

GLENKIRK CHURCH



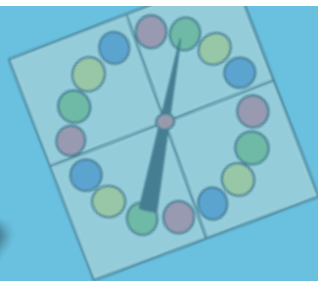
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# DEVO

JULY 15 - 19, 2024



# MONDAY



Read [Luke 5:1-11](#); [Matthew 28:18-20](#)

This week Glenkirk Church's annual Vacation Bible School commences! We welcome about 350 kids to our campus to learn more about Jesus and God's kingdom. Today's emphasis is upon Jesus' calling His first disciples, prospects many might find most unpromising: common fisherman, unlearned and otherwise living unremarkable lives. Let's join the Lord just weeks into the beginning of His earthly ministry.

Jesus was teaching large crowds of people about God's kingdom by the Sea of Galilee's shoreline. Standing by this lake, the receptive crowd pressing in, Jesus noticed two boats nearby. The fishermen were washing their nets from unfruitful efforts the previous night. Jesus boarded Simon Peter's boat, asking him to take it a short distance from the shore. Jesus sat down in the boat and continued teaching the gathered crowd.

Upon finishing His lessons, Jesus told Peter, *"Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch"* (Luke 5:4). Peter reluctantly obeyed, despite having netted nothing the night before. Upon relocating and dropping their nets again, Peter and his colleagues caught so much that they could not handle the haul. The amazed fishermen had their partners in the other boat help them, filling the boats with an overflowing abundance of fish.

Sensing Jesus' holiness, Peter fell down at His feet and appealed, *"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"* (v. 8). Jesus reassured Peter, promising *"Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people"* (v. 10). Peter and the other fishermen brought the boats to shore, leaving everything behind to follow Jesus.

Jesus is the Lord of everything, including the sea and all that is in it, along with all of creation. Peter saw that this miracle and its Source were of God. He experienced Jesus' holiness and demonstration of power, signs of Christ's mission and divinity. Peter then began to understand Jesus as the promised Messiah. How about you? Do you understand who Jesus is, the One who came to save and offer abundant life to all who would turn from sin and receive Him as Lord and Savior? Where are you when it comes to following Jesus?

## QUESTIONS

What was Jesus showing Peter (and the others) when telling them to drop their nets again (despite their prior, all-night futility)? Why was Peter initially fearful of Jesus upon experiencing the miraculous catch? Why did Jesus use the analogy *"I will make you fish for people"* in this setting?

## PRAYER

[For Vacation Bible School 2024](#)

Father, please keep the children we have on campus this week, the student volunteers, the team leaders and all involved with Glenkirk VBS safe in the summer heat. We ask You to prepare everything so that our guests and all involved can draw closer to our Savior, Jesus Christ.



# TUESDAY

Read **Matthew 14:22-33**; **Acts 9:36-41**

Today's story highlights Jesus Christ's trustworthiness and deity. His disciples were beginning to grasp that He was more than an ordinary Man, but they might have questioned Jesus' reliability after He dispatched them to the Sea of Galilee and subjected them to a perilous storm. Sometimes God allows us to get to the end of ourselves—our own abilities, understanding and comfort—to demonstrate His faithfulness, love and power.

People sought Jesus everywhere He went. After a long day of teaching near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus dismissed the crowds and told His disciples to go ahead of Him in a boat. He then went to the mountainside to pray. Later, the disciples' boat was far from shore, the wind began blowing, and the water grew rough and choppy, beating threateningly against their boat.

Just before dawn, the terrified and drenched disciples saw something approaching them. It was Jesus, walking on the water. They feared that He was a ghost, but Jesus reassured them, *"It is I. Don't be afraid"* (Matthew 14:26). Peter appealed to the Lord, *"Tell me to come to You on the water"* (v. 28), and Jesus complied. Peter then began walking on the sea toward Jesus, but took his eyes off of the Savior and then started sinking. Peter then cried out with Bible's shortest prayer, *"Lord, save me!"* (v. 29).

