

GLENKIRK CHURCH



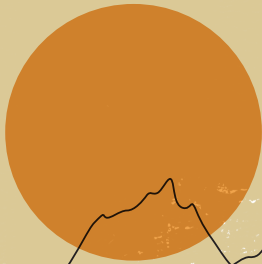
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

NOVEMBER 20 - 24, 2023

## Re-Formed:

Sermon on the Mount



Sermon Series 9/3 - 11/26

# MONDAY

Read **Matthew 7:24-27**

## Build wisely.

When you're building your house (life, resume, portfolio, relationships, family, community), build wisely. Of Moses, the Bible says he "was faithful as a servant in all God's house" (Hebrews 3:5). What an amazing assessment! It's what we want to hear at the end of our lives: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23).

How does one live like that? We don't want to use "wood, hay, and stubble" (1 Corinthians 3:12). If we did, it would blow down and collapse, like when the big, bad wolf blew down the houses of the first two pigs in the children's fable.

We want to start and finish with Jesus, "the Alpha and Omega" of our lives (Revelation 1:8), "the Rock" of our lives (1 Corinthians 10:4), "the Cornerstone" of our lives (Psalm 118:22; Mark 12:1-11), our firm foundation. When our foundation is on Jesus, storms will come, but our house will stand because of Jesus.

When my marriage was in trouble, I turned to Jesus. We survived that storm. When our parenting hasn't worked, we turn to Jesus. Through wise counsel and with God's help, I'm sure, we followed some new strategies; after patient endurance, our prayers are being answered. It's never too late to build one's life on Jesus.

This week we'll review some of the sayings Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount that we are to put into practice and thereby build our houses on a firm, solid foundation. Jesus helps us here by showing first things first. Azusa Pacific University's motto is "God First." Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). He also says, "Seek and you will find ... Whoever seeks will find" (Matthew 7:7-11).

Everybody is on a lifetime search for meaning and answers. Jesus came to give us both. The Bible counsels us to "set our heart to seek the LORD" (1 Chronicles 22:19). David often consulted the Lord before he went to battle. When David failed to consult God first, things did not go so well. Lives were lost.

## QUESTIONS

When have you sought the Lord and it paid off? When have you consulted God first for His input? Have you set your heart to seek the Lord in all things? How important is the kingdom of God and His righteousness in your life?

## PRAYERS

### For African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for those whom God is calling from our congregation to observe, first-hand, what He is accomplishing among the people of Rwanda. It's a miraculous healing work in a place where, not long ago, inter-tribal animosity led to genocidal violence. African Enterprise (AE) is making a difference.

# TUESDAY

Read **Matthew 16:18**

## **Jesus Himself is a wise builder.**

The first chapter of John is among the most important chapters in the Bible. Jesus is identified as “*the Word made flesh [human]*” (John 1:14), the Messiah, “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the Son of God*” (John 1:29), the King of Israel.

Jesus was at the creation of the world. John the Baptist introduces Him to the people of the world whom He created as its Light and Life itself. Some of His soon-to-be disciples are introduced—specifically, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. They were like sheep without a shepherd, soon-to-be sheep with a Shepherd.

Jesus knows exactly where we are and exactly where we should be, even if we are homeless. He knows our address, even if it’s under a fig tree. Jesus is building His church, God’s kingdom. We are the stones/bricks that He uses in His building. He is building us and making something beautiful out of our life of brokenness and strife, as sung in the Bill and Gloria Gaither song, “Something Beautiful.”

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is building His community of disciples. If you were to make a list of Jesus’ sayings in this sermon, I think you’ll find, if you haven’t already, that there is some overlap, even redundancy, which only reinforces what He is saying to us.

Take “the Golden Rule,” for example. Yes, many religions have some form of this rule (though none of these has a living Founder and Savior). But Jesus adds that all the Law and the Prophets are based on this principle (Matthew 7:12). This would include Moses and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and Jeremiah, etc.

