

GLENKIRK CHURCH

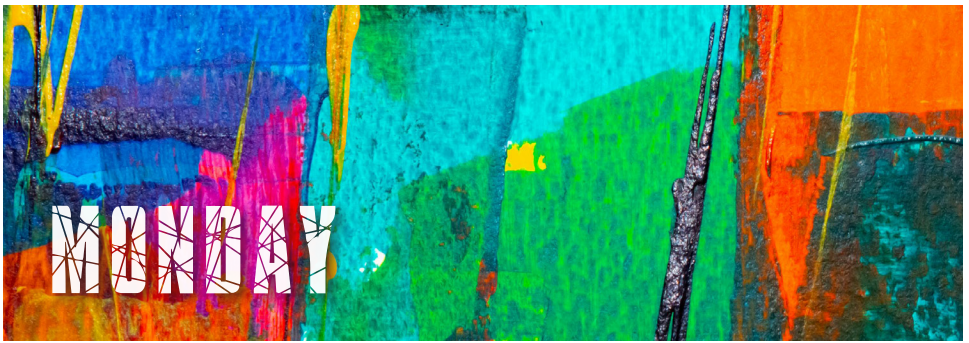


WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

DEVO

APRIL 15 - 19, 2024





Read **Romans 5:12-21**

God's surprising but wonderful choice

How does our interdependence with God and others help us with loneliness?

First of all, someone might say that God is too big to be dependent on anyone else. He is complete in Himself and doesn't need anyone or anything else.

But is He not big enough to choose to use us? He loved us first, so we could love Him. Did He not choose us, so we could choose Him? But why would He even consider doing this?

Well, this is a hard question, but let's look at it with the help of the Bible and with the help of the main focus of the Bible—Jesus. Paul called Jesus “*the second Adam*” (1 Corinthians 15:45). What does this mean? I think it means Jesus came to earth to show humans how to be human the way God intended because the first Adam did not do it.

Really, this sounds bizarre, I know. But stay with me. There's more.

Jesus came to show humans how to be human. How did He do that? What did He do? Well, He was born, like we are. And He grew up, like we do. He depended on other people, like His parents, John the Baptist, the people He healed because of their faith, and His disciples. He depended on His Father and the Holy Spirit as He wants us to do also. He believed in God His Father and in God the Holy Spirit, who helped Him to believe in Himself.

Jesus modeled for us believing in the Jewish Scriptures. It's our choice to receive God's love and to love Him back by loving other people. It's by God's amazing grace, as Philip Yancy puts it in his book, *What's So Amazing about Grace?*

QUESTIONS

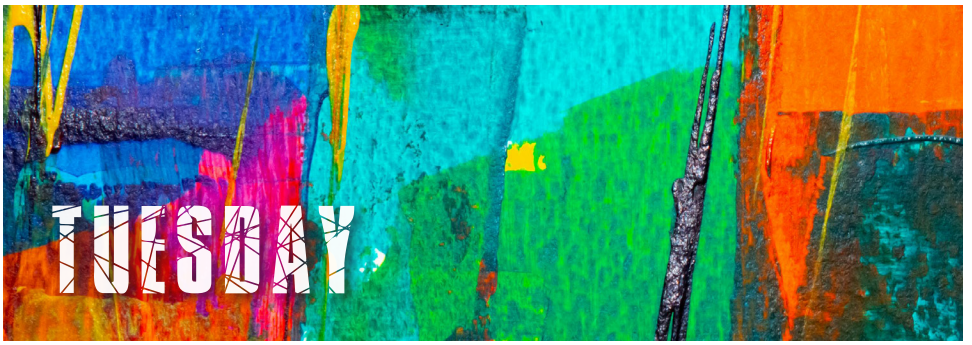
Do you think that dependence or interdependence may require humility?

PRAYER

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 literacy programs starting in April and others completing in June. Pray for the training of church leaders and preparations for VBS in May. Pray for increase.

www.gtihope.org



Read 1 Corinthians 12

Generosity

Jesus has designed His Church and its construction, and “*even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*” (Matthew 16:18).

According to Paul, God’s Church is made in such a way that we need each other. We complement one another. Where one is weak, another is strong and *vice versa*.

Marriage can be like that. They say, “Opposites attract.” That can be a good thing. I’m good at unscrewing jar lids and knowing directions when we’re going somewhere. On the other hand, my wife is good at everything else; but she has “no GPS” sense. I love hugging my wife, and she loves being hugged—if she’s not doing something else!

Jesus has constructed His Church to be the antidote for loneliness. We can see that in Paul’s description to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 12). Each of us has been given gifts. We and the gifts we have are to be given out to others. When we give our gifts and receive the gifts from other people, we overcome loneliness.

Even Jesus lived by this principle. He told the people, “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me,*

I will never turn away” (John 6:37). Jesus also said about those who believe in Him: “My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all” (John 10:29).

Sometime when you're at church and you see people not fitting in, why not ask God to give you a non-threatening question that shows genuine interest in them and their story. Give a gift; receive a gift. Be a gift.

QUESTIONS

What gift(s) has God given you which will bless others? How have you been blessed by others and their giftings? Let us take notice and encourage one another by acknowledging these blessings/gifts.

PRAYER

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 33% full. Pray it will be filled soon and for volunteers to help with sorting books.

www.gtihope.org



Read **John 15**

Community

Interdependence is God's idea. The Kingdom of God is about His idea of community.

The Bible, our faith and, for some, our experience tells us that the epitome of oneness, unity, harmony and interconnectedness is the triune God Himself: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God invites us into union with Him, His Kingdom, His plan, and His purposes.

