

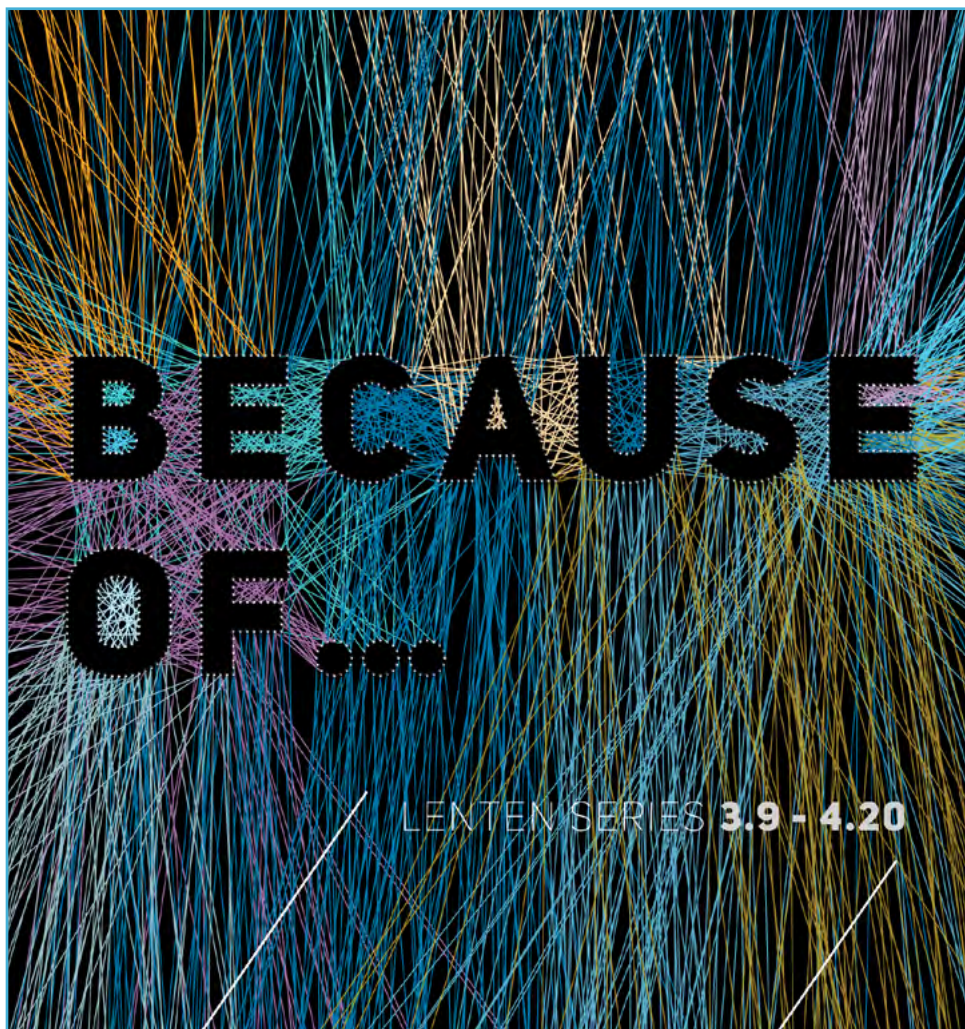
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

