

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

DEVO

SEPTEMBER 2 - 6, 2024

Romans 12-13

PECULIAR PEOPLE

Sermon Series 9/8 - 11/24



MONDAY

Read **Romans 12:1-2**

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy.” (Romans 12:1)

Romans 12:1 begins with the word “*therefore*.” Whenever we see the word “*therefore*” in our Bible study, we must ask what it there for? It is a very important word because the human author is drawing a conclusion from what has been previously discussed. Therefore, we must look at the previous passages from which the penman is drawing his conclusion.

In the sentence “*Therefore, ... in view of God’s mercy*,” Paul is referring to the previous chapters 1-11. In these chapters, we see that all are lost in sin (Romans 3:23) and that God demonstrated His love for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). We are saved by faith; we died with Christ and were raised with Him (Romans 6:4-8). We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, and will share in His glory. Nothing can separate us from God’s love (Romans 8:38-39).

In all of the above descriptions, we see the greatness of God’s love for us which moves us to love Him. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). We are so overwhelmed by His love that we are compelled to give our lives to Him as a living sacrifice

(Romans 12:1). This is true worship and essential to experiencing the normal Christian life.

To live a life of love for God, we need to stop conforming to the world and use the spiritual disciplines to change our way of thinking (Romans 12:2). Then we will experience the fullness of the life God has for us. Then we will come to know more and more how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

The key to living the Christian life is to experience the full depths of God’s love. This will move us to give our lives to Him and live daily for Him. God’s love is the driving force for a fruitful Christian life.

QUESTIONS

How does God’s love affect you personally?

PRAYER

[Neighborhood Homework House \(NHH\)](#)

The launch of the 2024-25 School Year: The NHH team is working tirelessly to kick off its after-school programs on September 10, 2024. Pray for all the efforts needed to make it the best school year for these students and families.

TUESDAY

Read **Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 3:1; 1 John 4:19**

“What great love the Father has lavished on us ...” (1 John 3:1)

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy ...” (Romans 12:1). God’s mercy, His love for us, is to be the major driving force of our lives. Therefore, it is important that we understand the significance of God giving His only Son for us. God’s love is so great that He gave His only Son. The concept of one’s only son has deep meaning in many cultures. Here is a view from people of the Sulka culture in Papua New Guinea.

Yoanes Valtelpnua and three other Sulka men, after working on translating the New Testament into their local Sulka language, were reading through the final draft of the Sulka New Testament. Yoanes read from the gospel of Matthew, *“E Nut khai to ke tro”* (“God’s only Son”).

Yoanes said that the term *tro* (only child) carries powerful cultural connotations. If a Sulka child is a *tro*, that child is very special and protected from danger, sickness, and harm of any kind. If a family were to lose their *tro*, the clan would be in jeopardy of dying out. Absolutely no one would put their *tro* in a situation that might bring harm.

So, when Yoanes read that God did not spare His *tro*, but instead offered Him to die on our behalf, the Sulka men were stunned at the realization of how much God loves them, what price He paid on Calvary’s cross to reconcile us to Him. You could see the astonishment in their eyes. Never before had they so clearly understood the extent of God’s love until they read, in their own language, about God’s *tro* and understood that God gave up His only Son to die for them. (Doug and Carolyn Tharp)

In no other religious system is that faith’s “god(s)” personal, much less sacrificial and loving. The only true and living Father God is so committed, so caring that He paid the ultimate price to provide the only way to salvation and abundant life for those who would receive this and thereby be adopted into His eternal family. What “Sulkas” do you know who need to learn about such a glorious God?

QUESTIONS

When you come to understand more deeply the scope of God’s love for you, how do you respond?

PRAYER

[Neighborhood Homework House \(NHH\)](#)

Volunteers: As NHH prepares for the launch of its after-school program on September 10, 2024, the staff needs to sign up seventy volunteers. Pray that the NHH staff is able to recruit, screen, train and place these volunteers in time.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Romans 12:1-2; Romans 5:8**

God loved us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). Human love is described as a “because of” kind of love while God’s love is an “in-spite-of” kind of love. He loves us in spite of our having rejected Him, of our having once been hostile toward God. Here is an example of a person who continued to love in spite of being rejected.

Edith Taylor of Waltham, Massachusetts, was married for twenty-three years when her husband, Karl, was sent by his company to work in Okinawa, Japan, for one year. There he fell in love with a nineteen-years-old Japanese maid, Aiko, who was assigned to work in his quarters. Edith had loved Karl for so long that she was unable to stop doing so in spite of having been rejected. After Karl married Aiko, Edith wrote to him requesting that they keep in touch.

Over the years, Edith and Karl continued to correspond. Karl and Aiko had two children, Maria and Helen. When Karl was dying of lung cancer, his greatest fear was what would happen to his two girls? Edith knew that her last gift to Karl would be peace of mind. She wrote to him: If Aiko was willing, Edith could take the two girls to Waltham and raise them. For many months Aiko could not let her children go. However, when she began to see that she had nothing but poverty to offer her children, she decided to let them go to the United States.