Jesus is the nexus of this interconnectedness. We see this pictured in John 15. He tells us that He is the vine and we are the branches. When we abide in (are connected to) Him, we bear much fruit. Without this connection to Him, we don't bear the fruit of His Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, endurance, kindness, goodness, meekness, temperance). It is in bearing much lasting fruit that God our Father is glorified (v. 8).

Jesus is the head of the Church, which is His body (Ephesians 1:22-23). Because we are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), one could say we are His hands and feet.

This partnership (fellowship, *koinonia*, collaboration, connectedness) is His idea and His initiative. It is His gift to us. Let us receive God's invitation in the same spirit of love and joy that He is offering it. Let us partner with others to serve one another and show God's love to the world.

Jesus' life on earth was an example to us of how to trust the Father and His Spirit for an eternal kind of life He lived while on earth. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice. This is a life-long learning project.

QUESTIONS

What is a time in your life when you felt especially close to God? What is a time in your life when you felt especially close to other people?

PRAYER

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Read **Philippians 2:1-5**

Teamwork

Some team sports illustrate teamwork better than others; for example, rowing crews of eight. The movie *The Boys in the Boat* tells the story of the crew of eight from the University of Washington who rowed in the 1936 Olympics, winning gold even in the face of adversity. They were unfairly put in the worst lane, but still they won. Training and camaraderie were necessary ingredients. And don't forget the coxswain.

Basketball is another team sport requiring good teamwork. A few outstanding stars need a good supporting cast, including bench players. And don't forget the coach and his or her assistants.

Team sports, like nations at war, are zero-sum events—one side wins while the other loses. The Kingdom of God is in such an important fight with the kingdom of darkness, but Jesus came to redeem all of creation. Paul outlines God's strategy of teamwork in his letter to the church at Philippi:

"Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the

Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, have the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:1-5)

QUESTIONS

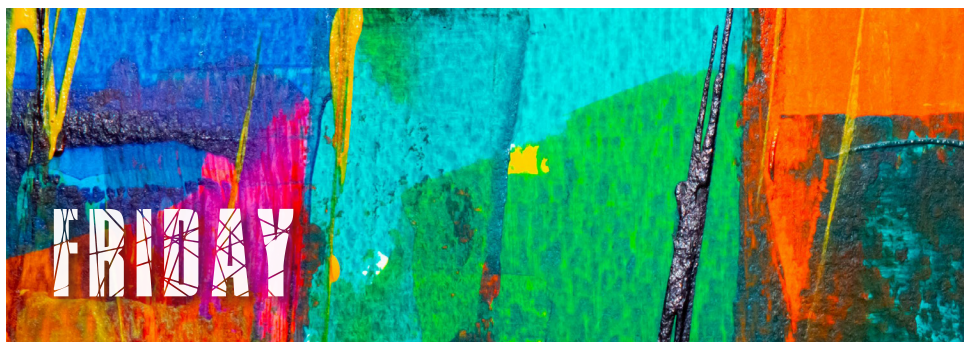
Is it hard to honor others as better than yourself? In what ways does the church require teamwork? What did Jesus say about teamwork? *“The smallest act of giving or receiving makes you a true apprentice” (Matthew 10:42 The Message).*

PRAYER

For GTi HOPE

Pray for the Madiya and the Mahadev Koli people group projects sponsored by Glenkirk. After delays, the Madiya church leader training for 12 students and the adult literacy programs for 300 adults are both in progress. Literacy programs for 450 Mahadev Koli adults are also in progress.

www.gtihope.org



Read **John 14**

Help from the Holy Spirit

Jesus said, “I will not leave you orphans” (John 14:18). “I will ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate [Helper] to be with you forever” (v. 16). Here Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit. When Catherine Marshall wrote her book on the Holy Spirit, it was entitled *The Helper*.

What does God want us to be and do? He died on the cross so that we could be filled with His Spirit. In other words, we are justified and glorified (Romans 8:30) to be “a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9) who prays, worships and reflects God’s image of love to the world.

How are we going to be and do and live the life Jesus has given us? When will we receive the power to do this? When the Holy Spirit comes upon us (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit is a gift, free for the asking (Luke 11:13).

Jesus sanctifies us (that is, makes us holy) for this purpose—to love others into His Kingdom. All people will know us by our love for one another and by our love for them (John 13:35).

The Holy Spirit has helped plant and expand God's Kingdom community of interdependence all over the world. Here are two such instances:

Acts 8 tells of Philip meeting an Ethiopian eunuch on the desert road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza. Verse 26 says an "angel of the Lord" directed Philip there. Then verse 29 says "the Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it.'" Verse 39 says that after Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, "the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away."

In more recent church history, Charles Finney, Presbyterian minister and college president, and Francis Asbury, Methodist circuit rider, were key figures in America's Second Great Awakening. Jesus said the Spirit blows where He wills. However, such widespread revivals appear in concert with concerted prayers by God's people.

QUESTIONS

What do you make of these stories? When were you aware of the Spirit's activity in your life? How does the Spirit help us in our loneliness?

PRAYER

For GTi HOPE

Pray for the persecuted church in India. Pray for protection, provision, and boldness among Christians and pastors. Pray that the persecutors have open ears and hearts to the message of the true God who loves them, who died for them, and who offers salvation. Pray against the spiritual forces of evil.



Sources

- Philip Yancy, *What's So Amazing about God's Grace?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002).
- Catherine Marshall, *The Helper* (Lincoln, VA: Evergreen Farm Publishing, 1978).
- "Second Great Awakening," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Great_Awakening

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

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