

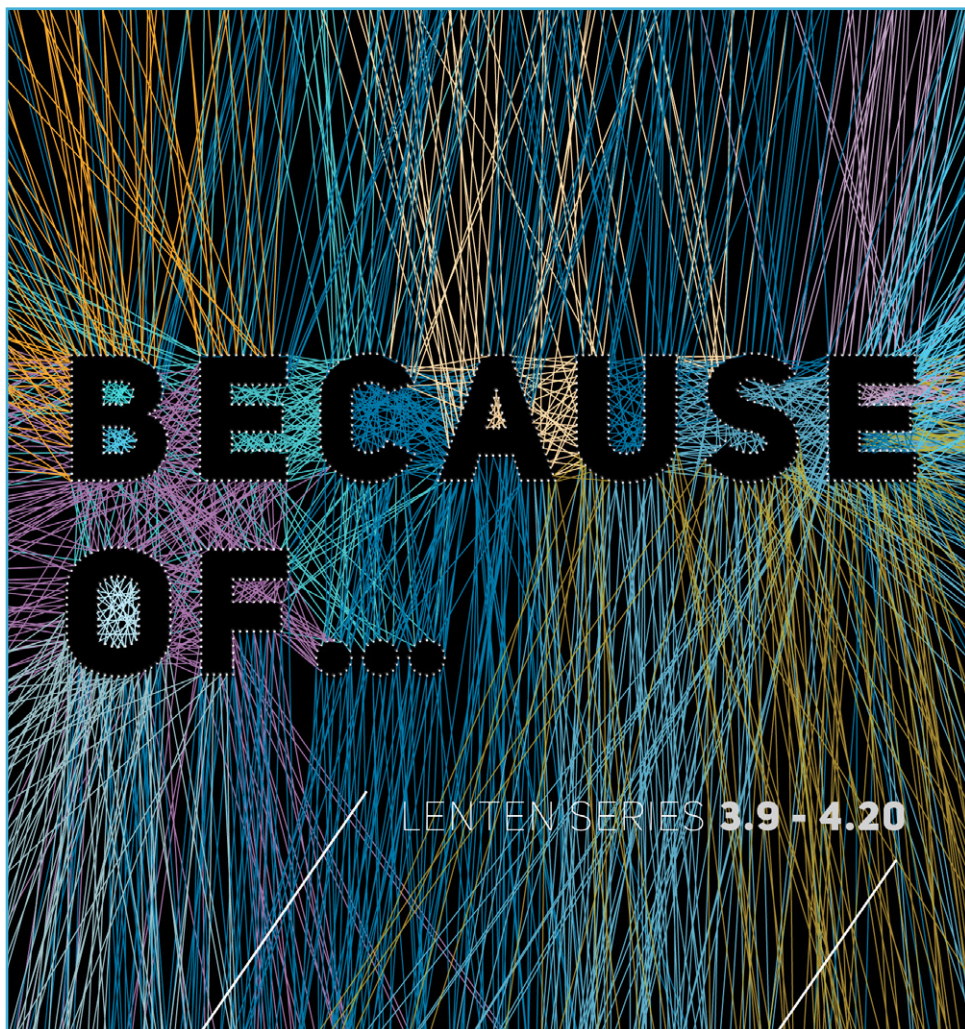
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# DEVO

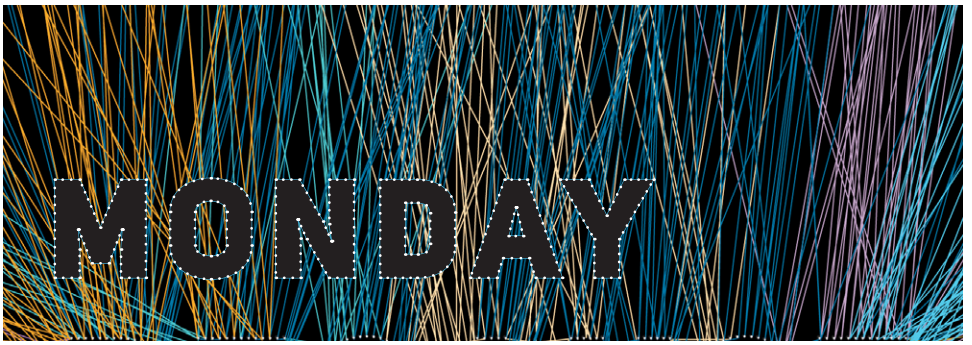
MARCH 3 - 7, 2025



**BECAUSE**

**OF** ...

LENTEN SERIES **3.9 - 4.20**



Read [Colossians 2:8](#); [John 18:28-38](#); [Matthew 4:1-8](#)

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Lent—the time wherein believers particularly reflect upon the wonder of Jesus’ brutal sacrifice and glorious resurrection—commences this Wednesday. Lent echoes Jesus’ 40-day wilderness fast and testing by Satan while also kicking off Easter season. This also opens Glenkirk’s 7-week “Because of ...” Lenten series. This week’s theme is “Because of our need”; today’s theme is “Because of our need for truth.”