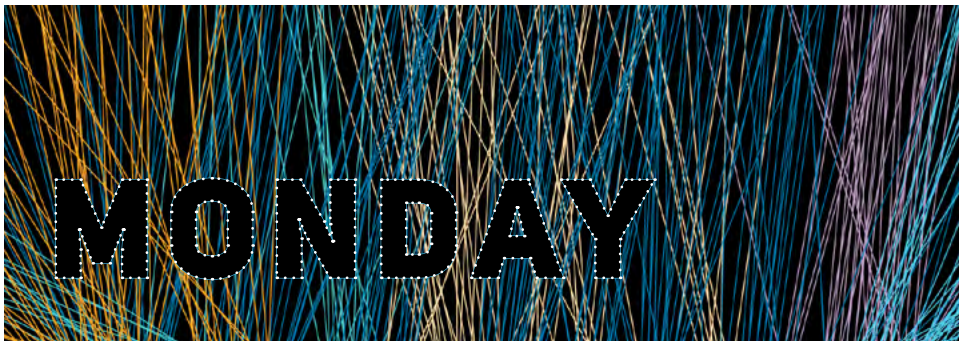
DEVO

MARCH 24 - 28, 2025



**BECAUSE
OF ...**

LENTEN SERIES **3.9 - 4.20**



Read [Mark 10:17-18](#); [Luke 9:23-25](#); [Matthew 26:39](#)

Trusting God. Because God is good, we can trust Him.

Jesus loves people. There's something about Jesus that inspires confidence. The early disciples didn't know everything about Jesus—even though they lived with Him for 3+ years—but they knew enough to love and believe in Him.

Jesus replied to the man who thought himself righteous, wishing to know what else he needed to inherit eternal life, *“Only God is good”* (Mark 10:18). Jesus was reminding this man of God's holy standard for perfection, but may also have been testing to see if he recognized His deity. Jesus and the Father are One. So Jesus is good, too. Jesus taught that in losing one's life, one gains it. In seeking to gain one's life, one loses it. *“For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world but lose his own soul?”* (Luke 9:24-25).

Does Jesus model this teaching for us? He did and He does. Though He appealed to His Father for another way, Jesus voluntarily embraced His Father's will to experience the most painful, humiliating death possible—crucifixion—both to satisfy God's righteousness while standing in for us. God the Father and God the Son turned their one-of-a-kind relationship inside out for us between noon and 3pm at Calvary. Jesus believed in His Father's goodness and power

to accomplish His purposes, for His own holiness' as well as our sakes, so that the Kingdom of God would include all who trust in Christ.

We have all had to trust God in our lives. Changes bring about the need for such trust—changes like becoming a summer counselor at a camp. Or like going away to school. Joining the military. Getting married. Signing up for a mission trip. Going to a new church. Losing loved ones.

Other challenges include wayward children, illness, and aging parents. This list goes on. But no matter the difficulties, we can trust God completely. *“The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know Your name trust in You, for You, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek You”* (Psalm 9:9-10).

QUESTIONS

When have you had to trust God? Where do you wish you could trust God even more? What are you having to trust God for at the present time?

PRAYERS

[Ethnos Asia](#)

Ethnos Asia's vision is to serve churches in the restricted-access countries of South and Southeast Asia. Christians in these countries are seriously restricted by governmental policies and persecuted by anti-Christian radicals. Pray that the Ethnos Asia leaders will have God's wisdom to serve the churches under these severe conditions.



Read **Philippians 4:8**

Thank God. Because God is good, He gives us good things to be thankful for. *“Every good and perfect gift is ... from the Father of the heavenly lights”* (James 1:17).

Paul wrote, *“... whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, ... think on these things”* (Philippians 4:8). I grant you that I have been fortunate and blessed. Growing up, I had a very good mother and father and family. My experiences in life included camping trips, base camps in the High Sierras, travels in California, other states and nations, marriage, children, and churches (including great pastors, teachers, and youth leaders). Trials even bring “God’s way of escape” (1 Corinthians 10:13), especially if we ask for it.

When I think of things to be thankful for, I think of friends and beautiful scenery, like snow-capped mountain vistas with lakes and forests, seashores and sunsets. But honestly, the most centering thing in my life is Jesus. His love and faithfulness are always there.

Growing up in church, I heard a story about a retiring lady missionary being asked a question: “What was the most important thing you learned in your years as a missionary to China?” She replied, “To be thankful **in** (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and **for** (Ephesians 5:20) everything.” Her own daughter’s firstborn was born a “water baby,” his head

swollen to twice its normal size at birth. At first, the daughter said she struggled to be thankful for that. But later she surrendered to the idea, thanking God for her child’s condition, while still praying for his healing and normalcy. Weeks later, the swelling came down, and the baby’s head became a normal size.

