

GLENKIRK CHURCH



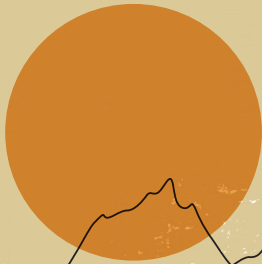
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

OCTOBER 9 - 13, 2023

Re-Formed:

Sermon on the Mount



Sermon Series 9/3 - 11/26

MONDAY

Read **2 Kings 5:1-27; Matthew 6:1-18; John 14:21-23; Hebrews 11:6**

What does heaven reward?

According to Jesus, God openly rewards secret giving, secret prayer and secret fasting. What else does God reward? *Seeking Him is another activity He rewards (Matthew 7:7). “Without faith nobody can please God, for the person who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a **rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6, paraphrased). If God wants us to believe this good news, it must be true.*

Those of us who seek to follow Jesus have set our hearts on seeking Him all of our lives. This is something King Rehoboam failed to do, and it cost him (2 Chronicles 12:14).

God also rewards **obedience** (John 14:21-23). In 2 Kings 5:1-19, there’s the story of Naaman, the Syrian army officer, who had leprosy. His captured servant girl told him of a prophet in Israel named Elisha, who she claimed could prevail on God to heal Naaman of his leprosy. She convinced him to travel to see Elisha; Naaman’s king agreed he should go.

Upon arrival, Elisha did not greet him personally, but he conveyed instructions to Naaman to dip himself seven times in the River Jordan.

Perhaps Naaman was put off at first because of Elisha’s lack of personal attention. However, Naaman’s assistant persuaded him to at least try doing the simple thing that Elisha told Naaman to do, saying, *“If the prophet had asked you to do something difficult, you would have done it. Here he’s asked you to do something easy. At least give it a try”* (2 Kings 5:13, paraphrased).

In the end, Naaman listened to his assistant and “simply” **obeyed** the instructions conveyed by God’s prophet Elisha. He was rewarded by the healing of his skin disease.

QUESTIONS

Can you think of other activities that God rewards? What motivates you to pray or fast? How have you sought God in the past? How are you seeking God now? Are there some instructions that God wants you to follow?

PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

The Clarks are pregnant again! Kate is 17 weeks along. Please pray for the health of this baby and that they will be able to meet the needs.

TUESDAY

Read **Matthew 6:5-18; John 7:18**

Who is your audience?

Pride is sin. Pride is like an infection. It is especially unhelpful. God is an expert in getting rid of it in our lives. He is not only our spiritual advisor; He is also our personal and Great Physician.

Jesus Himself—“the Word” of God (John 1:1) and “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15)—is God’s greatest sermon. And in Jesus’ greatest sermon (the Sermon on the Mount), He talked about prayer and fasting being not for show. In other words, not for pride’s sake, but for God’s sake only. Prayer, fasting and other virtues are for an audience of One. This audience was good enough for Jesus—more than enough, in fact.

I went through a season of fasting for good things to happen, I thought. I felt good about the process, although my wife didn’t enjoy living with me at such times. (Hungry people can be cranky!) But when the outcome I was expecting didn’t materialize, should I quit or continue to follow the Spirit’s prompting?

Jesus demonstrated a different approach to a life of prayer and fasting. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days. The outcome He wanted was what His Father in Heaven wanted—

His kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus trusted His Father to accomplish this and to enable Him to resist the devil’s temptation, quoting God’s words from the Scriptures.

We too can obey God in love, trusting in Him (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) to use us to accomplish His purpose—bearing much fruit in our lives (John 15:8).

QUESTIONS

What part has God given you to play today? Let me guess. It starts with private prayer. Jesus said, “*That’s why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large. Include everything as you embrace this God-life, and you’ll get God’s everything*” (Mark 11:24, The Message translation).

PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

Stephen and Kate just bought a house and will be moving in a few weeks. Join them in thanking the Lord for the blessing of a home and ask that they would be patient with each other as they do some minor renovations and work before getting moved.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Matthew 4:1-11, 6:10, 17:14-21; John 3:16-17, 15:9-14**

Love is why Jesus came to earth in person.

Jesus came to earth because God loves us. He loves all people. And Jesus practices what He preaches. He is quiet about what He does behind the scenes, praying and fasting. He hungered and thirsted for righteousness, for His kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. While He was still in heaven and when He was in the wilderness before He had performed any miracles or preached any sermons, Jesus yearned for righteousness and justice. Love is why He prayed and fasted.

It was during His 40-day fast that Jesus was tempted. His weapon of choice was Holy Scripture. When tempted to make bread out of stones, He said, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4).