Jesus grabbed Peter and pulled him to safety. The Lord then asked a question I find highly convicting: *"You of little faith ... why did you doubt?"* (v. 31). As Jesus and Peter reboarded the boat, the wind stopped and the sea calmed. Not only could Jesus walk on water, He could also control the wind and the waves! The disciples worshiped Jesus, professing, *"Truly you are the Son of God!"* (v. 32).

Many Bible readers readily criticize Peter—tomorrow's story provides fuel to the popular sport of "Peter bashing." John Ortberg, however, offers a different perspective via his book, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*. Sometimes it takes extreme circumstances and/or stepping out in faith to enable us to recognize Jesus' trustworthiness.

## QUESTIONS

Why do you think Peter began to sink into the water? What did Jesus want Peter to learn? Who deserves greater criticism: brash Peter or the other disciples who never left the boat?

## PRAYER

For Vacation Bible School 2024

Loving Lord, prepare hearts to receive the Gospel, to know the peace of Christ through His glorious sacrifice. Please eliminate outside distractions so that these precious children—each of them made in Your image—can learn more of You and Your plan of salvation.



# WEDNESDAY

Read [Luke 22:31-34, 54-62](#); [John 21:1-17](#)

Jesus knew that His arrest, crucifixion, burial and resurrection approached. He had foretold this to the disciples, though they did not then understand. Jesus knew also that His disciples (except John) would abandon Him at His crucifixion and afterward. The Lord specifically cautioned Peter that personal trials were coming, that He prayed for Peter accordingly—this prompted Peter’s brash promise that he would follow Jesus to prison or even to death. Jesus then predicted Peter’s threefold denial of Him that very night.

Upon Jesus’ arrest, the Roman posse took Him to the high priest’s house for His false trial. Peter followed at a distance, then joined others sitting at a nearby campfire. Fulfilling Jesus’ prophecy, Peter was questioned three times by others there about his relationship with Christ. Each time Peter strongly denied knowing Jesus, even swearing once. Upon the third denial, a rooster crowed, whereupon the Savior turned and looked at Peter. The shamed disciple departed tearfully. The next day Jesus was crucified on the cross, entombed before sundown. On the third day Jesus rose from the dead, fulfilling prophecy and confirming that He is the Way to salvation!

Peter later went fishing, joined by several other disciples. Paralleling Monday’s incident wherein Jesus first called them, the disciples’ overnight fishing again produced nothing. Heading toward shore,

they saw a Man there calling to them, “‘Haven’t you any fish?’ ... ‘No’ ... [followed by His response,] ‘Throw your net on the right side of the boat’” (John 21:5, 6), which produced an overwhelming haul. John recognized Jesus and advised Peter. Peter plunged into the water, swimming to shore. Jesus had a charcoal fire ready and they ate the bread and the fish that He prepared.

Upon finishing the meal, Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” (vv. 15, 16); the apostle answered affirmatively each time. Jesus told Peter to care for His flock (followers), likewise three times. Peter had betrayed Jesus, but Jesus knew that Peter now was prepared to follow Him anew.

The Lord is ready to forgive (Psalm 86:5) when we repent and turn to Him. Jesus can redeem anyone, even erring Peter and the likes of you and me!

## QUESTIONS

Why did Peter deny Jesus three times when questioned outside the high priest’s house? How did “*that disciple whom Jesus loved*” (John 21:7) recognize that it was Jesus on shore preparing for their breakfast? How do you find Peter’s failings, followed by Jesus’ loving reinstatement, encouraging?

## PRAYER

For Vacation Bible School 2024

Almighty Creator, please stir our VBS children to witness effectively within their own families. Prepare hearts among parents, siblings, other relatives, neighbors, classmates and friends to receive, opening them to the message of salvation in Christ.



# THURSDAY

Read **Acts 3:1-4:24**

Peter and John were approaching the temple when they saw a man “*lame from birth*” (Acts 3:2), reduced to begging. In response to the man’s appeal for money, Peter said, “*Silver or gold I do not have, but ... I ... [will] give you [this]. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk*” (v. 6). The man then rose, walked and praised God before all in the temple court—his witness stoked onlookers’ curiosity.

Peter then used the opportunity before the amazed crowd to share Jesus’ story, the Gospel (“good news”)—how the Old Testament predicted the Messiah, the Lord’s ministry, crucifixion and resurrection. Peter emphasized that all must turn to Jesus repentantly for forgiveness and salvation, how—apart from saving relationship with Christ—all face God’s judgment. Peter emphasized that such healing was of God through Christ, not due to their abilities.

