the leper and the widow of Zarephath, both foreigners who received God's blessing in contrast to Jewish citizens who did not (Luke 4:24-30). The point of Jesus was not that Israel was not blessed, but that the rest of the world is blessed as well.

This is only a reiteration of the Abrahamic covenant, which states, "*Through you, Abraham, all the families [ethnicities] of the world shall be blessed.*" (Genesis 22:18 paraphrased). And how does the triune God accomplish this? Through us, His disciples. Jesus invites us to partner with Him in this grand plan (Ephesians 1:9-10). As the Father sent Jesus, so Jesus sends us, starting with our prayers to the Lord of the harvest, to send forth laborers into His harvest. Jesus leaves us with the Holy Spirit until the work is done.

According to E. Stanley Jones, author of *The Christ of the Indian Road* and missionary statesman to India, "the Holy Spirit came not to replace Jesus' presence, but to guarantee His presence" (Robert Tuttle, 404). Once E. Stanley Jones asked Gandhi how missionaries could better bring Jesus to India. Gandhi responded with great clarity and directness. He suggested four things.

1. Talk more about Jesus and live more like Jesus.
2. Emphasize the love of Christianity more; make it your working force, for love is central in Christianity.
3. Learn about other religions and study them more sympathetically to find out the good that is within them.
4. But never adulterate your own religion; don't tone it down” (Tuttle, 101).

QUESTIONS

How better could we bring Jesus to where we live and to the world?
What is your part in this partnership with God to give all peoples on earth an equal opportunity to be invited participants in His kingdom?

PRAYERS FOR BRANDON & KENDRA KERTSON— CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

Pray for our family as, like many, we struggle with working from home while simultaneously homeschooling. Our youngest has particularly been struggling with online school. Also pray for Brandon's mom and aunt who live with us and are immune-compromised; pray that we'd be able to continue to keep them safe.

SATURDAY

Matthew 25:31-46; Philippians 2:3-4

Jesus came to earth to make our business His business.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. But rather in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4)

Isn't this what Jesus did when He came to earth? He made our difficulties His affair. He came to save us from our sins and teach us how to live.

One of His greatest teachings is the “Parable of the Sheep and the Goats” in Matthew 25:31-46. Verse 40 tells us that whatever we do for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of His, we do for Jesus. Jim Wallis writes about Mary Glover, who prayed before volunteers handed out bags of groceries and checks to families in need in our nation's capital (Washington, DC). Her prayer: “Lord, we know that you'll be coming through this line today, so Lord, help us to treat You well.”

My Iranian friend, a Muslim-background believer, was shocked by the verse that helped lead him to faith in Jesus. It was Matthew 5:44: “*But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.*” We are to treat all others as if they were Jesus Himself. In this, Jesus is teaching us how to treat others with equality.

After what Jesus did for us, should we not make His business our business? Even today He is making our business His business by interceding [praying] for us. We join Him in this grand enterprise by praying for others.

QUESTIONS

Who does God want you to pray for today?

PRAYERS

Pray for college students and young adults as they process all that is going on in our world. Pray for protection from the thoughts of Satan. Pray that they will find mentors and friends who lead them into Holy Spirit empowered lives that will lead the next generation to further God's Kingdom Building work.

Sources:

- Darrell W. Johnson, *Discipleship on the Edge: An Expository Journey Through the Book of Revelation* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004), 310.
- Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., *In Our Time: The Life and Ministry of E. Stanley Jones* (Published by The E. Stanley Jones Foundation, 2019), 101, 404.
- James Wallis, *Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2019), 243.