This idea of treating others like you would want to be treated echoes throughout Scripture. For example, Jesus says, “*Give and it will be given to you into your lap, more than your lap can contain*” (Luke 6:38, paraphrased). In Matthew 7: Jesus says, “*With the measure you use, it will be measured back to you, good or bad, encouragement or judgment*” (Matthew 7:2).

When you meet someone and you don’t know what to say, say what you would want to hear from them. Try it, and see how it works.

## **QUESTIONS**

How did it work? When have you felt like a sheep without a shepherd? Do you know that Jesus knows where you are and that He’ll guide you where to go and what to do?

## **PRAYERS**

### **For African Enterprise (AE)**

Ask the Lord to guide the leaders of this Rwanda visit—Wayne Herman, AE’s US and Canada board chair, and Jamie Morrison, AE’s US and Canada Director—as they develop the plans and make the arrangements for the team’s visit to multiple sites surrounding Kigale, Rwanda’s capital.

# WEDNESDAY

Read **Hebrews 3:6**

## **Jesus has a house.**

Hebrews 3:6 is one of my favorite verses: *“But Christ, as the Son, is in charge of God’s entire house. And we are God’s house if we keep our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ.”* Moses isn’t the only one faithful in all his house (Hebrews 3:2). Jesus is, too. And we are part of His house because we believe and hold fast to Him.

I was fortunate to grow up in a family with parents who were faithful to us kids. God’s grace, no doubt. Mom prayed for us, found us a good church to attend regularly, played tennis with me, had conversations with me, and was president of our local PTA. Dad took us on hikes and camping trips, was Cub Master and Scout Master of our Cub Pack and Scout Troop, taught me to be a shipping clerk at his business, and became my best friend in the end.

As good as my parents were, Jesus is even more faithful in His house. Some people are not as fortunate as my sisters and I were. But everyone can be a part of Jesus’ house.

Earlier in the week, we talked about Jesus being the rock-solid foundation on which we build our houses. But Jesus is more than that; He Himself has a house of which we can be an integral part.

God is trustworthy; we can fully trust Him. Jesus trusted His Father absolutely, and so can we. When Jesus says to *“consider the birds of the air ... [and] the lilies of the field,”* (Matthew 6:25, 28), He is saying that we can trust Him to provide all our needs. When Jesus says, *“Do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”* (Matthew 6:34), He is saying we can trust the future to Him.

Over and over, Jesus said, *“Fear not”* and *“Be not afraid.”* Have you ever had a panic attack? I have. At such times, God calms us and settles us down. Trust in God was/is Jesus’ secret for accomplishing God’s will in the face of challenges. It is our secret, too. Jesus’ sayings include the foundational stance: Trust.

## **QUESTIONS**

What are your assignments in Jesus’ house? How have you come to trust in God? When did trust in God seem to evaporate? How did you learn to trust again?

## **PRAYERS**

### **For African Enterprise (AE)**

Pray for safe travels and spiritually significant conversations in and around our Glenkirk group as they journey from California to Rwanda. May they be ready not only to witness but also to participate in various community projects and ministry activities they’ll be visiting together.

# THURSDAY

Read **Mark 11:17**

## **Jesus' Father's house is a house of prayer.**

Jesus said, “*Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?’*” (Mark 11:17). No wonder the theme of prayer is so central throughout God’s cosmos. No wonder Jesus ever lives in heaven to intercede for and on behalf of His people.

Don Richardson captured the extent of this in three of his books: *Eternity in Their Heart*, *Peace Child*, and *Lords of the Earth*. J. Edwin Orr wrote history books documenting the role of prayer in the major revivals he knew about (i.e., *The Flaming Tongue: The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals*).

Prayer is central to all of the major religions—a practice Jesus came not to abolish but to fulfill. All of the “untold” stories (and the “told” ones) of God’s works on earth have prayer as a major ingredient.

Prayer is foundational for disciples and discipleship—so much so that it is featured in all three chapters of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5, Jesus says, “*Pray for those who persecute you*” (Matthew 5:44). That seems odd in a culture that thinks in terms of “fight or flight.” However, if we seek to soak our lives in Jesus and His

words (and His Spirit), it becomes more natural for us to think His way and to believe that this approach actually works to bring peace and reconciliation to adversarial relationships.