A year after the children moved to the U.S., through the diligent efforts of many, Aiko was able to obtain a visa, come to the U.S., and join her children. When Aiko arrived at the airport and deboarded the plane, Edith embraced her and prayed, “Help me, God, to love her.” Seven years later, Edith wrote: “Though God has taken one life I loved deeply, He has given me three others to love. I am so thankful.” (Bob Considine)

Edith was able to continue loving the one who had rejected her. This is a picture of God’s love for us, a persevering love selflessly transcending natural human limitations.

QUESTIONS

We have rejected Christ; yet, Christ still loves us. How do you feel about that?

PRAYER

[Neighborhood Homework House \(NHH\)](#)

Recruiting interns and Federal Work Study students: Along with volunteers, NHH is actively recruiting interns and Federal Work Study Students primarily from Azusa Pacific University and Citrus College. There are several unfilled positions; pray that these positions are filled with amazing young adults.

THURSDAY

Read **Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15**

“For Christ’s love compels us.” (2 Corinthians 5:14)

When we experience the greatest act of love from another, our lives change. One man experienced such love and his life was never the same. This happened during World War II in a Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz, Poland. In the camp a prisoner from a labor detail had escaped. Since the prisoner was not found, ten of the 600 men of his cellblock, selected at random, would be put to death.

The 600 prisoners were lined up while the camp commander moved among them picking at random ten prisoners who would die. Among the ten selected to die was a Polish soldier named Francis Gajowniczek. After he was selected, he cried out, “My wife, my poor children!”

As the guard was prepared to march the doomed men off, there was a sudden stir in the formation. An eleventh man came forward, Maximilian Maria Kolbe, a Franciscan friar known as Father Kolbe. He said, “I want to take the place of that one,” pointing to the Polish soldier Gajowniczek.

The German officer in charge snapped, “Are you crazy?”

“No,” the priest replied. “But I am alone in the world. That man has a family to live for. Please.”

“Accepted,” the officer muttered. Father Kolbe took Francis Gajowniczek’s place.

For many days after, Gajowniczek was bewildered, wept and refused to eat. His friend said to him, “Take hold of yourself! Is the priest to die for nothing?” In that moment the Polish soldier made up his mind that he must live. And not just live, but live fruitfully and gratefully. He would not waste Father Kolbe’s gift. He had been wallowing in despair; however, after grasping the high cost of the priest’s sacrifice for him, he stopped living in his misery.

In 1971, thirty years later, at a ceremony of beautification for Father Kolbe at the Vatican presided by the Pope (a preliminary step to canonization as a Catholic saint), Gajowniczek and other prisoners who survived the Nazi concentration camp were present. (Lawrence Elliott)

QUESTIONS

How does Father Kolbe’s substitutionary, sacrificial death picture Jesus? Is Christ to die for nothing? How has Christ’s death for you affected you?

PRAYER

[Neighborhood Homework House \(NHH\)](#)

Robotics program: The NHH team has an opportunity to provide a robotics class for middle school students. Pray that they are able to gather the needed materials and recruit a co-teacher in time for the intended start of the program.

FRIDAY

Read **Romans 12:1-2; Ezekiel 11:19**

Consider a fifty-year-old man born with a defective heart. All of his life he had to be careful not to overly stress his heart. This became his habitual way of living. Then a marathon runner died and willed his heart for a transplant; it became available for him and was successfully transplanted. Now he has a new heart, the heart of a marathon champion.

Can he run a marathon now? His old body is not ready to do it. He needs to train his old body to match his new heart. Also, he has an even greater obstacle. All of his life he told himself to never overly exert. How can he change fifty years of negative thinking? What will he have to do now?

He has to work hard at overcoming fifty years of adverse thinking. He can easily slip back into the old patterns of thinking that he must not overly exert himself due to a weak heart. He has to develop the new practice of realizing that he now has a new power which he never had before.

This man's life is a picture of a Christian—someone who died with Christ on the cross and will rise from the dead with Him. In a Christian's new life, he is dead to the power of sin and alive to God. Since he is no longer a slave of sin, he is now alive with Christ. A spiritual heart-transplant has taken place. The new Christian needs

to see himself in a new way; he needs to change his way of thinking. He needs to see that Christ now lives in him. He must retrain his old body to match his new heart. Now he must spend much time in the spiritual disciplines so that he can change his way of thinking and his way of life.

Let us live each day remembering that Christ lives within us. Let us try to obey Him in all we do. As Christians we no longer live our old lives. Now Christ lives within us. We are new people who live each day with the Spirit within us and empowering us.

QUESTIONS

In Christ you now have a new heart. Now what changes do you have to make in the way you live?

PRAYER

[Neighborhood Homework House \(NHH\)](#)

The path to a flourishing NHH in 2030: The NHH board has launched a strategic planning project that they believe will lead them to the NHH of 2030. Pray for wisdom and discernment for all involved in this planning.



Sources

- Bob Considine, “Could You Have Loved As Much?” *Readers’ Digest*, April 1966.
- Lawrence Elliott, “The Heroism of Father Kolbe: In Choosing Death, He Ennobled Life,” *Readers’ Digest*, 1973.
- Doug and Carolyn Tharp, “Tro Love,” Papua New Guinea; *In Focus*, Wycliffe Bible Translators’ Magazine, 1997.

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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