

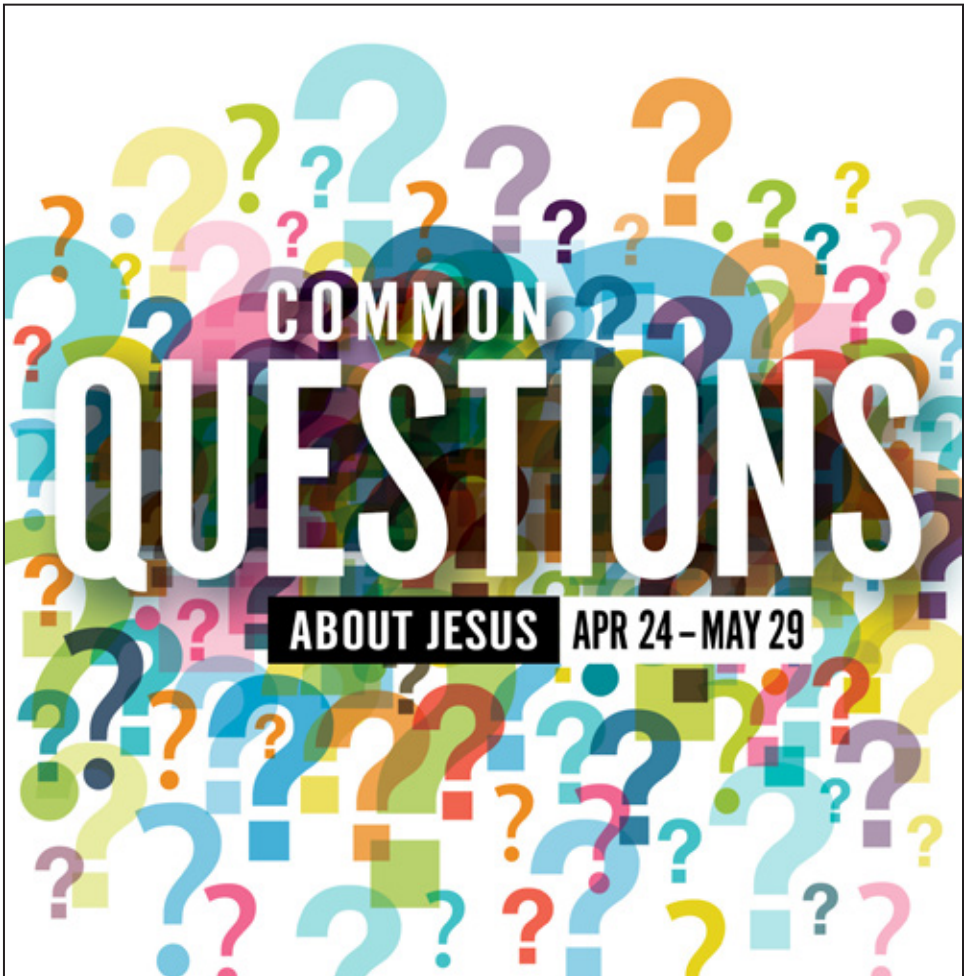
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MAY 16 - 20, 2022



MONDAY

Read **Psalm 14:2-3; Matthew 11:27-30**

“The LORD looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Psalm 14:2-3

History reveals that Jesus of Nazareth existed. There can be no reasonable doubt as it is confirmed by both pagan and Christian writers. The question that arises: Is there any evidence for the Christian assertion that the carpenter of Nazareth was the unique Son of God?

This question is fundamental. If Jesus was not God in human flesh (incarnate), then Christianity is completely discredited. We are left with just another religion with some beautiful ideas and noble ethics; its unique distinctiveness is gone.

But there is evidence for the deity of Jesus—strong, historical, cumulative evidence; proof from which an honest person can subscribe to without committing intellectual suicide. Spend time reading the Bible. Look particularly at the Gospels, which tell the story of Jesus Christ. Give Him the opportunity to confront you with Himself and to authenticate Himself to you.

Jesus promised: *“Seek and you will find”* (Matthew 7:7). If we do not seek, we will never find. Jesus told three stories (Luke 15) to illustrate this point. The shepherd searched until he found the lost sheep. The woman hunted until she found her lost coin. The father was constantly on the lookout for his lost son. Why should we expect to do less? God desires to be found, but only to those who seek Him.