The authorities—threatened regarding fleeting influence—arrested Peter and John, imprisoning them overnight. The next day Peter and John stood before Israel’s leading priests, who asked them how the man was healed. Peter, Holy Spirit filled, boldly proclaimed Jesus’ healing power. He declared that trusting in Jesus is the only way to be saved from sin’s consequences. “*When [the priests] saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and ... took note that these men had been with Jesus*” (4:13).

The leaders could not discredit Peter and John’s bold faith. The healed man was in their midst, his restoration witnessed by many. They ordered Peter and John to stop teaching about Jesus, but the disciples responded that they could not keep silent regarding what God was doing among them. They were released without further consequences, the authorities powerless to silence them.

Much like during Jesus’ time, the Gospel remains countercultural, “against the grain” for so many. And increasingly—not just within oppressive global regimes, but even our country—we believers face consequences for our faith. But we know that Jesus is worth following, that everyone needs the Savior. Do you stand faithfully, like Peter and John, when God’s truth is challenged?

## QUESTIONS

How was Peter able to heal the man “*lame from birth*”? Why were the Jewish religious authorities threatened by Peter’s and John’s actions? Why were these leaders compelled to release the disciples?

## PRAYER

For Vacation Bible School 2024

O God, this day is one where the Gospel and faith commitments are a particular emphasis at VBS. Stir recommitments to faithfully following Christ among the children knowing Jesus already. Among the others, please prepare hearts to draw closer to and receive the Lord.

# FRIDAY



## Read Acts 10

As a Gentile soldier within an occupying force, Roman centurion Cornelius would have been an outcast among many Israelites. Yet Cornelius worshiped Yahweh. He had a vision wherein God told him to send for Peter to meet him. The next day, as Cornelius' colleagues approached, Peter prayed on the roof of a house in Joppa.

At about lunchtime Peter went into a trance, seeing a sheet descending from heaven holding various animals, some ritually “unclean” to Jews. *“And there came a voice to him: ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.’ And the voice came ... a second time, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common’”* (Acts 15:10-12). After the third time, the sheet and its contents ascended and disappeared.

As Peter pondered what this meant, Cornelius' associates arrived. The Spirit prompted Peter to join them; they shared Cornelius' invitation to meet him in Caesarea. Upon meeting Cornelius and his family the next day, Peter affirmed, *“[Though it is] unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit ... [Gentiles,] God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean”* (10:28). Cornelius then revealed his vision and charge to meet the apostle, asking Peter what message God had for them.

Peter declared, *“I [now] understand that God shows no partiality, ... [that] anyone who [reverses] Him and does what is right is [His]”* (vv. 34, 35). Peter then shared the Gospel and Jesus' Great Commission charge that Christians *“go and make disciples of all nations”* (Matthew 28:19). The Holy Spirit descended upon all there, Jews and Gentiles alike. These new believers were then baptized in Jesus' name.

Many disapprove of Christianity's “exclusivity”—critics bristle at Jesus' declaration: *“I am the Way ... No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14:6). Yet redemption is available to everyone accepting Christ, regardless of heritage, nationality, IQ, social standing, etc. Even Peter had to learn this, as do many even today. Do you know anybody who wants/needs to understand Christianity's accessibility? Share the Gospel with them!

## QUESTIONS

Why would Cornelius have been called a “God-fearer” by respectful ancient Jews? How did God use Peter's vision to help Him understand Jesus' agenda for all humankind? How do you respond to someone criticizing Christianity for its “exclusivity”?

## PRAYER

### For Vacation Bible School 2024

Our Great Redeemer, Jesus, commissioned us to *“go and make disciples”* (Matthew 28:19). Please move and prepare this week's VBS participants to faithfully respond. Let others see what You are doing among our VBS children, marveling at and drawn to Your goodness and love.





## Sources

- This week's devotionals borrow extensively from the 2024 Glenkirk VBS curriculum developed by Amber Flores and others on Glenkirk's Children's Ministries staff.
- John Ortberg's book, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), can be purchased at various outlets, including Amazon (<https://www.amazon.com/Want-Walk-Water-Youve-Boat/dp/0310340462>).

*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](mailto:KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org). If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.*

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