Rome-appointed Judean Governor Pontius Pilate might be described, among other things, as a relativist. Trying to sidestep the ancient Jewish authorities’ insistence upon Jesus’ crucifixion, Pilate personally examined the Savior. At one point, Pilate cynically pondered, “*What is truth?*” (John 18:38). Ironically, at that moment he was standing before “*the Truth*” (John 14:6) Himself, God’s Son. Our fallen world—prompted by the enemy, “*the prince of this world*” (John 14:30)—is awash in relativism, the misguided notion that “truth is relative: I have my ‘truth’ and you have yours.”

The devil has mastered twisting and misapplying truth, attempting this even with Jesus amidst His wilderness trials; the Lord scripturally corrected Satan repeatedly, dismissing the deceiver. The Bible promises believers eternal life in Christ and adoption into God’s family; cults and New Agers corrupt this, maintaining that adherents

“are (or can become) gods.” Jesus prayed, “... *that all of [My followers] may be one, Father, just as you are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us*” (John 17:21). John Lennon sang, “I am he as you are he, as you are me and we are all together.”

Bank tellers and retail cashiers are trained to detect phony currency. How? Not by spending endless hours scrupulously studying counterfeits, but by knowing what legitimate currency looks like. And so it should be with Christ followers. We need to be wise regarding untruth and the enemy’s ways; we come to know the Truth and thereby God Himself through regular, in-depth Bible study.

Paul warned the Colossians, “[*Do not fall prey to*] *hollow and deceptive philosophy, ... rather, [focus] on Christ*” (Colossians 2:8). Know Jesus, know Truth; no Jesus, no truth. As Lent unfolds, what are you studying in your Bible?

## QUESTIONS

What does Lent commemorate? How was Pontius Pilate a forebearer to contemporary relativists? Which shared example of the devil’s mastery at twisting and misapplying truth do you find most useful?

## PRAYERS

### African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for Brian Mugwidi and the AE Zimbabwe Team as they minister to the people in the capital of Harare. Pray that pastors would be united and that people’s hearts would be open to receiving the Gospel and putting their lives in the hands of Jesus.



# TUESDAY

Read [Colossians 2:9-10](#); [John 10:25-30](#); [Acts 4:12](#)

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As a seeker and even later an immature believer, I sometimes pondered: “Why did Jesus have to die? Couldn’t God just forgive us regardless? And why in such bloody, brutal fashion?” I didn’t appreciate sin’s gravity, how much it is “a stench in the nostrils of God.” (Greg Ogdon) I hadn’t yet grasped Romans 6:23, “*The wages of sin is death.*” Our sin literally kills us, first spiritually if we’re unsundered to Jesus Christ, and then literally—this just in: 100% of all humans die.

Another truth I learned are the differences between true Christianity and other religions or beliefs: salvation (reconciliation with God) cannot be earned; it’s His unmerited gift in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). Religious legalists reject this, but the Bible couldn’t be clearer. Another dividing truth separating true Christianity from cults: Jesus is God incarnate (John 1:14). He had to be human to take our place and our deserved judgment (Romans 6:23) while divine to have both the capacity and purity to atone for us. Thus, “*in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ... He is the Head (Lord) over every power and authority*” (Colossians 2:9-10).

Every human—past, present or future—needs the Savior. And that Savior is God in human flesh. A “religious couple” once came to my door and we had a cordial though contrary discussion regarding Jesus’ deity. One challenged, “The Bible says Jesus prayed to God



at Gethsemane. If Jesus is God, how could He pray to God?"

I responded, "If we could fully grasp this, we wouldn't be considering our transcendent God but something manmade. My God isn't cruel or cowardly—He didn't create a being to take such punishment; He took it Himself."

