

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JUNE 5 - 9, 2023



Sermon Series 5.28 - 8.13

FORGED

IN THE FURNACE

MONDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:22-2:3**

Jesus said, “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)

One of the sad realities is that Christians do not always get along with each other. You would think that those who walk in hope and holiness (1 Peter 1:13-21) would also walk in harmony. God’s divine perspective is that there is one body (Ephesians 4:4-6). But what we see across the congregations and denominations is a church divided and sometimes at war.

Peter, knowing the coming persecutions and terrors, calls God’s people to spiritual unity. Peter draws out three principal reasons for this unity: that we have experienced the same birth (vv. 23-25); that we express the same love (v. 22); and that we enjoy the same nourishment (vv. 1-3). We are children of the same family.

While we may not have grown up under the same roof with similar family experiences, the bond between believers is powerful because it comes through faith in God—faith in the gospel that brings salvation and unity. Jesus calls us to a love so compelling and different that others will know it is from God. How did you come to know the love and goodness of God?

Here are a few ideas to encourage the framework of spiritual unity in your church:

1. Meet with fellow believers regularly (Hebrews 10:25).
2. Speak the truth in love (Matthew 18:15; Ephesians 4:15).
3. Reach out with compassion (1 Corinthians 12:26).
4. Forgive others (Leviticus 19:18).
5. Seek good for fellow believers in tangible ways (1 Thessalonians 5:15).
6. Pray for them and with them (James 5:16).

Let others into your world so that they will let you into theirs. You go first. Are you working at loving as you should? Is there a difference between liking and loving? How can I love someone I dislike? Read Philippians 4:13.

QUESTIONS

How are you encouraged to love fellow believers in the church today? What does it mean when Peter calls believers to “*love deeply from the heart*”?

PRAYERS

For LaCasa/ECO Church

Pray for associate pastors, Gio and Indra Garcia, and their leadership team. May they continue to do God’s work through the power of the Holy Spirit and guide many families to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and a committed discipleship.

TUESDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:23-25; Hebrews 4:12**

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

Great Basin Bristlecone pines are remarkable for being one of the oldest non-clonal trees on the planet. This strange tree, shaped by the wind, snow, and rain, has survived over thousands of years, overseeing the rise and fall of empires, growing through ice-ages and catastrophic volcanic eruptions. When you come across this pine tree with its gnarled and bare branches, you think it is dead. But it is not! Bristlecones’ resistance to corruption from insects, fungi, rot, and erosion cause it to grow in the harshest conditions.

Some people think of God’s Word as just another dusty book of ancient history, as dead literature. But any believer who has read God’s Word in faith knows that it is very much alive! God’s Holy Scriptures remain a faithful beacon of truth and light for people across centuries, generations, cultures, and contexts (Psalm 119:105). Those who seek refuge in God, who has revealed Himself in His Word, ground their present lives on a secure foundation that gives hope for a glorious future (Psalm 119:14-16; Ephesians 6:17).

The Bible represents the Creator's well-chosen words for the people He created. Therefore, people flounder when they choose to live without the firm foundation of the Bible's unchangeable truth. Lasting hope cannot be found apart from God Himself. To fail to read, understand, and live under the authority of God and His Word is to build a life on shifting sand (Matthew 7:24-27).

Believers who love and seek God hold fast to the Bible. With its message of hope in Christ, God's Word reveals truth, exposes sin, infuses hope, and gives life an unshakable purpose. Have you experienced God's voice speaking truth and guidance into your everyday life? God knows our deepest longings and speaks into our lives in tangible ways. The Holy Spirit ignites the living, active Word of God to transform our thinking, change our appetites, and show us how to live to impact others.

QUESTIONS

Do you love God's Word? Why or why not?

PRAYERS

For LaCasa/ECO Church

Pray for each family who attends LaCasa Church. May they be taught God's Word and be ministered into righteous living so that they may be fruitful and a blessing in their communities.

WEDNESDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:22-2:1**; **James 4:11**; **Ephesians 4:22**

“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.” (1 Peter 2:1)

As a mom, one of the first words I taught my sons to say was *sorry*. Accidents, mistakes, and sins against others happen regularly, and it was important to me that I taught them to take responsibility for their actions with two simple words, “I’m sorry.” And although I know sins against God and others still happen in my life, I struggle saying “I am sorry” to others. In lots of ways, I am learning to acknowledge my sins, turn from them and seek forgiveness.

When we think of repentance, we often think of saying, “I’m sorry,” and it’s finished. True repentance involves much more than an apology or sorrow or consequences. Repentance and faith go hand-in-hand. Peter is calling God’s people to rid themselves of sin in response to the truth. Those who truly repent turn their backs on their sins to worship and obey the One True God. Peter declares that the evidence of obedience is in the expression of sincere love (v. 22).

