

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

DEVO

JANUARY 20 - 24, 2025

THE STORY OF US

Sermon Series
Jan 5 - Mar 2



MONDAY

Read **Ephesians 3:1**

“For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—” (Ephesians 3:1)

Christ has a purpose in our hard places.

Paul went through many hardships throughout his ministerial life. The letter of Ephesians is considered one of his “prison letters” along with Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Though written in captivity, they are considered to be Paul’s most hopeful and encouraging letters. Their upbeat message contrasts with the harsh reality of his physical circumstances. They remind us that God will see us through any difficulty and that He has a purpose for our good and His glory.

Paul could blame Rome or even the Jewish leaders for his imprisonment, but for him their involvement was incidental. He is in chains for Christ and on behalf of Christ for a purpose—for the sake of the Gentiles, to continue drawing these former “outsiders” to Christ. Paul’s call was to bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles (Romans 1:5; Galatians 1-2), and mere prison chains could not stop him.

We all go through difficult seasons. When we’re hurting but see no relief for the future, what can we be sure of? Primarily that God is with us in our troubles. He gives us what we need, whether it’s

His love and strength, a sense of security and belonging, and/or the knowledge that we are not alone. Jesus comprehends the temptations and obstacles we face because He knows what it’s like to suffer, be rejected, and lose a loved one. What’s more, He carries our burdens (Psalm 68:19). The God who walks with you is not limited by anything (Matthew 19:26).

Like Paul, we can use our difficult circumstances to deepen our faith in God and focus once again on our efforts to point people to Christ. People are watching to see if our faith is real and if it makes a difference in good and bad times. Challenges allow believers to exhibit “*the peace of God, which transcends all understanding*” (Philippians 4:7), a peace and accompanying joy drawing them toward the Savior. We have countless reasons to be thankful.

QUESTIONS

Reflect on the blessings and assurances we have in Christ and take 1 Thessalonians 5:18 to heart by giving thanks “*in everything*”—including the hard times.

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 literacy and empowerment programs, as well as church leader training programs starting this spring to be effective. Pray for ears and hearts open to the Word. www.gtihope.org

TUESDAY

Read **Ephesians 3:6**

“This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together in one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 3:6)

The Gospel and Paul

Paul was gripped with the wonder of the Gospel. He never got over his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), and it shaped his life until the day Jesus called him home. The love and forgiveness of God weren't tidy doctrines; they were life and breath given to Paul by Jesus—truths that propelled him to the corners of the world telling anyone who would listen about Jesus, no matter the hardship or the consequences (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

Paul understood that evangelism is successful only if God leads us, opens doors, and motivates us by reminding us of the wonder of the message. Paul was tough, but recognized telling others about Christ is a partnership between us and God and that God is doing all the heavy lifting.

In our lives, it seems easier to leave evangelism to professionals. Is that how you heard the Gospel? Probably not. Undoubtedly, we can bring someone to church to hear a great message, or hear

great music, but we can also pray for open doors with family and friends. When the time is ripe and the Spirit leads us, we can tell people what Jesus has done in our lives. We may not be articulate or able to answer all their questions, but that's all right. What people want to know is if our faith is real, and we're the only ones who can show them it is.

Write out an outline of what you will tell unbelievers when God opens the door. Write about what your life was like before you trusted Christ—your “BC” (before Christ) story, the event when you trusted Him, and the difference Jesus has made in your life since then. Then start sharing your story. If this is unfamiliar and intimidating, start with someone “safe,” perhaps a sympathetic fellow believer. Someone might challenge your faith or theology, but no one can doubt your story. Like the Apostle Paul, share it wherever you are.

QUESTIONS

How has the Gospel changed your life? Take a few minutes to ask God to open a door to share your faith with particular people who are on your heart.

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Pray for the Mahadev Koli people group project sponsored by Glenkirk. Pray for the twelve church leaders being trained for a year. Pray for the villages where they will be serving and sharing the love of Jesus and message of peace. Pray for ears that hear and a bountiful harvest.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Ephesians 3:6, 9**

God's mystery revealed to us.

A good mystery story typically includes elements like a compelling central mystery to solve, a strong protagonist with a motive to investigate, a suspenseful plot with twists and turns, well-placed clues, red herrings to mislead the reader, foreshadowing to hint at future events, a believable setting, and a satisfying resolution that ties up loose ends. This type of mystery is not what Paul wants us to think about and live out.

A mystery in the New Testament is something that had at one time been hidden but is now revealed to God's people. Paul used the word "mystery" 21 times to declare a spiritual truth, revealed by God through divine inspiration. A *"mystery that was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets"* (v. 5). But what changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament, and why is there a mystery in the first place?

One of the key things that changed was that God's plan of redemption through Jesus was fulfilled. There were hints of God's plan in Genesis 3:15, which took place in the Garden of Eden. Throughout the Old Testament God revealed some of His plan, but it was primarily through the Jews.