Above all, God is a Lover; He is the Lover; and He *“is Love”* itself (1 John 4:7-8). It is impossible to measure His love for us (Ephesians 3:18-19). God loved us so much that *“He gave His only Son”* (John 3:16). Jesus loved His Father and us so much that He laid down His life for us (John 15:13). This greatest love required great courage and absolute trust.

God wants to make us lovers, too, seeing each other through His eyes of love. Each of us knows examples of the transforming power of love. Each of us needs such love, and we serve a God who gives love freely.

QUESTIONS

What attracted you to become Christ’s follower? Was it love? Something else? What is helping you to become a lover of God, yourself, and other people? What examples of love inspire you to be a loving person?

PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

Pray for Kate as she manages her new role with C2C that is filled with more responsibility. It has been fun but overwhelming at times.

THURSDAY

Read **Zechariah 4:6; John 14:16-19, 16:7-8; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 6:16-17; Jude 24**

God's how is the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the epitome of righteousness/character and power/ability. A good primer on the Trinity is *Experiencing the Trinity* by Darrell W. Johnson. When talking about the Holy Spirit, it is important to keep three things in mind.

First, Jesus fully endorsed the Holy Spirit, and *vice versa*. In John 14:16-19, He said that it was a good thing that He was “leaving” earth, because then the Holy Spirit would come to be *with* and even *in* Jesus’ disciples/us. According to Jesus, the Holy Spirit would remind us of all Jesus’ words and teachings. The Spirit promotes Jesus; He teaches the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-8). The Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit work as One, inviting us to work in union with the triune God.

Second, the Holy Spirit is the Leader in our spiritual formation into Christlikeness. The “*fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and [self-control]*” (Galatians 5:22-23). “*As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the*

[children] of God” (Romans 8:14). We do not control the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit controls us. This is how Jesus lived and ministered, giving us an example.

Third, the Holy Spirit is also the epitome of power/ability. The power is God’s (Acts 1:18). He can do above and beyond anything we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). The kingdom of God is not a matter of just talk, but of power (1 Corinthians 4:20). We receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us (Acts 1:8). The gifts of the Spirit enable us to live out the fullness of the abundant life Jesus came to give us (John 10:10). This includes the accomplishment of Christ’s Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). How? “*The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it*” (1 Thessalonians 5:24). “*It is by My Spirit,’ says the LORD*” (Zechariah 4:6).

QUESTIONS

How have you experienced the Holy Spirit? What do you understand the Scriptures to say about the Spirit’s importance in your life?

PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

Stephen is loving his part-time job at the Chapel. Pray for him as he balances these two jobs. And join the Clarks in thanking the Lord for the financial needs that have been met thanks to this opportunity.

FRIDAY

Read **Matthew 6:5-18; Mark 12:18-27; 2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:10-18**

How do we resist temptation and overcome evil?

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”
(2 Corinthians 10:4)

Jesus is not only our Savior and Lord; He is also our Teacher (Matthew 11:29). We know our fight is not against people, but against malignant, evil forces (Ephesians 6:12). Our weapons against these forces are not guns, knives, or disinformation. So, what are these unworldly weapons Paul is talking about? Here are three possibilities:

Prayer. Jesus got up early in the morning to pray (Mark 1:35). Jesus ever lives even now to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25). Over and over, He urged His disciples to pray (John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:24).

Fasting. We have already seen that secret fasting is rewarded by our Father in Heaven. When faced with an unclean spirit, Jesus said, *“This kind comes out only by prayer and fasting”* (Matthew 12:27 NKJV).

Scripture. God’s Word, the Spirit-inspired Bible itself, is called *“the sword of the Spirit”* (Ephesians 6:17). We have already seen how Jesus quoted Scripture to turn aside the devil’s temptations in the wilderness. We know from James 4:7 that when we resist the devil, he will flee from us. Hiding God’s Word in our heart (through memorization and reflection) is a wise strategy for Spirit-filled living (Psalm 119:9, 11).

All of these were involved when my friend in the military seemed to go back on his decision to follow Christ. First, disturbed, I fasted. Reading a book about being specific in prayer, I asked God for my buddy to pick up the New Testament he had and read something he got so excited about that he would have to share it with me. A week later he knocked on my door. He had the New Testament open and wanted to share a verse with me. The verse: *“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit—fruit that would last, that whatever you ask the Father in My Name, He will give it to you”* (John 15:16, paraphrased). Some decades later, I learned he was married with four daughters and a successful pastor.

QUESTIONS

What stories will God tell about us?

PRAYERS

For Stephen and Kate Clark and C2C Ministries

Pray for the seekers and new believers whom C2C Ministries is working with around the world. New Bible studies have begun with Muslims in Indonesia. There is follow-up happening with university students in Japan, and Stephen and Kate have started Bible studies with internationals in Baton Rouge.



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