We must seek Jesus seriously, humbly, honestly, and obediently. Jesus said, *“My Father has entrusted everything to Me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”* Then Jesus said, *‘Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you. Let Me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light’* (Matthew 11:27-30). Pursuing a relationship with Jesus, the Son of God, changes meaningless toil into spiritual productivity and purpose.

QUESTIONS

How would you describe your “seeking” to understand who Jesus is and what that means?

PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE (AE)

Pray for Mombasa, Kenya: There are more than 1 million people in Mombasa and nearly 350,000 of them are Muslims. Pray that their hearts will be open to the Gospel.

TUESDAY

Read **John 14:1-6; Luke 4:21**

The most remarkable feature of Jesus' teaching is that He was constantly talking about Himself. It is true that He said a great deal about the Fatherhood of God and the kingdom of God. But Jesus added that He is the Father's Son (John 5:19), and that He Himself had come to launch the kingdom. Entry into the kingdom depends on how people respond to Him personally. He went so far as to call the kingdom of God "*My kingdom*" (John 18:36). Jesus points to Himself as He says, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6).

Luke describes in some detail the dramatic scene when Jesus attends the synagogue of His home village, Nazareth. He was given a scroll of Old Testament Scriptures and He stood up to read. The passage is from the prophet Isaiah 61:1-2. (Please read aloud at home.) He closed the book or scroll, returned it to the synagogue attendant and sat down, while all eyes were upon Him. He then broke the silence with these profound words: "*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*" (Luke 4:21). In other words, "Isaiah was writing about Me."

One of the purposes of Jesus' teaching about Himself is to lead us to answer this great question: "*Who do you say that I am?*" (Mark 8:29). This is shaped by what you know and understand of Him from all the Bible.

Jesus offered Himself as someone in whom they should put their faith and to whom they should offer their love. People are supposed to believe in God, yet Jesus urged people to believe in Himself. “*The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent*” (John 6:29). “*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life*” (John 3:36—see also 8:24; 16:8-9). If to believe in Him is our first duty, not to believe in Him is our chief sin.

Jesus predicted: “*I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself*” (John 12:32). He knew the cross would be a moral magnet. But His understanding was that this attraction would bring the people first and foremost, not to God or the church, not to truth or righteousness, but to Himself. Jesus drew people to Himself so that they would come to embrace these other realities as well.

QUESTIONS

Why is it wrong to simply label Jesus a great teacher?

PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE (AE)

Pray for Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo: Kinshasa is Africa’s third largest metropolitan area, with a population twice that of New York City. Many have come here fleeing from civil unrest in the countryside. They desperately need to know Christ’s love.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Daniel 7:1-14; John 3:13**

Historically, the church's confession of the dual nature of Jesus—that He has a divine nature and a human nature—has led to the misunderstanding of the difference between the title “Son of Man” and “Son of God.” The tendency has been for people to assume that when Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man, He was speaking of His human nature; when He is referred to as the Son of God, it is to His divine nature. Both titles have elements that refer to His deity and humanity.

The term “son of God” is used in the Bible as another way to refer to humans who have a special relationship with God through obedience not biology. In Exodus, the nation of Israel is called God's firstborn son. The “Son of God” referred to Jesus' eternal sonship and His deity (John 1:14).

Jesus used the title “the Son of Man” at least seventy-eight times! Jesus' humanity was never in contention, so how can this title help us grasp the divine nature of Jesus more fully? In the Old Testament book of Daniel, the prophet Daniel records a vision of the interior of the heavenly court of God, where he saw the Ancient of Days enthroned and judgement was set. And to the Ancient of Days comes “*One like the Son of Man coming with clouds of heaven. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power; [and all would worship Him]*” (Daniel 7:13-14). So, the Son of Man is a heavenly person who descends to earth and

then He returns to the presence of God in His ascension. Jesus said, *“No one has ascended [to the Father] except He who [first] descended from [Him]”* (John 3:13). This is a claim of divine authority.

When Jesus heals on the Sabbath day and is rebuked by the religious leaders, He says, *“I did this that you may know that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath”* (Matthew 12:8 paraphrased). And when He forgives sins and creates an uproar from His enemies, saying, *“Only God has the authority to forgive sins”* (Mark 2:7 paraphrased), Jesus said, *“[I did this] so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”* (Mark 2:10).

QUESTIONS

What is the difference between these titles: the Son of God and the Son of Man?

PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE (AE)

Pray for Kayonza, Rwanda: Kayonza is a transportation hub in a country that is still recovering from the genocide of 1994—a horrendous event that left an estimated 800,000 people dead. Pray that AE will reach not only local residents with the Gospel, but thousands more who are traveling in Africa.

