

GLENKIRK CHURCH



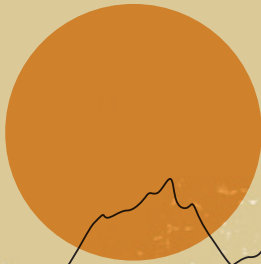
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

NOVEMBER 6 - 10, 2023

Re-Formed:

Sermon on the Mount



Sermon Series 9/3 - 11/26

MONDAY

Read **Matthew 7:7-12**

Jesus is encouraging the people to ask freely of the Heavenly Father. *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened”* (Matthew 7:7-8).

There are many Scriptures which encourage our seeking after God: *“I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me”* (Romans 10:20). *“You do not have because you do not ask God”* (James 4:2-3). *“Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing”* (Psalm 34:10). *“Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice”* (Psalm 105:3). *“Blessed are they who keep His statutes and seek Him with all their heart”* (Psalm 119:2). *“He rewards those who earnestly seek Him”* (Hebrews 11:6).

With all these reassuring promises, we still tend to depend upon ourselves and not turn to God. We tend to have a self-sufficient, independent spirit. We take pride in being able to do it ourselves without having to ask anyone for help. Often a child will have this attitude: “I can do it all by myself! I don’t need any help!”

This was my thinking when I attempted to do a challenging car repair which I had not done before. Halfway through the repair, I realized that it was too difficult for me. I had to reassemble the parts and drive the crippled car to a mechanic. There he told me that I should not have tried to do it myself; instead, I should have had a mechanic do the job. It was embarrassing for me to have to eat humble pie and admit that I needed help.

If we set Moses’ and the Hebrews’ Exodus story in the context of today’s principal theme, one might joke that they wandered forty years in the wilderness because they refused to ask for directions.

QUESTIONS

Men are known for their reluctance to ask for help. Why? Do you have difficulty asking for help? Why?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

GTi HOPE brings hope to the hopeless in South Asia, helps train and equip the indigenous church, and distributes Scripture. Pray for ongoing ministry programs for literacy, empowerment, and training church leaders. Pray for an increase in ministry to bless people and transform lives, families, and communities. www.gtihope.org

TUESDAY

Read **Matthew 7:7-12**

Jesus' invitation for us to ask, seek, and knock shows His eagerness to provide for our every need. He is like the grandparents who are excited to give gifts to their grandchildren. Sometimes the parents of the grandchildren have to calm down the over-eager grandparents to prevent them from smothering the grandchildren with gifts.

This is a picture of the heart of God who gives beyond our imagination. *"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us ..."* (Ephesians 3:20). This describes how the Lord provides for His children.

When I was in college, my mother asked me what profession I was thinking of entering? I told her that I was considering becoming a pastor. You could imagine the reaction of my mother who was a non-Christian and new immigrant to the US. She said, "You're crazy! Your belief in Jesus has made you mad! How are you going to feed your children? How are you going to educate them?"

In time I became a pastor. When our three boys were ready for college, we had no money to pay for their expenses. Through the Lord's provisions, they were able to put themselves through college through part-time jobs. They attended high-ranking universities and were able to obtain their undergraduate degrees in four years. Two of them earned master's degrees. The Lord provided well for them.

Over many years, we saw the Lord marvelously provide in so many ways for our family. He provided three daughters-in-law who love the Lord very much. He provided seven grandchildren who are being raised up in the Lord. He provided the down payment on our house. Over the years, He provided gifts of two new cars and two used ones. Blessings after blessings. A lifetime of blessings. The Lord is a great provider!

QUESTIONS

God is eager to pour out His fullest blessings on you and your family. Are you asking, seeking, and knocking?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Pray for the collection of gently used Bibles and Christian books. There is a tremendous need among English reading believers and seekers. The revenue received makes ministry happen. Our container is about 90% full. Pray it will be filled soon, and pray for volunteers to help on shipping day (TBD). www.gtihope.org/books

WEDNESDAY

Read **Matthew 7:7-12**

“If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11)

Most parents, although imperfect, want the best for their children and will not hesitate to give all that they are able to help their children achieve the best in life. Since God is the perfect parent, “*how much more*” will He give to His children! God gives beyond our wildest expectations.

Parents may sometimes give excessively to their children or give them what might be inappropriate. God in His perfect wisdom gives or withholds in order that His children experience what is best for them. Sometimes God does not answer our prayers according to our specific request because He has a greater end in mind. God will always answer our prayers; but He answers them in His way, and His way will be the way of perfect wisdom and of perfect love.