We cannot evoke repentance on our own. God, in kindness, leads His people to repent through the work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8; Romans 2:4). By God’s power repentant people receive God’s mercy and desire to please Him. The city of Nineveh repented after God

confronted them with His power and holiness (Jonah 3:6-10). Peter's first sermon (Acts 2:38-41) brought about three thousand to faith that day. The resulting devotion and love (Acts 2:42-47) of God's people displays God's power and holiness at work through repentance.

Over time the Holy Spirit transforms a believer's heart, attitudes, and motives. Just like a car making a U-turn is an obvious change, repentance brings change in all you do (Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20; 1 John 1:8-9). Repentance spurs inward peace and outward unity. What would it look like for you to rest in this truth as you "rid" yourself of your sins?

QUESTIONS

What do you need to get rid of according to Peter's exhortations?
What motivates you to make these types of changes?

PRAYERS

For LaCasa/ECO Church

Pray that LaCasa Church will be used to do God's will and connect with people in and around the community. Pray that the church congregants will share the gospel and be a light, giving God the glory as they serve wherever there is a need.

THURSDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:23-25; Isaiah 40:6-8**

“For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable [enduring forever], through the living, giving, and enduring Word of God.” (1 Peter 1:23)

Did you know there are three types of lifetime warranties? Whether the warranty is valid for the owner’s lifetime, the time of ownership, or the expected lifetime of the product, it is generally understood that most products made today will not last. Peter’s words of the unchanging nature of God and His salvation resonate in our hearts against the clamor of the world’s changes. Only God’s will, work, and Word are everlasting (1 Peter 1).

“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers in the field: the grass withers and the flowers fail, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word that was preached to you.” (1 Peter 1:24-25)

Peter is quoting from Isaiah 40:6-8 to remind believers that everything in this life—prestige, position, people, and achievements—will fade away. Reading the fine print of lifetime warranties on purchases today is essential for the outcome of the product. Reading the fine print of God’s imperishable seed, His Word, will reveal God’s eternal character, nature, plan and purpose in your life.

The word that was preached (v. 25) was the gospel, also known as the Good News. It is the story of the life of Jesus, His death, and His resurrection. It tells of God the Father's love for humanity and the redemption work of Christ to deliver us from sin, bringing us back into a right relationship, forever. It is good news because it is a gift from God, not something we earn through works (John 3:16; Romans 5:8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-19; Titus 2:11-14).

One way to share the gospel is by living a lifestyle that imitates Christ (Matthew 5:16). But nothing can replace the spoken Word. Prepare and ask for help from God. The best place to start is by examining how you came to faith.

QUESTIONS

Why is the gospel important? How can you be prepared to share the gospel? How did you come to faith in Jesus Christ?

PRAYERS

For LaCasa/ECO Church

Pray for God's wisdom and protection over LaCasa Church. May its members be rich in the knowledge of God and strong in the power of the Holy Spirit.

FRIDAY

Read **1 Peter 2:2**

“Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation.” (1 Peter 2:2)

One characteristic of most children is they want to grow up to be like an older sibling or like their parents. When we are “*born again*,” we become spiritual newborn babies. If we are healthy, we will yearn to grow. The need for milk is an instinct for babies, and it signals a natural desire for nourishment that leads to growth. In 1 Peter 1:23 we read: *“For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.”* (NLT)

God’s Word, the Bible, has life, gives life, and nourishes a believer’s life. We should have an appetite for the Word of God just like hungry newborn Christians do. Peter is saying we should want the pure Word, unadulterated, because this alone can help us grow and flourish. How would you describe your appetite for God?

Sometimes children have no appetite because they have been eating junk food. This is true for adults as well. Peter knew the troubles ahead for God’s people and prescribes the eternal Word as essential to growth and unity of the church. Today is not different, but there is so much that competes for your time.

I want to encourage you to pursue knowing God's Word through reading, studying, and meditating on it. When I became a believer (my early 30's), I found the Bible difficult to navigate and understand. The Sunday sermons were challenging; I thought the music was moving. But I craved to know the Bible for myself. I joined a Bible study, I joined a small group, and I volunteered in various ministries to mature my faith and glorify God. A former Glenkirk pastor taught me that a Christian is a life-long learner. As I have grown in my knowledge and understanding of God's Word, I am so grateful for God's patience and His grace more and more.

QUESTIONS

What nourishes your soul? How have you grown this year through reading and studying God's Word?

PRAYERS

For LaCasa/ECO Church

Pray for the ministry needs of LaCasa Church. May God provide the resources needed for the church to grow. May its members faithfully walk with the Lord Jesus and become mature Christians.



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