Thanking God in and for everything does not always result in such an outcome, but it is both good and right for us to embrace the Bible’s admonition to *“give thanks in all circumstances”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Missionaries forced to leave China would be hard-pressed to thank God for the challenges prompting that, but the Church in China has grown even in the absence of those foreign missionaries. Of course, missionaries, successful Bible smugglers, supporters of such efforts, and prayer had something to do with the result, but the reliance of Chinese Christians on God alone has done wonders.

QUESTIONS

What are you thankful for in your life? Where should you be more thankful to God? What mission projects are you praying for and supporting?

PRAYERS

Ethnos Asia

Pakistan. A month ago, Ethnos Asia conducted a series of leadership training and development and prayer-mobilization meetings across Pakistan. Pray for the attendees as they go back to their churches that they may be effective in equipping and strengthening their people. Pray that they will be fruitful trainers of disciple-makers.



Read Jeremiah 38

God's promises. Because God is good, He doesn't lie and His promises in the Bible are true; we can rely on them because of God's goodness along with His almightiness, sovereignty and all-knowingness. For example, "*You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart*" (Jeremiah 29:13). God promises that anyone sincerely seeking Him will find Him, that they will be led to saving faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

When have you sought the Lord with all your heart? Probably when you were desperate. After asking Jesus to invite him to join Him as He walked on the Sea of Galilee toward the disciples' boat, Peter began sinking upon taking his eyes off of Christ. This prompted the Bible's shortest prayer: "*Lord, save me!*" (Matthew 14:30). My most desperate prayers came in my most desperate situations. These prayers led to quick or eventual encounters with God. The worst moments turned into the best moments. The worst seasons turned into the best seasons. The Bible is full of examples:

Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern for prophesying the truth. Ebed-Melek, the Cushite rescued him (Jeremiah 38).

Joseph was thrown into a pit to die, but his older brother Reuben convinced his other brothers to sell him into slavery in Egypt,

where God was with him in slavery and prison. Eventually, Joseph was elevated to a high position in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. God used Joseph's high position to save his family amidst a severe regional famine. Later, Joseph expressed his forgiveness toward the brothers who had betrayed him, declaring, "*... you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good*" (Genesis 50:20).

Daniel was thrown into a pit with hungry lions. King Darius prayed for Daniel's safety and the lions didn't harm him, though later they ravaged his treacherous enemies (Daniel 6:16-24). God can turn the worst of our times into the best and most memorable of times.

One of my favorite promises is part command and part promise. This verse carried me through all four years of letting the U.S. Air Force tell me what to do. Joshua 1:9 says, "*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, ... for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*"

QUESTIONS

When have you prayed in desperation and found God to be faithful? Where would you like Him to grant you an extra measure of faith?

PRAYERS

Ethnos Asia

Bangladesh. A regional prayer conference was held in Bangladesh last month. By His grace, the regional prayer conference brought together about one hundred people representing seven denominations, and we witnessed healing and revival. Pray that unity among different denominations continues to grow.



Read [Exodus 34:6](#); [Jeremiah 9:24](#); [John 1:18](#)

God's character. Because God is good, He reveals His character to be good. God's goodness would be of no effect if He kept it to Himself. But He does not—He created us to be recipients of His goodness and love. Jesus is the ultimate revealer of God's goodness, *"the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being"* (Hebrews 1:3). Everything we want to know about God can be seen in the life of ministry of God's Son, Jesus of Nazareth.

It started in the Old Testament, God first calling Abraham to *"Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you"* (Genesis 12:1). About 500 years later God revealed Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, *"The LORD (Yahweh), the LORD God, is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion and faithfulness"* (Exodus 34:6).

God revealed Himself to Jeremiah before Judah's exile to Babylon, declaring, *"Let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight. I declare the LORD"* (Jeremiah 9:24).

In the New Testament, the Apostle John wrote: *"No one has seen God, but the one and only Son, who is Himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made Him known"* (John 1:18).