Here is an example of God answering our prayers according to His perfect wisdom: I met a pastor from Laos who was put into prison. All of his family and church members prayed fervently for his release. He was imprisoned for twelve years. Where was God? Why didn't God answer their prayers?

During his imprisonment, this pastor led many inmates to the Lord and disciplined them. Most of them served shorter prison terms than the pastor. Upon their release, they went out sharing the gospel and planting churches. God was using the prison as a discipleship training center with the government providing the facilities and the trainees who had abundant time on their hands, and the government paying for their room and board. God's ways are far beyond ours!

Here are two additional Scriptures that show the giving heart of God: “... *how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!*” (Matthew 7:11). “[God] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20).

QUESTIONS

Are you willing to accept God's answers to your prayers according to His perfect timing and wisdom? Why or why not?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Pray for upcoming elections in four Indian states in November. The results of these elections may give an indication of how national elections will go in Spring 2024. Pray for election of leaders who are more tolerant of minorities and religious freedoms (including protection of Christians and churches).

THURSDAY

Read **Matthew 7:7-12**

Jesus' invitation for us to ask, seek, and knock shows His eagerness to provide for our every need. However, these verses give the appearance of a blank check—that we can ask for anything and God will give it to us. However, we cannot isolate a passage of Scripture and build a whole system of belief out of it. We must look at the whole of Scripture and interpret a specific passage based on the teachings of the rest of the Bible.

Therefore, we need to see what the Scripture says regarding the conditions by which God answers our prayers. We need to ask with the right motives. *“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives”* (James 4:3). We need to ask in faith. *“Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours”* (Matthew 11:24). We need to be walking in obedience. *“We have confidence before God and receive from Him anything we ask because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him”* (1 John 3:21-22). Does our request glorify God? *“And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father”* (John 14:13).

We need to ask according to God's will. *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him”* (1 John 5:14-15). When

we know that our request made to God is definitely His will, we can have full confidence that He will grant it.

For example, when I approached my father for college-tuition money, I had full assurance that he would give it to me. My college education was one of his highest priorities. He would always be ready to give all that I needed for college. In the same way, God will always give to us that which is fully His will.

QUESTIONS

Do you hesitate to bring your request to God? Why?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Praise God for His provision during our recently ended fiscal year which resulted in an increase in ministry! Pray for our Southeast Area Director and his family as he strives to raise awareness and support in the Nashville area and throughout the Southeast USA to increase ministry in South Asia.

FRIDAY

Read **Matthew 7:7-12**

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

Because we are sinners, we cannot fully obey this commandment in our own strength. We are self-centered. When someone hurts us, our automatic reflex is to get revenge. In our own strength we cannot forgive those who hurt us nor can we love our enemies. Only when the Holy Spirit dwells within us and begins to change our hearts can we love those who have hurt us.

Here is an example of forgiving one's enemies. In 2018, police officer Amber Guyger, 31 years old, mistakenly killed Botham Jean, a church worship leader, in his own apartment after she accidentally went to his apartment thinking it was her own. She parked her car on the wrong floor and went to the apartment that is at the same location as hers but the wrong floor.

She was found guilty of murder. At her sentencing in October, 2019, Botham's brother, Brandt Jean, 18 years old, addressed Guyger from the witness stand. He said that his brother would have wanted her to turn her life over to Christ, and that if she asks God for forgiveness, she will get it. “I love you as a person. I don't wish anything bad on you.”

Then Brandt Jean asked the judge, “I don't know if this is possible, but can I give her a hug?” They embraced for a long time; she cried and said a few words to him.

The county district attorney called the embrace “an amazing act of healing and forgiveness that is rare in today's society, especially for many of our leaders.” If Botham Jean's 18-year-old brother “can heal and express healing in that fashion, in his words, and in his deeds, I would hope that the greater community, not just Dallas but all of Texas and all of the United States, could gain a message from that.”
(Dallas Morning News)

QUESTIONS

God will enable us to love and forgive those who have hurt us. Are you willing to forgive them? Why or why not?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Pray for the leadership of GTi HOPE and our indigenous partner as we strive to increase the number of people who experience the light of literacy and the Gospel, empowerment and leadership training programs, and the love of Jesus. Pray for our partner's book exposition in a large city in November.

Sources

- YouTube, *The Dallas Morning News*, 10/02/19, “‘I Forgive You,’ Botham Jean’s Brother Hugs Amber Guyger,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeESVLQK4hw>.

