

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

AUG 29 - SEP 2, 2022



# MONDAY

Read **Deuteronomy 5:6-7; 2 Kings 17:36**

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“Glenkirk Church is a worshipping community ...” (Glenkirk Mission Statement)—we are a worshipping body. However, worship (revering, adoring, honoring) is only as worthy as its Object. Deuteronomy 5:6-7, the First Commandment, leaves this unmistakable: we are to worship only the true and living God, our Creator.

The “how” of worship is also crucial, its imagery representing God’s majesty and attributes. The Second Commandment—“*You shall not make for yourself a carved image of anything [created ... nor] bow down to them or serve them ...*” (Exodus 20:4-5)—considers idolatry, but also properly worshipping Yahweh. When the Jews molded the golden calf as Moses received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 32), high priest Aaron perhaps intended a tangible, visual representation of God Himself. As a result, 3,000 unfaithful Israelites fell (Exodus 32:28). After Israel’s split from Judah, Jeroboam set up calf images in counterfeit Northern “temples,” destructively promoting false worship like Aaron did centuries earlier.

Exodus 25-30 and 35-40 painstakingly detail the tabernacle’s design and furnishings along with priestly essentials. Leviticus 23 through 24:1-9 addresses proper feasts and tabernacle elements. Numbers 7-10 details suitable offerings and celebrations. These chapters collectively get considerably more biblical ink than even the Creation account and Jesus’ crucifixion! David’s servant, Uzzah, was slain for steadying the Ark of the Covenant (2 Samuel 6:2-7). Uzzah offered incense in the

temple and was stricken with leprosy thereafter (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). The elements of proper worship are hyper-critical to God, but why? Why does He seem so “fussy” about such intricacies?

The LORD’s own peculiar declaration, “*I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God*” (Exodus 20:5), helps to explain this. Remember, “jealousy” is not envy (coveting), but rather “not wanting to lose that which is yours.” God opposes anything harming His beloved. Idol worship, along with any misguided worship practices, are destructive because they misrepresent reality. Accordingly, they corrupt God’s imagery in us, damaging souls and prompting other sin.

God’s jealousy is a fruit of His love. His meticulousness regarding worship is likewise for our good—He doesn’t want to lose us to harmful, faulty practices distorting His imagery and likeness. Thus, there is Jesus’ teaching that we “*worship in spirit and truth*” (John 4:24).

## QUESTIONS

What makes worship worthwhile, worthy? Why is God so picky about how His people worship? What does God’s “jealousy” have to do with all of this?

## PRAYERS

**For Brandon and Kendra Kertson and Chi Alpha Campus Ministries**

Pray for the Lord’s wisdom as the Kertsons mentor and coach Chi Alpha Missionaries who are pioneering new ministries across the country!

# TUESDAY

Read **1 Peter 2:9; Acts 13:2-3**

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This week emphasizes Glenkirk as “a worshipping community,” the words that open Glenkirk’s mission statement. This calling follows the biblical arch extending all the way back to Abraham: “*The LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation ...’*” (Genesis 12:1). Abraham’s faithfulness in following and worshipping God produced Israel through Isaac, along with other nations via Ishmael and Keturah.

Israel, Abraham’s descendants, was called to be “*a kingdom of priests*” (Exodus 19:6) and “*a light for the nations*” (Isaiah 49:6). While corporate Israel was inconsistent in fulfilling God’s mission, it did produce the Messiah and the Church’s earliest leaders.

Jesus of Nazareth, the Savior and “*Lion ... from the tribe of Judah*” (Revelation 5:5), picked up where ancient Israel struggled. In coming to “*seek and save the lost*” (Luke 19:10), Jesus glorified (manifested and reflected) the Father. He was, and is, “*a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel*” (Luke 2:32). As “*the light of the world*” (John 8:12), Jesus embodied God’s kingdom and worship itself. Accordingly, He commissioned His disciples, and us, to “*go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (Matthew 28:19).

The Apostle Paul, personally enlisted and schooled by the risen Christ (Acts 26:16-17; Galatians 1:12), accepted this commission. He faithfully responded to Jesus' calling him as the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21), serving as the principal church builder throughout the Mediterranean region during the first century.

