

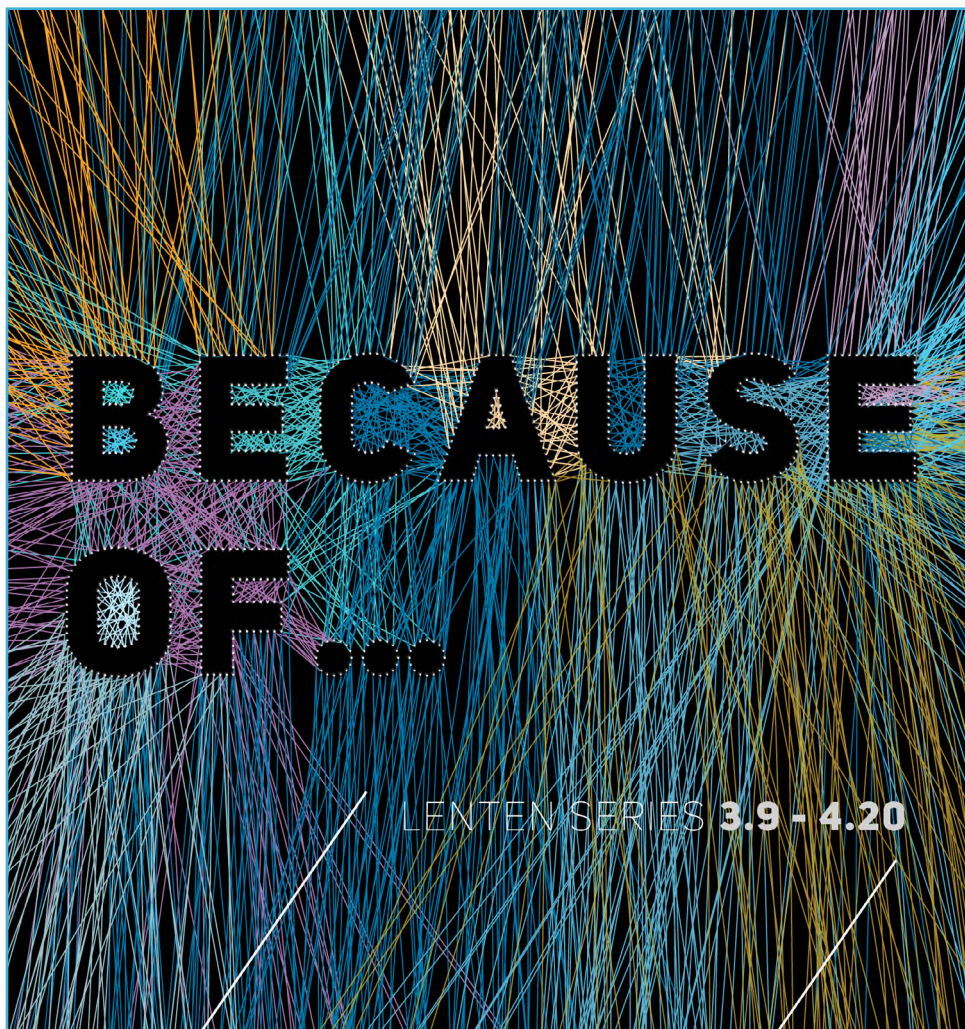
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

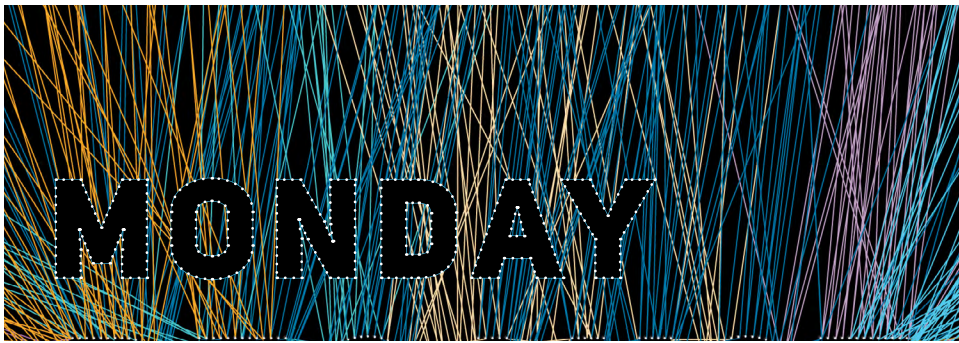
DEVO

MARCH 17 - 21, 2025



**BECAUSE
OF ...**

LENTEN SERIES **3.9 - 4.20**



Read [Philippians 2:5-10](#); [Romans 12:1-2](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:22-24](#)

As we continue in the “Because of ...” teaching series, this week’s emphasis is “Because of His Faithfulness.” In Philippians 2:5, Paul starts with an unusual, seemingly unreachable challenge: “... *have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.*” The tallness of that order aside, how is this possible and what does it mean practically?