The picture the Old Testament tells is what was to come through Jesus Christ. God showed the Jews that they could not keep the law, and they had to keep making sacrifices to cover their sins. Then in the Gospels the ultimate sacrifice, Jesus Christ, came to cover their sins once for all (Hebrews 9:12).

There is so much that divides us today: socially, politically, educationally, and more. We can all point to the problems and divisions in the church, but can we also point to ourselves to take steps in bringing unity in truth and love? Remember, *"God is able to do immeasurable more than we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us"* (Ephesians 3:20).

Now that Christ's work on the Cross has been completed, and the mystery has been revealed to us through Paul (Ephesians 3:8-9), it is time to boldly proclaim the Gospel to everyone—both Jew and Gentile (Romans 10:14-17).

QUESTIONS

What is God doing in your heart today to bring about unity in our church? How can we show genuine love and kindness to those in our church and call others into our fellowship?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Pray for the Vision Trip, February 8-22. Nine people will be traveling to India to meet with our partner, visit local ministry sites, hear testimonies from literacy students and graduates, talk with church planters, and witness how the Lord is moving through GTi HOPE and our partner.

THURSDAY

Read **Ephesians 3:16-19**

“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.” (2 Corinthians 2:12)

The Holy Spirit helps believers!

Diamond mine shafts can be more than a mile deep. You don't have to go far in them before it is pitch black. That is why miners work with headlamps (and more). In the dark, diamonds are like any other rock, but the headlamp helps the miner find the diamond crystal.

In much the same way, the Holy Spirit illuminates God's Word so that we can see the treasure it contains. So far in Ephesians we have mined the believer's spiritual blessings in Christ, the treasures of redemption, God's mystery, the Holy Spirit's work and more to come in the concluding chapters 4-6. Without the Holy Spirit, people are like miners fumbling in the dark. They read Jesus' words, *“Come to Me, all who are weary and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:25), but they do not realize the Bible is speaking to them personally. It is the Holy Spirit who helps us to see and understand Jesus' invitations to come.

The Holy Spirit works in other ways in our lives as well:

- He is our Helper who teaches and reminds us. (John 14:26)
- He convicts the world of sin. (John 16:7-8)

- He dwells in believers forever. (1 Corinthians 3:16)
- He is our source of revelation, wisdom, and power. (1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 1:17-20)
- He guides us. (John 16:13-15)
- He gives us spiritual gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:7-1)
- He seals us. (Ephesians 1:13)
- He helps with our weaknesses and intercedes for us. (Romans 8:26-27)
- He makes believers new and grants us eternal life. (Romans 8:10-11)
- He sanctifies and enables good fruit in our lives. (Galatians 5:16-25)

Just as a diamond mine is deep, so the truth of God's Word runs deep. We believers will spend our whole lives on mining God's Word, and there will still be an eternity of discoveries to uncover.

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 2:38)

QUESTIONS

How has the Holy Spirit helped you to understand God's Word?

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 65% full. Pray that it will be filled soon and pray for volunteers to help with sorting books. www.gtihope.org/books

FRIDAY

Read **Ephesians 3:20-21**

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory.” (Ephesians 3:20)

The God who is able!

Do you need God to do something “impossible” in your life or in the life of someone you know and love? When I see this verse, I am awestruck at the wonder of possibilities. Do you believe that there is nothing impossible for God? When we look through the annals of Scripture, we see God doing many amazing things.

Creation tops the list of amazing things in Genesis 1 and 2. God directed Noah to build a boat and then sent a worldwide flood to judge the earth (Genesis 6-9). He promised Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky (Genesis 12:1-3), and He produced the first child of that promise from an aged couple far past their prime (Genesis 17:15-16). God instructed Gideon to get rid of most of his men before he went into battle against overwhelming odds (Judges 7). He sent fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice and a moat to reveal Himself to Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:16-45) ... and so much more!

The Gospels are packed with miracles. Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, cleansed lepers, and changed hearts over and over again. His disciples and apostles also performed miracles and changed lives after Pentecost (Acts 2 and following).

What about today? Does God still work exceedingly abundantly in the same way for you and me? Yes! Sometimes He works physical miracles, but more often He works the miracle of redemption in a person's heart and the miracle of restoration in broken relationships. God's power and purpose haven't changed. He still can and does more than we ask or think.

Do you believe that? Can't the God who created everything out of nothing handle your circumstances and challenges? For whom, or what, should you be praying? *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).*

QUESTIONS

What amazing things have you seen that can be attributed to God? What are you trusting God to do in your life now?

PRAYERS

For GTi HOPE

Pray for the persecuted church, especially in states which promote harassment and have passed anti-conversion laws. 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, died for them, and offers salvation.



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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