Worship comes in many forms: music amidst services, praising God, prayer, service, everyday work done for His glory, etc. We worship God when following in the footsteps of Abraham, the Lord Himself, and Paul; when we *“proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”* (1 Peter 2:9); and when we faithfully respond to being *“set apart ... for the work to which [the Lord has] called [us]”* (Acts 13:2). Whom will you invite to join our worshiping community this coming Sunday?

## QUESTIONS

What did Abraham's faithfulness produce? How did Jesus glorify the Father? What are some ways in which you worship the living God?

## PRAYERS

**For Brandon and Kendra Kertson and Chi Alpha Campus Ministries**

Pray that Chi Alpha Campus Ministries would be able to sustain the huge growth that they are experiencing as a movement with good training and solid resources.

# WEDNESDAY

Read **Exodus 33:10; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25**

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We unite as a worshipping community in experiencing God's presence among us. Through the Lord's Supper and baptism sacraments, we celebrate God's revealed, divine grace. Unlike one denomination, we do not believe the Communion elements become the literal body and blood of Jesus. However, our observance here is not mere ritual: "The Lord's Supper ... unites us to the ascended Christ so that His resurrection life may nourish, strengthen, and transform us." (ECO's Essential Tenets)

The ancient Israelites, in their fallenness, struggled with being in God's presence—they were awed and intimidated by His holiness (perfection and "otherness"). They appealed to Moses, "*You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die*" (Exodus 20:19). Moses even began veiling his face after meeting with God, as the residual glow of God's glory unnerved his countrymen (Exodus 34:30-32).

Jesus' life addressed Israel's issues: He grew up like an ordinary person (Isaiah 52:3). The Messiah aimed to fully identify with humankind—and have us identify with Him—enabling Him to be both our Advocate and Substitute (in receiving God's judgment for our sin). Amidst His ministry Christ did, however, provide glimpses of His divinity—at Jesus' transfiguration where "*His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light*" (Matthew 17:2); with His disciples when He walked on water (John 6:19) and calmed a raging storm (Mark 4:39).

Jesus, God the Son and our “*Immanuel (which means ‘God with us’)*” (Matthew 1:23), brought God to us. Religion is about mortals seeking “the divine,” aiming to please (and sometimes manipulate) their “god(s).” In Christianity, however, God reaches for us—He does all of the initiating (and completed the needed work upon Calvary’s cross, confirmed by Christ’s resurrection). We need only to respond willingly, embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior.

God-honoring worship not only recognizes the living God as Creator and Redeemer, but invites Him into our presence. Of course, we can, and should, worship the Lord continually individually. However, there is no substitute for Spirit-filled, community worship. Whom do you know who may have discontinued joining Sunday services? Lovingly invite them to rejoin us in worship.

## QUESTIONS

What is a common purpose of the sacraments? Why did the ancient Israelites appeal to Moses to stand between themselves and God? What’s a key difference between religions and Christianity? .

## PRAYERS

**For Brandon and Kendra Kertson and Chi Alpha Campus Ministries**

Pray for Kendra as she is pursuing a coaching credential that would allow her to be a coach trainer for other Chi Alpha missionaries.

# THURSDAY

Read **Nehemiah 8:5-6; Matthew 13:1-23**

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As a pre-Christian decades ago, I could not read the Bible. I tried, finding it dry and perplexing. A complaint arising from our small group since: “Why can’t Bible study be easier—why does God make it so difficult, subject to varied interpretations and disputes?” One brother—thinking he’d assist the Almighty—once offered, “It would have been better, and easier, had God put advice on parenting in one section, money management in another, etc.”

Jesus, teaching in parables and explaining why He did so in Matthew 13, stirs this pot. Therein He clarified, essentially, “I teach the crowds like this to make it hard for hostile or uncommitted listeners to embrace the message.” When the crowds swelled after Jesus did healings or other miracles, He often emphasized hard truths, which influenced the superficial followers to stop following.