Last month Pastor Gary rightly characterized the Gospel according to Mark as a fast-paced record penned with action-oriented Romans in mind. Luke’s Gospel, alternatively, presents Jesus as the perfect Man (“*the Son of Man,*” Luke 12:8), its audience principally Greeks obsessed with philosophy and humankind’s perfecting. Paul’s “*the mindset [of] Christ Jesus*” harmonizes acutely with Luke’s emphasis.

It’s interesting to consider contemporary culture’s default to evolution as explaining how humankind came to be. In a macro-evolutionary context (species spawning new, discrete, and more advanced species), humans are essentially “privileged animals.” This theory’s appeal may be due partly to the sinner’s related excuses for animal-like behavior: “I was just doing what comes naturally.” Unfortunately, “naturally” does not equal “good,” particularly given our fallenness. Evolutionary Darwinism ultimately inclines people toward a “survival of the fittest” orientation and objectification of others—clearly not the ways of Christ.

We were created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26-27), the pinnacle of Creation. Jesus is our Template, the perfect Person we were created to emulate. Elsewhere Paul urges believers to “[renew] your mind” (Romans 12:2), suggesting a pathway toward “*the same mindset as Christ Jesus.*” On our own this is impossible. But God faithfully enables this via the sanctification (progressive molding into increasing Christlikeness) of the Spirit. Our role is to surrender cooperatively to the Spirit’s associated work, enabling us to become increasingly “holy”—an ideal goal not fully realizable until Christ’s return.

The closer to God we are, the more truly human we become. Sin and its corruption distort God’s imagery in us, prompting “inhuman” attitudes and behavior. But, good news: in Christ we are redeemed and restored. The US Marines’ slogan is “Semper Fi,” meaning “Always Faithful.” Recruits are challenged to “Be all that you can be.” God alone, however, can ultimately, faithfully deliver on such promises.

QUESTIONS

How is Luke’s Gospel different in emphasis than Mark’s? What are some of the appealing aspects of the evolutionary theory to unbelievers? What does “the closer to God we are, the more truly human we become” mean to you?

PRAYERS

[Southeast Asia](#)

Pray for Jazlyn, who is heading to Southern Asia, as she prepares to go overseas. Pray for financial provision and continual guidance from the Lord during her itineration.



Read [Philippians 2:6-7](#); [Jeremiah 9:23-24](#), [29:12-13](#)

Our men's group recently commenced a study that considered the Trinity—God's oneness in deity and triunity as co-equal, co-eternal Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Anyone claiming to fully comprehend the Trinity is either delusional, dishonest, and/or considering an idol far beneath Yahweh's infinite majesty and glory. Regardless, James 4:8 indicates that God welcomes sincere efforts to draw near to Him.

The Godhead's second Person, "the Word" (John 1:1), came down from eternity into a human form to save us and demonstrate how to serve. Jesus laid aside His advantages as God (e.g., omnipresence, omniscience, almightiness, heavenly glory)—Self-limiting—to operate fully within human constraints. All that the Savior did while among us He did as a Man—but a Man enabled by the Father and Holy Spirit. Jesus is fully God ("the Son of God," 1 John 4:15) while fully Man ("the Son of Man," Matthew 8:20).

In taking on His voluntary mission, the Lord *"did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself ... a Servant ... in human likeness"* (Philippians 2:6-7). Jesus did not give up His divinity or become "less God" to make room for His humanity. Rather, He added the fullness of humanity to the fullness of His deity becoming, in temporal terms, "200%"—impossible naturally and per our limited human reasoning. This is

another reminder that *"with God all things are possible"* (Matthew 19:26).

There are two extreme corruptions of Jesus' "hypostatic union" (being incarnate, fully God while fully Man). Docetism maintained that Jesus was divine only—His physical body illusionary—and that He did not truly suffer or die on the cross. Arianism, underpinning the beliefs of contemporary cults, holds that Jesus was merely human, a created being rather than God incarnate.

Our God is of one divine nature or essence—and one will—while three Persons. Jesus was one Person with two natures (divine and human), each with its own will. The Savior subordinated His human will to God's—and we are to do the same, our limitations notwithstanding. Humbly, prayerfully ask for God's help here—He delights in our seeking Him.

