

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

AUGUST 23 - 27, 2021



MONDAY

John 1:1-7, 21-23; 4:34-38; 5:31-40

John the Baptist introduced the world to Jesus.

“There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness concerning [Jesus] that light, so that through [John] all might believe.” (John 1:6-7)

John the Baptist was like a one-man circus, attracting great crowds to the wilderness where he lived on locusts and wild honey. However, John insisted he was not the main attraction. One was coming, greater than he, whose shoelaces he was not worthy to tie. John said he was not the Messiah. *“Who are you then?” they asked. “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord,’ he replied” (John 1:21-23).* The people may have asked, *“Who is this Lord, and how do we prepare for His coming?”*

John had a two-part plan for them to prepare for the Messiah’s coming: (1) be baptized in water as a sign of confession, forgiveness, and cleansing from sin, and (2) do the right thing, like (a) if you have two coats give one away, and/or (b) don’t require more money than you are due.

John did what God sent him to do. Corrie ten Boom said, *“The measure of your life, after all, is not its duration, but its donation.”* (Guideposts) John the Baptist’s life was cut short with his beheading for confronting the sin of one of the lesser King Herods.

Speaking of testimonies about Himself, Jesus replied to the Jewish leaders, *“You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony, but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light”* (John 5:33-35).

This week we are looking at five truths in John 1-5. Today is the truth that John the Baptist did the work assigned to him, and we have been assigned a work to do also. *“My food,”* said Jesus, *“is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work”* (4:34). *“I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor”* (4:38). *“As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent Me. Night is coming when no one can work”* (9:4).

QUESTIONS

What work has God assigned to you? Are you doing it?

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD’S PANTRY

Food insecurity produces gripping fear. This fear affects everything from self-esteem to day-to-day decisions. How does someone survive when they cannot afford to eat each month? Our prayer is for those experiencing food insecurity to find Shepherd’s Pantry to be a lifesaver and an example of God’s comfort.

TUESDAY

John 4

Jesus is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Sin is not just missing the bull’s eye; it’s missing the target entirely—even the haystack. In *The Prodigal God* by Tim Keller, the author points out that both the younger brother and the elder brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son are deep in sin. Both sons approach life wrongfully. So what is the right way? The right approach involves believing God’s version of our story, not our version. This way includes letting Jesus be our Savior and not trying to be our own savior.

What is taking Jesus so long? I see sin in me and in the world’s cultures. At the same time, I am attracted to righteousness, which I see in Jesus, who said, “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled*” (Matthew 5:6). Even if we believe these verses, do we find fault in the way Jesus is going about sin eradication?

We can sympathize with John the Baptist’s questioning if Jesus really is the Promised One. Jesus gave John assurances that He was. “*Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor*” (Matthew 11:4).

In John 4, Jesus passes through Samaria and “chances” on the woman at Sychar’s well at midday. After her conversation with Jesus, she returns to the village saying, “Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” (4:29).

At the town’s invitation, Jesus stayed in Sychar two more days as their guest. Upon Jesus’ departure, the people there said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world” (4:42).

For other verses on God’s taking away our sin, see Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 1:18; Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 1:21; Romans 3:22-26; 6:23; Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:9.

QUESTIONS

How did John the Baptist know that Jesus was the Man he told the people He was? What assurances did Jesus give when John sent his questions to Him? How did the townspeople of Sychar recognize Jesus to be the Savior of the world? Do you know this to be true? How do you know?

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD’S PANTRY

When people face eviction and homelessness, sometimes they are a few days or one payment away from disaster. Shepherd’s Help Fund is now helping fund those emergencies so people can remain housed. Our prayer is that this fund can remain available, along with personalized support to help our vulnerable neighbors get back on their feet again.

WEDNESDAY

John 3

God is the giver; we are the recipients.

Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission (more recently, Overseas Missionary Fellowship), learned in life and ministry that “God is the ultimate circumstance.” For me, this is a profound concept. No matter who or what circumstance we are facing, God is who we need to deal with. If we need or want anything, God is the One to whom we should be making our requests.

Jesus said, “Ask, and you will receive” (John 16:24). But Corrie ten Boom cautions, “Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire? Paul observes, “*For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you had not?*” (1 Corinthians 4:7).

James tells us: “*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights*” (James 1:17). John the Apostle says, “*Out of God’s fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given*” (John 1:17). God is not stingy with His grace.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, “*If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water*” (John 4:10). Five verses later, she asked Him for that living water, and it changed her life forever, as He had said it would.

God's greatest gift of all is Jesus. And our reception of Jesus is the greatest miracle we could ever experience, because that is when eternal life begins. *"As many as received [Jesus], to them He gives power to become sons and daughters of God"* (John 1:12).