THURSDAY

Read **Mark 2:1-12; Luke 7:36-50**

“Then Jesus said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’” Luke 7:48

I remember the spring day in 1988 when I gave my heart to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. The sun seemed brighter, everything felt new. I hope your first experience of Jesus’ forgiveness and new life was as poignant or as potent as mine.

Besides Jesus’ direct claims to deity, there are indirect ways He made it clear. On many occasions He did only what God should do. In this lesson, we’ll look at Jesus’ power and authority to forgive sins.

On two separate occasions, Jesus is recorded as forgiving sinners. Friends of a paralyzed man brought him to Jesus by letting him down through the roof on a mat. Jesus recognized that his need was basically spiritual and surprised the crowd by saying to him, *“Son, your sins are forgiven,”* before going on to heal his physical problem as well (Mark 2:1-12).

The second declaration of forgiveness was made to a woman known to be living an immoral life, who came to see Jesus while He was having a meal at the home of a religious leader. She came up behind Him while He was reclining at the table and washed His feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. What amazing worship. And Jesus said to her, *“Your sins are forgiven”* (Luke 7:36-50).

On both occasions the onlookers raise their eyebrows and ask, “*Who is this? What blasphemy is this? Who but God can forgive sins?*” They were right to be concerned. We may forgive the injuries and injustices that others do to us, but the sins we commit against God can only be forgiven by God Himself.

When Jesus said, “*Your sins are forgiven*”—even before He died on the cross—He was not speaking empty words. He had the power to forgive sin, just like He had power to heal paralysis. During the life of Jesus, sins were forgiven based on Jesus’ yet future death on the cross—the benefits of that sacrifice were granted to those who had faith in Jesus. Now, by faith, we look back on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and receive God’s forgiveness. Hallelujah!

QUESTIONS

What are the implications of Jesus’ claims to forgive sins for you?

PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE (AE)

Pray for Malawi: Pray for the AE team under the leadership of Dr Cornelius Huwa that they may be strengthened in their work. We thank God for the engagement of churches and evangelists in Malawi through AE’s work, and we ask for continued strength and safety as they engage with people in extreme poverty.

FRIDAY

Read **John 6:68**

“Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’” John 6:68

For as long as humans have inhabited the world, we have been searching for answers to the same big questions: Where did I come from? Is there life after death? What is the meaning of life? Life is an enigma. Whether we are talking about physical life or spiritual life, its nature is as baffling as its origin. We can neither define what it is nor state where it comes from. We can only call it a gift from God. It is this gift that Jesus claims to give. Jesus wants to be your answer to life’s great questions.

Jesus described Himself as *“the Bread of Life,” “the Life,”* and *“the resurrection and the life.”* He likened His followers’ dependence upon Him to the sustenance derived from the vine by its branches. He offered a woman from Samaria *“living water”* and promised eternal life to a rich young ruler if he would come and follow Him. Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd who will not only give His life for the sheep but give life to them abundantly! He stated that God has granted Him authority over all people that He might give life to as many as God gives Him, and declared, *“The Son gives life to whom He is pleased to give it”* (John 5:21).

So definite is this claim that Jesus' disciples clearly recognized the truth of it. It made leaving Him impossible. "To whom shall we go?" In his straightforward way Peter answered for all of us—there is no other way. Though there are many philosophies and self-styled authorities, Jesus alone has the words that give eternal life. People look everywhere for eternal life and miss Christ, the only source. There is nowhere else to go.

Like Peter's, our own understanding of Jesus must grow as we live for Him. As time passes, our awareness of the breadth and depth of Jesus' saving work and lordship ought to bring life to others as we share our faith and new life with them.

"In the world of created and changeable things, Christ and His Word alone remain unshaken." (*The Valley of Vision*)

QUESTIONS

Describe your life with Jesus? Does anything need to change?

PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE (AE)

Pray for Zomba Mission. This year saw approximately 900 people giving their hearts to Christ. Let us pray that they will stay strong in their faith, grow with the help of the Church, and be enriched every day.

Sources

- Arthur Bennett, ed., *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Publishers, 1975), p. 17.



Glenkirk Church | 1700 Palopinto Ave, Glendora, CA 91741 | 626.914.4833

GlenkirkChurch.org |  **@GlenkirkChurch** |  **Facebook: GlenkirkChurch**