

GLENKIRK CHURCH



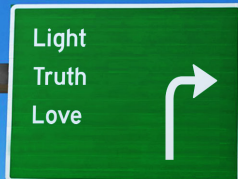
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

OCTOBER 21 - 25, 2019

## WALKING IN THE TRUTH

SERMON SERIES 9/8 - 11/24



# MONDAY

## Acts 1:7-9

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### Jesus' Last Words

Scripture tells us that Jesus rose from the dead. He didn't immediately ascend to heaven after He rose from the dead. For forty days as our Resurrected Savior, He proved He was risen from the dead through physical appearances to His disciples and miracles like the miraculous catch of the fish. This important period of time was to encourage and teach the disciples. During this time, Peter was reinstated after his three denials and all seemed well.

However, even after following Jesus for three years, these disciples were still thinking, hoping, dreaming, and even wishing that Jesus would still physically establish His kingdom then and there. He rebukes them in Acts 1:7, *"It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority."* Jesus reminded the disciples that there was a different purpose for them, a purpose that was not to be fulfilled with His ascension or a new physical kingdom. They were to stay focused on the big picture of being witnesses to His life and teachings.

And then in Acts 1:8, Jesus says to them what would be His very last words on earth until He comes again: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

The last words you hear from a loved family member or friend are precious words—words that you remember for the rest of your physical

life. They are cherished and you will do all that you possibly can to fulfill these words if they take the form of a “dying wish.” Why didn’t Jesus take His disciples with Him? Probably for the same reason He did not take us to heaven on the day we accepted Him as our personal Lord and Savior. He left us here because there is a Gospel to preach, a Jesus to proclaim, and Good News to tell to the world. We are to be His witnesses here in our neighborhood, our city, our country, and to the ends of this earth until we see Him again on this earth or in heaven.

## REFLECTION

Listen to the Holy Spirit reflectively through prayer and studying Scripture and see how God is calling you to be His ambassadors today.

## PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE

Pray for African Enterprise, which has worked to bring peace, reconciliation and hope to African nations for 50 years. AE’s evangelistic approach involves mobilizing thousands of local volunteers and churches in African nations to bring the Good News of Jesus to people in North Africa.

# TUESDAY

## Matthew 28:16-20

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### The Great Commission

Dr. Ted Engstrom was a well-known Christian leader in the late 20th, early 21st century. Probably best known for his leadership of World Vision, Youth for Christ, and Zondervan Publishers, he was a man who loved God, the Church, and the world. With all he accomplished as a Christian leader, many times alongside evangelists like Billy Graham, he shared more than once that his personal mission in life given to him by Christ was “to populate heaven,” which he did until his death at the age of 90 in 2006.

These words from Jesus in the final days of His life (the Great Commission) remind us of how big the kingdom of God really is and what our Lord expects of us in spreading His Gospel in order to populate heaven. Jesus indeed commissions us to send people everywhere in the world to spread His Good News, to proclaim His promise to be with believers always, until the end of time.

However, in the busyness of life, this command or commission can sometimes be “lost,” and it often appears to be “just too big to handle.” Many times we reason that “it’s someone else’s calling,” or “it’s just not my gift.” Unfortunately, there are no qualifications or exceptions to this commission; we are all called to a role in expanding God’s kingdom, or “populating heaven.”

The challenge (or is it Satan whispering) is that we often link this commission to those who have been called to that special ministry of serving in a distant land or culture. These are indeed special servants who need our prayers and resources, but this is not a “get-out-of-jail free card” for the rest of us. The majority of us are called first to be witnesses in our “Jerusalem” (Acts 1:8), in our neighborhood, in our community, with our friends, and with parents at the soccer field.

The entire world, including the street we live on, is where we are called every day to share the Good News of the Gospel. We really don’t have to get on a plane to obey this command—for some of us the “world” may, in fact, be where we are today.

## QUESTIONS

How can we be more intentional in sharing what Jesus has done for us with our neighbors and community this week?

## PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE

Pray for the African Enterprise teams that go to Rwanda, where they partner with local churches to train pastors and Christian leaders to be more effective evangelists. Pray also for guidance as they share the Gospel with college students, prisoners in local jails, street children, and commercial sex workers.

# WEDNESDAY

## Romans 10:13-14

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### Unreached Peoples

It is hard to believe in this age of technology, the internet, social media, satellites, and other 21st century media and communications networks that there are still “unreached people” in this world. So, what do we mean when we refer to an unreached people group? Basically, an unreached people group is considered “unreached” when there is no indigenous community of believing Christians who are able to engage in or evangelize this particular ethnic/cultural group, or who has the capacity to plant churches without outside help.

In the middle 1990’s, mission strategists tried to be more specific about this definition. The consensus settled on these criteria: to be called an unreached people’s group meant that less than 2% of the population were true Christ-followers with a personal relationship to Christ, and less than 5% were professing/nominal Christians. (This includes all forms of Christianity; i.e., all who would call themselves “Christians.”) The number of unreached people groups with these criteria vary, but it ranges from 3,000 to 7,000 groups in the world. Imagine that—3,000 to 7,000 ethnic groups where less than 2 in 100 are Christian believers, which is approximately 40% of the world’s 7 billion people!