In John 3, Jesus told Nicodemus about a "new birth," describing it as being "born again." Nicodemus didn't understand. *"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit"* (v. 8). *"How can this be?"* Nicodemus asked (v. 9).

QUESTIONS

For some, our starting point with God is clearly known. For others, it is not so clear. Surely, assurance of salvation is one of God's most precious gifts. How is/was it with you?

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD'S PANTRY

Multiple diverse ethnic groups find themselves struggling with employment, government agencies, and community resources only to find themselves living in constant stress. Pray for Shepherd's Pantry to increase its sensitivity to recognize these needs and solutions available to them.

THURSDAY

John 4

The life Jesus promises, once begun, continues.

“Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become to them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:14)

Eternal life starts now. And eternal life is a gift (Romans 6:23). Sometimes, when we compare our humdrum lives to what we read or hear about, we wonder what we’re missing. Where is this “*more abundant life*” that Jesus talked about? And what does it consist of? Wherever we may be, it starts here and now. We know it includes Jesus because He is literally that life. And because He is that life, we must talk with Him, asking Him questions and wanting His opinion, and listening to His answers and direction. We must seek Him with the view to finding Him.

When we look back over our lives, we can see that Jesus has been involved in our lives much more than we realized. The life He has assigned to us may seem difficult or even pointless, but He is here helping and believing in us.

This life of Jesus is the life of faith. Even more, it's the life of love. As Paul pointed out, faith is nothing without love. When we are convinced of the truth that God loves us, we can love ourselves—we can love others. God's love is the reason He sent Jesus. So there's a lot riding on getting this deep into our heart and its outflow to the people around us.

The branch abiding in the Vine [Jesus] means continual and forever connection (John 15:5). According to Corrie ten Boom, and she would know, “When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer” (Guideposts). Or in the words of Paul, “*God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work*” (2 Corinthians 9:8). The Bible is a book of life for us with words to live by.

QUESTIONS

Our life in Jesus is not only a spring welling up inside us (4:14); it is also a river flowing from our inmost being to others (7:38). Let us encourage one another in living up to these words. How can you encourage a friend in his or her walk with Jesus?

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD'S PANTRY

Mental illness is a clean definition for a horrible challenge for many people. You see it result in homelessness, job hopping, unemployment, confusion, and depression. The prayer at Shepherd's Pantry is always for these marginalized neighbors. May they find peace and clarity as true gifts from God.



FRIDAY

John 5

Jesus was/is always in sync with His Father.

“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can only do what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son does also. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all He does.” (John 5:19-20)

Over and over Jesus’ Father God communicated His love and pleasure in His Son. And, because of Jesus’ love for His Father, He did/spoke only what His Father showed Him and told Him to do and say. With absolute trust in His Father’s love, Jesus hung on and obeyed His Father’s every word.

“For I do not speak on My own, but the Father who sent Me commanded Me to say all that I have spoken.” (John 12:49)

We can be tempted to do and say whatever we think is best or expedient, or to do and/or say nothing at all. But Jesus showed a better way. He told His disciples, *“Whoever has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love them and show Myself to them. ... Anyone who loves Me will obey My teaching. My Father will love them, and We will come to them and make Our home with them” (John 14:21, 23).*

“If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commands and remain in His love” (John 15:10).

God’s love for us is a powerful incentive and motivation to obey Him.

Jesus models for us the connection between love and obedience.

The Chosen Series on TV illustrates how living in the presence of Jesus makes a change in the disciples’ desires (Burgis). Their aspirations were elevated and began to conform with those of their Leader. Jesus wants more for us than we want for ourselves.

John 1-5 contains at least five truths or pointers on how to embrace Jesus and the life He gives us: (1) prepare for His coming into our lives and the lives of others, (2) recognize Him, (3) receive Him, initially and (4) continually, and (5) stay connected with Him.

QUESTIONS

Have your desires changed while walking with Jesus? How?

PRAYERS FOR SHEPHERD’S PANTRY

The Shepherd’s Pantry Case Manager has reached multiple families raising their children in and out of a local motel. The children are housed in a difficult, often detrimental environment trying to have the life and education that a child deserves. Our prayer is for these families and how to support those children in their desperate time of need.

Sources

- Ashley Lateef, “10 Inspiring Quotes from Corrie ten Boom,” *Guideposts*, www.guideposts.org
- Luke Burgis, “Why We Love *The Chosen* So Much,” *Christianity Today*, July 14, 2021. (“The show isn’t just about the transformation of the disciples; it’s about our spiritual transformation, too.”)
- Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).

