

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

FEBRUARY 1 - 5, 2021

SHATTERED MIRRORS

SERMON SERIES

Jan 3 - Feb 14

MONDAY

1 Peter 1: 9-17

Our theme this week is “Respect Differences.” As Christians we must treat everyone with honor, especially those who are disrespected and dishonored in the world. We are to live this way because we are different from the world. We are “*a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God*” (1:9). “Holy” means set apart. We have been set apart from the world. We now march to the beat of a different drummer. We used to hold prejudices and hatred toward certain groups of people; now as believers, we no longer follow the world.

The world is at war with God; Christians have chosen to break away from the crowd and make peace with God. To help us better understand our act of making peace with God, let us look at the conflict of Israel against many Muslim nations today. Most of the Muslim countries of the world are anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian. One of the great achievements of the Trump administration has been to have brokered movements of peace between Israel and four Muslim countries. These four Muslim countries have chosen to recognize Israel as an independent nation. In order to make peace, they had to break away from the crowd by abandoning the anti-Israel stance of most of the Muslim world. This is what Christians have done; they have broken away from the throng and stopped following the values of the world in order to make peace with God.

Since we are now at peace with God and set apart from the world as God's holy people, we must live according to our new citizenship. We must respect all people in spite of their being different from us, even though the world discriminates against them. In the world there is ill-treatment of certain racial groups, immigrants, political groups, religious groups, and other groups that might not fit one's personal beliefs. Christians are to love all people as Christ loves them. We do this because we are now God's holy people, set apart for Him.

QUESTIONS

Do you see yourself as a different citizen from those of the world?

Do you see yourself as a holy people, a people belonging to God?

Do you live by a different motivation from the people of the world?

Is your purpose in life different from those of the world? What might hinder you from doing so? What can you do to remove these hindrances?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

Three Angels Haiti serves orphans and at-risk families in Haiti. Our goal is to help them escape poverty, encounter Jesus, and become part of a healthy home. Father God, thank You for entrusting us as stewards of Your gifts! Help us always to seek You, to be true to Your ways, and to serve You in service to others. Help us to keep our eyes on You always.

TUESDAY

1 Peter 1: 9-17

Since we are now citizens of a new nation and set apart for God, we are to live “*as aliens and strangers in this world*” (1:11), abstaining from sin and doing good among the unbelievers (1:12). Becoming a Christian involves a change in citizenship. We have moved out of Satan’s kingdom and have moved into God’s kingdom. Now, we live in a different country and need to live according to our new location.

Our change in citizenship is like refugees fleeing a war-torn country and finding sanctuary in a safe country. I want to tell you about a Vietnamese mother and her two children who fled the war in Vietnam and were resettled in the U.S. They temporarily lived with an American family. One day the American housewife was cleaning the room where the refugee family stayed and found food hidden under the bed. She then brought them to visit an American super market to show them shelves full of food. Next, she took them to two other markets to do the same. She explained to them that there was no need to hide food under the bed because there is an abundance of food in the U.S. The newcomers had a refugee mentality; although living in the U.S., they continued the practice of fearing the lack of food. They needed to change their mindset to match their new location.

This is a picture of the Christian’s change in citizenship. Although we still live in this sinful world, we no longer belong to this world. Since we now belong to God’s kingdom, we need to change our mindset and

leave behind our old ways of thinking, the old values and prejudices of this world, and live by our newly established status “*as aliens and strangers in the world.*” Today, many in our society attack various racial, social, political, law enforcement, economic, and other groups. We must stop going along with the crowd. We must be willing to stand alone if necessary because we are strangers in this world.

QUESTIONS

What did Jesus mean in declaring “*tetelestai*” (“*It is finished!*”—John 19:30) from the cross? What signs did God use to reinforce the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice? What does “Jesus hasn’t simply made peace between God and man and Jew and Gentile; He is our peace” mean?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

Almighty Lord and Creator, You know the extreme needs and challenges facing Haiti. Please bless the children and families we serve, our staff and supporters. Revive and renew our community—both in Haiti and the world over—for Your glory!

WEDNESDAY

1 Peter 1: 9-17

When we live as strangers in this world, our good deeds will be an alarming contrast to the world's thinking. When the world sees our good works, they will glorify God (1:12).

Here is an example of God being glorified through a man's good deeds. The Uyghurs are a Muslim Turkic ethnic minority people living primarily in Xinjiang, the northeast province of China. A Uyghur man named Ohwin (fictitious name) was a fervent Muslim until he met the Lord. For "illegal religious activities" (preaching the gospel to Muslims), he was incarcerated with drug addicts and Muslim extremists for two years in a labor camp. The Muslim radicals in the prison, after discovering he was a Christian, treated him badly. Without access to a Bible, memorized Scripture kept him going. Because of his character and conduct, the prisoners gradually accepted him. He was able to share the gospel with these Islamic activists. At the end of his incarceration, the leader of the rebels embraced Ohwin, told him he was a good man, and that he respected him more than anyone else. Ohwin, by his good deeds in the midst of persecution, became a light in the prison which brought glory to God.

This is how we are to live in this world. It might be costly and painful like what Ohwin went through. Yet, this might be the price we will have to pay to live as strangers in this world. Today, as we see such bitter divisiveness and hatred among various groups in our society, what

can we do as individual Christians to promote healing? What is our role as a church? What can we do to bring glory to God in the midst of all the conflicts in our society? We cannot change the world; however, we can change our personal behavior and outlook.