QUESTIONS

Does understanding that all Jesus did He did within human limitations inspire or convict you? What is the "hypostatic union"? How could Jesus be fully God while fully Man at the same time?

PRAYERS

Southeast Asia

Pray for the over 1.3 billion people in India who don't know Jesus as Savior yet. Pray that God will reveal more of His gracious love to them and open their hearts to hear the Gospel.



Read **Philippians 2:7-8; John 13:1-16; 1 John 3:16-18**

American parents have historically exhorted youngsters to “make something of yourself” or “pull yourself up by your bootstraps.” Our culture lauds “the self-made person” overcoming extreme odds to succeed. Yet Paul wrote of Jesus’ 1st Coming mission: “*He made Himself nothing, ... [becoming] a Servant ... [and] humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death*” (Philippians 2:7-8). Clearly the Way of Christ is countercultural in the contemporary US!

Hebrews 5:8 states that Jesus “*learned obedience from what He suffered.*” Wouldn’t omniscient God “know obedience”? Being the universe’s only true Sovereign, God alone is answerable to no other. Creation wasn’t an act of obedience, but shared this with nobly obedient acts: it was Selfless and loving. Having no need of His own, our perfect God created us knowing that we would rebel, our sinfulness and rejection hurting Him immensely (Psalm 78:10).

Did Jesus of Nazareth have to progressively “learn obedience” to develop the “obedience muscles” necessary for facing Calvary’s cross? “Learning and suffering and death are part of the life experience for all people, and God ensured that His own Son would be no exception. ... At His incarnation, Jesus limited Himself to the human experience. He chose the weak position of having to learn and grow (Luke 2:52).” (GotQuestions.org)

Sequential examples of Jesus expressing obedience preceding His crucifixion include: baptism by John “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:13-17); temptation in the wilderness, resisting Satan (Matthew 4:1-11); washing the disciples’ feet (John 13:1-16); and praying in Gethsemane, submitting to God’s will despite its accompanying, immense suffering (Matthew 26:36-42).

Jesus’ “learning obedience” parallels the progressive surrendering—“*[denying] yourself*” (Luke 9:23) while “*[offering] your bodies as a living sacrifice*” (Romans 12:1)—fundamental to Christians’ cooperating with the Spirit’s sanctification. It’s beyond countercultural, actually absurd to American unbelievers. “[As Jesus’] disciples ... [we are] to be different [than surrounding culture, preoccupied with stature and self-esteem]. ... In God’s kingdom, the way up is actually down. Honor is found in giving it, not in receiving it. Greatness is displayed in serving, not in being served.” (Alistair Begg) Father, help me be more surrendered, so that I might know victory in the Victor!

QUESTIONS

What are some ways contemporary American culture is at odds with the Way of Christ? Why would Jesus need to “*[learn] obedience from what He suffered*” (Hebrews 5:8)? Where do you need to learn more obedience to God and His ways?

PRAYERS

Southeast Asia

Pray that the believers in India are encouraged and continue to share the Good News with those who have yet to hear it. Pray that they grow spiritually and remain bold in their faith.



Read **Philippians 2:9; John 3:13-15, 12:31-33**

Because of Jesus' faithful submission to God's will, He was "exalted ... and [given] a name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9, emphasis added). "Exalted" is defined as "raised or elevated, as in rank or character" or "rapturously excited." (WordReference.com)

The Apostle John twice quotes Jesus using "*lifted up*" to characterize what Paul terms "exalted" in Philippians: "Just as Moses *lifted up* the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be *lifted up*, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him" (John 3:14-15, emphasis added) and "I, when I am *lifted up* from the earth, will draw all people to Myself" (John 12:32, emphases added). I see three interrelated dynamics—spiritual, temporal and emotional/relational—evidenced here.

First, consider the crucifixion's emotional/relational aspects. Remember, "exalted" can mean "rapturously excited." Though Jesus expressed sincere, painful grief at His treatment as a Man and emotional/relational anguish in His once-and-only-throughout-eternity separation from the Father while bearing humankind's sins—two of the reasons underlying His appeal, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46)—Hebrews states "For the joy set before Him [Jesus] endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus went to the cross gladly, obediently, lovingly—it was the only means whereby He could call His Bride while satisfying God's holiness.