Committed, reflective Bible study is a form of worship. We celebrate God’s grace together in His Word. However, as with following Christ, that doesn’t mean that grasping the full counsel of God should be easy. On our own—like children choosing what they prefer eating—we might continually settle for “spiritual junk food” instead of wrestling with more elusive, deeper truths. Sadly, this is what some “McChurches” dispense in pursuit of “being relevant” and drawing a crowd. While this may suffice for “baby Christians,” it eventually stunts spiritual growth.



Paul characterized this helpfully: *“I ... could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it”* (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). Though the Bible is the most-published book ever, God didn’t inspire and produce it to generate sales. Similarly, though Jesus welcomes all who submit to a saving relationship with Him, He was no politician seeking votes.

If the Bible was merely a self-help book, what would distinguish it? We might read it once, conclude “I’ve got that figured out,” and never study God’s Word again. God created us for ongoing, meaningful relationship. And with that comes growth-enhancing effort. Otherwise, how else could we—finite and fallen—begin to comprehend and worship the holy, sovereign, infinite Creator?

## QUESTIONS

Why did Jesus often teach the crowds in parables? Why didn’t God craft the Bible like a “how to” or “self-help” book?

## PRAYERS

**For Brandon and Kendra Kertson and Chi Alpha Campus Ministries**

Pray for wisdom as Brandon and Kendra are parenting their three pre-teen and teenage girls.

# FRIDAY

Read **Psalm 95:2; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Acts 16:25**

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*“Let us come into His presence”*—Psalm 95:2 issues a warm invitation. However, if God is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10)—present everywhere continually—why would we need to come into His presence?

“There is a ... difference between saying, ‘God is everywhere,’ and saying, ‘God is here.’ ... God ... is all-knowing and all-powerful, yet is accessible and draws near to His creation. We must embrace God in both His transcendence and His immanence ... Although ... completely holy and set apart from creation, [Yahweh] also has chosen to be active in the world and to draw near ... God desires to be with us, to guide us and to work His will in and through us. ... God is ... already present and simply waiting for us to turn our attention to Him.” (Caleb Clements)

As a worshipping community, Glenkirk Church embraces God’s holiness—His “set-apartness” from fallen creation, His transcendence (perfect, eternal existence outside of physical limitations and time). Accordingly, we worship Jesus Christ, “*Immanuel ... ‘God with us’*” (Matthew 1:23). Jesus—“*fully God and fully Man*” (Philippians 2:5-7)—is the “Connector” between heaven and earth, the eternal and physical, the spiritual and temporal. The Savior is “Jacob’s ladder,” envisioned by Israel’s patriarch in a dream as “*set up on the earth ... the top of it reach[ing] to heaven ... the angels of God ... ascending and descending on it!*” (Genesis 28:12)

When fully surrendered in celebrating God’s grace musically and prayerfully, we come wholly into the presence of the Creator who fashioned us for such intimacy. Thanksgiving—gratitude and resultant joy—should fill worshipful music and godly prayer. Today’s featured Scriptures commend this: “*Thanksgiving ... joyful noise to Him with songs of praise*” (Psalm 95:2) and “*supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings [are to] be made for all people ...*” (1 Timothy 2:1). Just as Jesus personally joins us with the eternal God, so does thanksgiving that is offered musically and prayerfully.

How connected to God do you feel? Does thanksgiving infuse your prayers? Are you active in Glenkirk’s worship, or do you hold back because you’re “not musically gifted”? God wants our hearts. Our talents issue from Him. Offer Him your prayers and singing, both privately and communally. He lovingly awaits you.

## QUESTIONS

How can God be holy while being present among fallen people?  
What does “Jesus is the ‘Connector’ between heaven and earth” mean?  
Why and how are thanksgiving important?

## PRAYERS

**For Brandon and Kendra Kertson and Chi Alpha Campus Ministries**

Pray for Brandon as he is doing a lot of traveling this year.  
Pray for his health and safety.

## Sources

- Glenkirk Church's full mission statement can be found at <https://www.glenkirkchurch.org>.
- ECO's (Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians) Essential Tenets can be found at <https://glenkirkchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ECO-Essential-Tenets-Confessional-Standards.pdf>.
- Caleb Clements' quotes are from <https://outreachmagazine.com/features/21646-presence-god-worship.html>.