In chapter 6 of Matthew, Jesus says, “*And when you pray*” (v. 5), not “*If you pray.*” And He gives us the Lord’s Prayer as a model prayer to pray.

In Matthew 7, Jesus says, “*Ask, and it will be given to you*” (v. 7). Do you ever wonder why Jesus insists on our asking in His name when He knows already what our needs are? Maybe it’s because He wants active participants in His kingdom with whom He can collaborate for kingdom growth and spiritual fruit.

The “Parable of the Talents” (Luke 19:11-27) tells us that spiritual fruit comes by exercising our faith. Two people used their talents to gain more. A third person hid his talent in fear, not faith. May we be people of prayer and faith. God will help us as we call on Him in prayer.

## **QUESTIONS**

*What do you think God wants His people to ask in His name?  
What would freshen up your prayer life?*

## **PRAYERS**

### **For African Enterprise (AE)**

Ask the Lord to build such unity and harmony within our Glenkirk traveling team that they may encourage one another and cheerfully work through any unexpected challenges that arise along their way. May they be a blessing to all whom they meet.

# FRIDAY

Read **Psalm 23**; **John 10:7-14**; **14:21-23**

**“Whoever loves God is known by God.”** (1 Corinthians 8:3)

Some of the sayings of Jesus in a word are: seek (Matthew 6:33), love (Matthew 7:12), trust (Matthew 6:25); pray (Matthew 6:5); serve (Matthew 20:28). Matthew 7:12 is also known as “the Golden Rule.”

The key to being known by Jesus is to know His heart. Knowing Jesus is what real life is all about (John 17:3). Knowing Him also means knowing Him in others (Matthew 25:40). Putting Jesus’ sayings into practice is building our house on Him—our Rock.

The Koine Greek noun *mone* (abode) of the verb *meno* (abide) appears only twice in the Bible’s New Testament, both times in John 14. The first time is the place Jesus’ Father is preparing for us. The second is the place in our hearts where we prepare for Jesus and His Father to be at home in us.

Consider David’s “Shepherd Psalm” (Psalm 23) as a prayer:

*“Lord Jesus, You are our Good Shepherd; we shall not want. You make us lie down in green pastures, You lead us beside still waters. You restore our soul. You lead us in paths of righteousness for Your name’s sake. Though we walk through the valley of death, we will fear no evil, because You are with us. Your rod and staff, they comfort us. You prepare a table before us in the presence of our enemies. You anoint*

*our head with oil. Our cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life, and we will dwell in Your house forever.”* (Psalm 23, paraphrased)

N.T. Wright in his book, *Surprised by Hope*, writes that Jesus’ physical appearance to His disciples in the post-resurrection changed everything. There was no turning back or second-guessing their full devotion to Jesus and His agenda. Seeing Him alive underscored the truth of all His words: *“There is plenty of room for you in My Father’s home .... I’m on My way to get your room ready. I’ll come back and get you so you can live where I live”* (John 14:2-3 The Message).

## QUESTIONS

How does the Bible’s description of your destination encourage you to finish your earthly course well?

## PRAYERS

### For African Enterprise (AE)

May the Lord prosper each African Enterprise endeavor to transform and prosper communities, foster reconciliation, equip young people with career skills, and develop leaders who will govern their nation with justice and righteousness.

## Sources

- Bill and Gloria Gaither, Songwriters, “Something Beautiful,” Capitol CMG Publishing, 2012.
- Don Richardson, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, (Ada, Michigan: Bethany House Publishers, 2006).
- Don Richardson, *Peace Child* (Ada, Michigan: Bethany House Publishers, 2005).
- Don Richardson, *Lords of the Earth* (Ada, Michigan: Bethany House Publishers, 2008).
- J. Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue: The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973).
- N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2008).



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

GlenkirkChurch.org |  @GlenkirkChurch |  Facebook: GlenkirkChurch