C.S. Lewis debunked sentimentality regarding Jesus. "The really foolish thing that people often say about [Christ]: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but [not] His claim to be God.' That is [patronizing nonsense]. ... Either this Man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse, ... but [not merely] a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Do you appreciate the gravity of your sin and need for the Savior? Does this fuel grateful joy and willingness to lovingly serve others for God's glory? Whom do you know, apparently ignorant of his/her need for God the Son?

## QUESTIONS

What's the problem with seeing Jesus as "a great moral teacher"?

## PRAYERS

### African Enterprise (AE)

Praise and thanks for the prayers and generosity. As a result, a new maternity wing was just opened at the clinic! This maternity wing will hold twelve women at full capacity and has state-of-the-art beds and a delivery room.



Read **Colossians 2:11-12; Isaiah 43:1-7; Romans 5:8**

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The “gods” of ancient Greco-Roman religions—like those of prominent, contemporary world religions—are fickle, unknowable, and aloof. Not so with the true and living God, who lovingly created us despite having no need of His own. He even joined us in our lost, fallen plight, coming to earth on a mission of salvation and reconciliation as Jesus of Nazareth. The Redeemer came to satisfy God’s righteous wrath toward sin, saving us via His sacrifice while personifying what God is like.

Isaiah 43 beautifully conveys the heart of God toward His own, Yahweh therein declaring, *“I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine. ... I will be with you ... You are precious and honored in my sight ... because I love you”* (vv. 1-4). A divine declaration of love is unknown outside of the God of the Bible. Even King David found God’s love unfathomable: *“What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?”* (Psalms 8:4).

In Colossians 2:11-12, Paul pictures the intimacy God desires with us while touching upon His work in every believer drawn to Christ. Paul references *“circumcision”* (v. 11), a deeply, literally sensitive rite representing dedication to God in denying the flesh as Jesus Himself did. Paul also cites being *“buried with [Christ] in baptism”* (v. 12)—

an illustration of dying to ourselves and sinful ways—and “*raised with Him*” (v. 12)—promising present abundant life and life everlasting in Christ.

A Muslim friend once declared, “I love Jesus (He was a great prophet). And all religions teach essentially the same things.” I countered, “That’s somewhat true regarding morality, but completely untrue regarding salvation. Only Christianity affirms how God Himself sacrificed so that we might be reconciled to Him. Only the God of the Bible declares and demonstrates His love for us.”

God’s salvation is knowable only in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We believe not only **in** Jesus, but **on** Him, fully dependent upon and trusting in His saving sacrifice, resting in His promise of new life. Embrace this: God loves you! Joyfully bask in it. Return it to Him gratefully.

## QUESTIONS

What are a few ways that the Creator God is different from the “gods” of other faiths? How does knowing that God loves you change things for you? How do you address the common challenge that “all religions teach essentially the same things”?

## PRAYERS

### African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for the AE South Africa Board to have wisdom about the way forward in a country that is 80% black and has been rife with corruption. It has just experienced an encouraging breakthrough election where the formerly dominant African National Congress party lost its 30-year-long majority.



Read **Colossians 2:13-14; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6**

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If you asked others, “Do you need forgiveness?” many might answer, “For what?!” Those more self-aware might surface some “minor lapses”—hurtful words said, “shading the truth,” etc.—needing reconciliation. Believers, however, should be inclined toward grasping the gravity of our sinfulness and associated need for a Savior. Paul characterizes fallen humankind’s issue—apart from Christ—as “*dead in your sins*” (Colossians 2:13; under God’s wrath), “*legal indebtedness*,” and “*condemned*” (v. 14).

Everyone needs forgiveness and resultant justification before God. Justification is a legal term: not only deemed “not guilty” but, wondrously, judged “righteous.” It is “an act of God whereby He pronounces a sinner to be righteous because of ... faith in Christ. ... It ... *declares* [them] not guilty [and treated as holy] before God.” (GotQuestions.org)

Paul’s term “legal indebtedness” has rich application to Jesus’ 1st Coming mission. My initial question as a new believer joining my first Bible study was: If Jesus is God, why would He declare from Calvary’s cross, “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*” (Matthew 27:46) I now appreciate that Jesus’ formal appeal reflected the legal transaction between Father and Son happening in that moment. Jesus was then “[*made*] *sin for us*” (2 Corinthians 5:21), thus “*at noon, darkness came over the whole land until three [PM]*”



(Mark 15:33) as the fullness of the Father's judgement for humankind's sins fell upon Christ. Jesus' final declaration from the cross confirmed full resolution: "*It is finished!*" (John 19:30)—legally translating to "bail posted" or "case closed."