Spiritually and temporally, consider "*lifted up*." Jesus hung on a cross, suspended between heaven and earth both physically and supernaturally. That very "lifting" enabled His exaltation and rightful claim as our returning "*King of kings and Lord of lords*" (Revelation 19:16). Jesus is not only our Intercessor and Substitute, but also the Integrator of the eternal with temporal, of heaven with earth. When hanging above earth and beneath heaven at the crucifixion, Jesus gloriously represented His 1st Coming mission and purpose: God's redemptive plan for humankind.

"Moses *lifted up* the snake in the wilderness"—snakes represent sin biblically, and Jesus was "*made ... sin for us*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). By that very lifting, "*everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him*" and Jesus "*will draw all people to [Him]self*." What a good, faithful God and Savior!

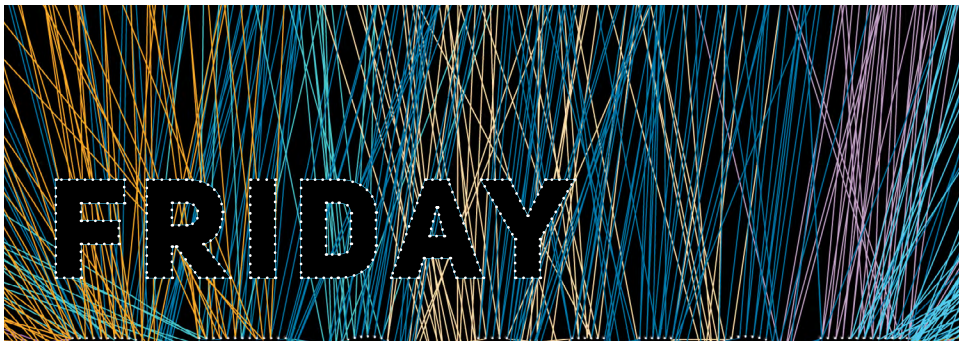
QUESTIONS

How are "exalted" and "lifted up" sometimes used with double meanings in the Bible? What are some reasons Jesus appealed from the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46)? How is Jesus "the Integrator of the eternal with temporal, of heaven with earth"?

PRAYERS

Southeast Asia

Pray for the teams in India that the Lord will protect them, that they will see spiritual breakthroughs with many locals, and that the Lord will guide them as persecution increases toward them.



Read [Philippians 2:10](#); [Isaiah 45:22-24](#); [Revelation 20:11-15](#)

Pop culture is drenched in sentimentality regarding heaven. Its music features Bob Dylans' "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" among other heaven-based tunes. TV's *The Good Place* and cinema's *Heaven Can Wait* offer familiar sentiments. But the Bible gives few glimpses into heaven's dynamics. However, we do know this regarding eternity: "... at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow" (Philippians 2:10).

"Universalists" might interpret Paul's statement to suggest that all are heaven-bound, that "All Dogs Go to Heaven." Even some professing Christians hold that, following God's judging unbelievers in the afterlife, they can still follow Christ. Their hyper-focus: "God is love" (1 John 4:8) and "the Lord is ... [unwilling that any should] perish, but [that] everyone ... come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Some people reason that "God would never damn a good, sincere Jew, Muslim, or ..." They overlook that we are not saved by our sincerity—it's perilous to have faith in having faith. It is the object of our faith that saves ... or not. Jesus declared, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Elsewhere He warned, "For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

When commissioned to his prophetic ministry, Ezekiel was told to "eat this scroll" ... and it tasted as sweet as honey in [his] mouth" (Ezekiel 3:3). There is sweetness in God's Way of salvation: God lovingly paid the ultimate price to reconcile with us. When told similarly to eat a scroll in Revelation 10:10, the Apostle John shares: "It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but ... [in] my stomach turned sour." The Gospel is "sweet" in God's salvation but "sour" regarding its rejecters.

Whom do you know whose unbelief sours you? Faithfully share Christ with them. Help them know the God who sweetly beckons, "Turn to Me and be saved, ... for I am God, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:22).

QUESTIONS

What makes "Universalism" appealing among so many? What is Universalism's biggest issue? How is the Gospel both "sweet" and "sour" concurrently?

PRAYERS

Southeast Asia

Pray for more people to be willing to go and serve overseas to share the Gospel with those who haven't heard. Pray that people say "yes" to the call to go into all nations and share the love of Jesus.

Sources



- GotQuestions.org's quote can be found at <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-learned-obedience.html>.
- Alistair Begg's quote is from his book, *Truth for Life, 365 Daily Devotionals* (Charlotte, NC: The Good Book Company, 2021).
- WordReference.com's definitions can be found at <https://www.wordreference.com/definition/exalted>.

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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