There are those who harbor bitterness toward a particular ethnic group because of past pain they have suffered at the hands of that group. For instance, my parents, who are Chinese, refused to attend the wedding of their own son because he was marrying a Japanese woman. This took place ten years after World War II. My parents had harbored such bitterness because Japanese soldiers had committed many atrocities when they had occupied much of China during the war.

QUESTIONS

How does one get over the intense anger toward those who caused one much pain? Slowly one has to work through this anger with the help of the Lord by learning to forgive and seek reconciliation. In this way God can be glorified.

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

Precious Lord and Savior, You have entrusted us with beautiful children. Help us to care for and educate these orphans and students so that they might be kingdom-builders, faithful Christ followers who impact Haiti and the world in Your magnificent name.

THURSDAY

1 Peter 1: 9-17

We are no longer citizens of this world; we are now members of God's kingdom. Now we live as strangers in this world; we live to glorify God. Our good deeds will be in marked contrast to the actions of the world and will silence the world's criticisms.

The following is an example of good works silencing one's critics. Mayor Kotaba Wamura saw his town in Japan destroyed by a tsunami in 1933. He proposed building a flood gate and sea wall. The town council initially balked because it would cost \$30 million based on 2011 dollars. He persisted until 1972 when construction began. The sea wall—673 feet long, 51 feet high— was completed in 1984; it took twelve years to complete. The project was criticized as wasteful for a town with a population of 3,000. (Tomoko A. Hosaka, cbsnews.com—5/13/2011)

Mayor Wamura died thirteen years after the wall was constructed. He had never seen the wall put to use. At his retirement he spoke to the village employees: "Even if you encounter opposition, have conviction to finish what you start. In the end, people will understand." (Hosaka)

Twenty-seven years after the wall was built (March 11, 2011) an earthquake and tsunami hit the Japanese town. The wall was 51 feet in height, the tsunami was 66 feet high. Some water flowed over the wall but not enough to cause serious damage. The city was saved. His critics were silenced. (Hosaka)

When we stand apart from the world and do good, we will be criticized. However, in the end, our critics will be silenced. Here is another example of critics being silenced. During the beginning stages of COVID, the doctor in Wuhan, China, Dr. Li Wenliang, was reprimanded by the authorities for “disrupting public order” when he warned his colleagues about a new disease. He later died from the virus. A subsequent Chinese official inquiry exonerated him, and the Communist Party of China formally offered a “solemn apology” to his family and revoked the admonishment against him. The Chinese people now regard him as a hero. Those lower authorities who had initially reprimanded him were in turn disciplined. His critics were silenced. (Andrew Green, Stephanie Hegarty)

QUESTIONS

By living as strangers in this world, doing good instead of going along with the prejudice and hatred practiced by many, God will be glorified and we will silence our critics. Is this reason enough to stand up for what is right in the midst of much opposition?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

Our Covenant God, You are faithful and true! Holy Spirit grant our board discernment and faithfulness to shepherd Your resources wisely. Help us to make good decisions that serve the children in our care, their families, our staff, and the people of Haiti. Bless our volunteers and supporters, dear Lord.

FRIDAY

1 Peter 1: 9-17

To live lives that bring glory to God, we are to “*show proper respect to everyone*” (1:17), even though many others in our society might treat certain groups of people shamefully.

Sometimes we become stuck in the sinful prejudices of the world even after becoming Christians. Because of one’s upbringing, one might not even be aware of the prejudices that one harbors. For instance, when I was young, I would often hear from my parents and from others in my environment negative comments about certain racial groups. Therefore, at a very young age I was developing prejudices against these groups. These latent prejudices continued to dwell within me into adulthood, although I was not fully conscious of them.

As I began to meet people from these particular racial groups, it took a while before I could see them as individual persons rather than members of a specific racial group. Although we are now living in God’s kingdom, we can be stuck in some of the old values of the world and not even be fully aware that we are.

In the same way, we can have latent biases against people of a certain sex because of early childhood experiences. For instance, in my childhood home, I would often hear my father talk to my mother in a condescending way. Because he had an American education while she had only a few years of elementary schooling in a small village school in China, I would often hear him say to her, “You don’t know a thing!”

My father would continue this practice for the rest of his marriage, treating my mother as an inferior. Sometimes when my wife would visit my parents' home, she would notice the way my father talked down to my mother. Some years later my wife said to me, "You are treating me just like your father treats your mother!" I was shocked to hear this. I denied it. However, after much thought I came to the surprising realization that she was right. It was an eye-opener for me to discover this inclination that I had within me. My thinking that a woman is lesser than a man was a latent tendency that I was not even aware that I possessed. Because this way of thinking was deeply rooted from childhood, I could not shake it off overnight. For many years I have worked at overcoming it, and I still have to keep guard over it.

QUESTIONS

Are there latent prejudices that you might hold for which you are not fully aware? What can you do about them?

PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

O Faithful Redeemer, You know better than any of us of these challenging times faced globally. We find rest and joy in knowing that You are all-powerful and sovereign. Bless our donors; keep them safe and faithful to You. Please grant them wisdom, peace and generosity as Your image-bearers.

Sources

- Tomoko A. Hosaka, “How One Japanese Village Defied the Tsunami” (May 13, 2011), <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna43018489>.
- Andrew Green, *The Lancet*, “Obituary: Li Wenliang” (February 18, 2020), [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30382-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30382-2/fulltext)
- Stephanie Hegarty, “The Chinese Doctor Who Tried to Warn Others about Coronavirus” (February 6, 2020), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-51364382>