Legalists, including those outside of Christianity, bank upon a legal basis—personal merit—for their justification. They misunderstand, however, the impossibility of this given God's holy standard of perfection. Sadly, they disregard that Jesus already handled the legalities, "*nauling [the sin debt we owe] to the cross*" (Colossians 2:14). You can choose a legalistic position with God, but it won't end well for you.

Don't settle for a legal relationship with God. When standing alone before Yahweh one day facing judgment (Revelation 20:11-15), don't be "the defendant with a fool for a lawyer." Jesus already settled this case favorably—let Him be your Intercessor.

## QUESTIONS

What does "justification" mean in a Christian context? What aspects of Christian justification stir you most? If Jesus is God, why did He have to declare from Calvary's cross, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Matthew 27:46)

## PRAYERS

### African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for AE's Gospel outreach in North Africa via local partners there. Pray that people who have grown up as Muslims would be eager to hear of Christ's love for them and about the grace and forgiveness that He offers them. Pray that these former Muslims would be safe once they become Christians.



Read **Colossians 2:15; John 8:1-11; Mark 12:13-17**

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Jesus was masterful at “turning the tables” on adversaries. He did this twice, literally, regarding the temple’s deceitful merchants—exploiting gathered, worshipful Jews and God-fearing Gentiles—both at His ministry’s beginning (John 2:14-16) and just days before His crucifixion (Mark 11:15-17).

One example of Jesus’ outmaneuvering enemies was with the “woman ... caught in ... adultery” (John 8:1-11). Jewish officials aimed to entrap the Lord in a no-win situation. Under Jewish law, this woman’s offense required stoning. Roman rule, however, prohibited Israel from executing capital punishment. If condoning her behavior, Jesus supported Law-breaking. If backing her execution, He’d appear both harsh and compliant with violating Roman law. Jesus’ actions dispersed her condemners, closing the case—Jewish jurisprudence compelled two or more eyewitnesses; when the accusers left, no other witnesses remained. The Messiah left her with a grace-filled admonition: “Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin” (v. 11).

In another entrapment attempt, officials asked Jesus if Israelites should pay Roman taxes (Mark 12:13-17). If He flatly said “Yes,” they’d label Him a turncoat Roman sympathizer; if “No,” He’d be condoning Roman lawbreaking. The Son took a Roman coin, asking, “Whose image is [on] this?” They replied, “Caesar’s.” He said to them,

*“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s”* (vv. 16-17). Paraphrase: “Coins bear Caesar’s image, so pay your rightful taxes; you, however, are made in God’s image—give yourself to Him.”

If you saw “The Passion of the Christ,” you’ll recall the brilliant scene at the crucifixion’s climax upon Jesus’ death. The Satan character looming peripherally suddenly cast eyes heavenward in shocked dismay, just then realizing that his supposed victory was an utter defeat. Paul beautifully captures this: *“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross”* (Colossians 2:15).

Psalms 2:1-2 asks: *“Why do [people] conspire and ... plot ... against [Yahweh] and against His Anointed?”* Jesus Himself admonished the yet-unconverted Saul of Tarsus (nee Paul), *“It is hard for you to kick against the goads (battle Me)”* (Acts 24:16). Indeed—anyone opposing God is fighting infinitely out of their weight class!

## QUESTIONS

Which of the examples of Jesus’ “turning the tables” on adversaries do you find most compelling? What did Jesus mean when declaring, *“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s”* (Mark 12:16-17)? Whom do you know apparently “fighting out of their weight class” against God?

## PRAYERS

### African Enterprise (AE)

Pray for AE’s South Sudan Team Leader, Alex Billal, and for AE’s mission to the capital of Juba. Pray that peace would remain in this war-torn country and that AE’s Team would be able to bring the Gospel and the healing that comes with it to people who have been traumatized.



## Sources

- John Lennon's lyrics are from the song he co-wrote with Paul McCartney, the Beatles, "I Am the Walrus," distributed in the US by Capital Records, November 1967.
- Greg Ogden's quote is from his study guide, *Discipleship Essentials* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007).
- C.S. Lewis' quote is from his book, *Mere Christianity* (UK: Geoffrey Bles, Publisher; US: Macmillan Publishers and HarperCollins Publishers, 1952).
- GotQuestions.org's quote can be found at <https://www.gotquestions.org/justification.html>.

*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 Wallance 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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