Paul asks this important question in Romans 10:14: *“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”* We know that this is a rhetorical question

because in his letter to the church in Philippi, he states emphatically, “... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

There is this gap in the world today between the several thousand unreached people groups and the confession Paul speaks to where all of humanity will worship Jesus Christ. This is the purpose and mission of the Church and believers today—to share the love and Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the world so that “every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth.” What a challenge, what a privilege that we are alive in this time and for this purpose to spread His Word throughout this world.

## QUESTIONS

In what ways can you help to spread the Good News throughout the world?

## PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE

Pray for the African Enterprise teams that go to Ethiopia. They have set a goal to reach 40,000 people with the Gospel and are currently training hundreds of volunteer evangelists to do one-on-one street witnessing.

# THURSDAY

## Acts 13:2-3

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### The Call to Send

Charles Spurgeon, the famous 18th century theologian, is reported to have said, “Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.” The implication is that every true believer who has been saved by the blood, grace, and love of Jesus would want nothing more than to have everyone have the same joy and experience. If we are not yet in heaven, why would we not want to take as many as possible with us? Knowing that this is only possible through salvation in Christ, let’s spread the Word! We are all called; we are all missionaries in our daily life.

But, like Saul (Paul) and Barnabas, there are those privileged few who through the direction of the Holy Spirit are set aside by God to be sent to spread the Good News. In these few verses in Acts 13, there are several key elements we as believers can learn. First, the “sending” was an outcome of “*worshipping the Lord,*” resulting in the Holy Spirit convicting the worshippers to have Saul and Barnabas “set apart” and sent. Mission work is not only a personal conviction and vocation, but a service that is verified by the Holy Spirit and those who send. There is a *call* to serve and a *conviction* to send.

Second, Saul and Barnabas were not just called to serve, but they were called “*for the work for which I have called them.*” God has a plan, a sovereign plan, and a plan that will be fulfilled. Our role in this plan



is to be open to be sent and to know that this is for a specific purpose. Were Paul and Barnabas surprised at being set apart for a specific purpose? I think they might have been; after all, they had just returned from a successful mission (Acts 12: 24-25) and probably thought their work was done.

Finally, we read in verse 3, *“So after they had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them and sent them off.”* John Piper, retired pastor and author, makes this interesting observation: “You can be a goer, you can be a sender, or you can be disobedient. There is no other option but those three.” Paul and Barnabas were goers and the church members were senders, which is where most of us are today. We do not want to be disobedient! Our call is to pray for and support those sent, while working in our daily lives to be “missionaries” to those around us.

## QUESTIONS

Has your awareness of Glenkirk’s outreach support increased during the past year with the devo prayer emphasis each week on various outreach ministries?

## PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE

Pray for the people of Northern Ethiopia. There are less than 1% evangelical Christians who reside there. African Enterprise partners with the local churches in this area in order to spread the news of the Gospel.

# FRIDAY

## Jeremiah 1:4-8

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### So What about Me?

God had a special mission for Jeremiah, a mission that God had purposed him before his first breath on this earth. It was not just a simple call, but a global call to be a “prophet to all nations.” Would it be all fun and adventure? Probably not! Would he become a celebrity? Absolutely, but not for the reasons most people want to become famous. For as we read in this account of Jeremiah’s life, the mission from God was to go to his brothers and sisters in his home country (Israel) and demand they repent and return to God.

Jeremiah knew this was a thankless task; it was going to make a lot of people very angry, especially at him. Like many of us, when nudged by God, Jeremiah found several reasons why he wasn’t the right person for the job beginning with: *“I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”* But our God is sovereign, persistent, and patient as we read God’s response: *“Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you.”* Then the LORD reached out His hand and touched [Jeremiah’s] mouth and said to [him], *“I have put My words in your mouth”* (vv. 6-9).

It’s was a natural response, and many times as Christians we do the same thing. In our comfort of the “known” and the life we have built

for ourselves, we respond to God’s call with excuses about the timing, the place, the sacrifices we will need to make to do the mission the Lord has given us—be that global or local missions. Perhaps we reason, “I don’t have seminary training” or “I don’t know enough about the Bible. What will they think of me?” Fear of the unknown is a great motivator and a greater inhibitor, but our Lord is loving, gracious, and patient. As He responded to Jeremiah, so He would respond to us and say, “Do not be afraid of them.”

God never calls us to do something for Him that He doesn’t empower us to do if we are willing to put in the work and the time. Take the time today to get to know God in an intimate way. Your purpose on earth is to shine God’s love to a lost and dying world. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is waiting for you!

## QUESTIONS

Has God ever called you to a “mission” that you were hesitant to undertake for His kingdom?

## PRAYERS FOR AFRICAN ENTERPRISE

Pray for divine protection for the workers and volunteers of African Enterprise that they would be safe from diseases such as malaria, cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. Pray for strength and courage as they serve God’s people in Africa.

## Sources

- Charles Spurgeon's quote is taken from <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/404648-every-christian-is-either-a-missionary-or-an-imposter>
- John Piper's quote is taken from <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/do-you-think-everybody-should-be-a-missionary>