Jesus tells His apprentices that if we follow Him, He will teach us how to "catch" (draw) men and women into the Kingdom of God by being a conduit of God's love and a revealer of God's goodness ourselves (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17). We do this by faithfully adhering to *"the law of Christ"*: to love God and love others in the name and power of Jesus Christ.

Written stories give lessons for our unwritten stories. Prayer to God is always available. Prayer is especially appropriate in bad situations. Good choices are often tested by difficult circumstances. Nobody loves troubles. However, challenges put us on our knees, calling upon the God who loves us and wants good things for us.

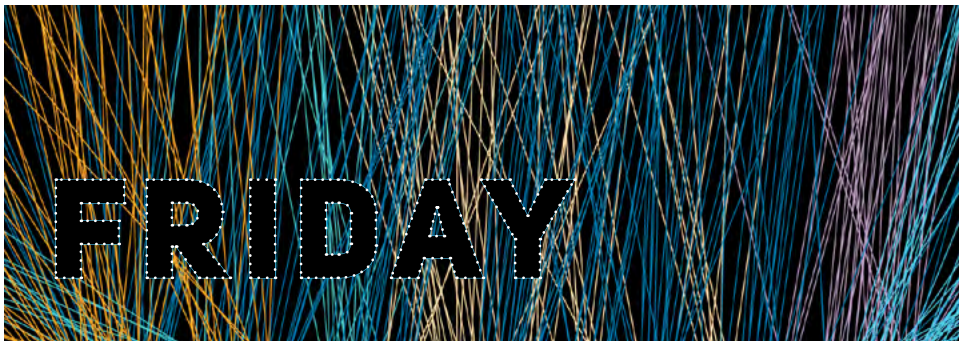
QUESTIONS

How did you encounter Jesus and God's love? As you follow Jesus, has He taught you how to "catch" men or women in God's net of love? How can you know whether they have learned how to do the same, to follow the God who loves and made the ultimate sacrifice for them?

PRAYERS

[Ethnos Asia](#)

Thailand. Karen tribal Christians who were persecuted in Myanmar have fled to refugee camps in Thailand. Recently, Ethnos Asia conducted discipleship training for "Karen Teens for Christ." Sixty-eight young people attended who responded well to the training. Pray that they continue to grow in Christ and shine as lights for Him.



Read [John 15:1-16](#)

God's children. Because God is good, He produces good children.

You've heard the saying, "Like father; like son." Or, "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." A similar saying in Spanish: "De tal palo, tal astilla," meaning "From such a stick, such a splinter."

Because God is good, the way He works is to raise His children properly, those graced enough to be "born again" (John 3:7). How does this happen? Jesus' late-night visitor, the Pharisee and Sanhedrin member, Nicodemus, wanted to know (John 3:1ff). According to 2 Corinthians 3:18 it happens by the Holy Spirit "from glory to glory." And a few chapters later, the Apostle Paul writes that it happens as a result of Jesus' saving us from sin, enabling us to be "clothed in His righteousness" (Romans 13:14). "All things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17), because we are now "in Christ Jesus."

John Ortberg's latest book *Steps* helps explain how God works to accomplish His outcomes in our lives. Ortberg calls us "the fellowship of the withered hand." In other words, "people who have one weakness or many." Everyone qualifies. All desperately need the Savior's redemption. The most kind, selfless, pious person and the most wretched, depraved, lost sinner possible have this in common: neither can be reconciled with God apart from Christ. Yet in the

Savior not only are their sins forgiven, but they are welcomed enthusiastically into God's eternal family with the same standing and as the Son of God Himself!

This chapter in *Steps* reminds me of the wisdom of Jesus' half-brother James when he quotes Proverbs 3:34 and adds something extra: "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:6-7). The one who is deluded into feeling self-sufficient is perilously deceived. Such a person will stand before the Creator and Judge of all laid bare before the all-knowing and holy God, nothing hidden and no hope apart from Christ.

Jesus' disciple John tells us in his first letter that "we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1). That is our reality when we believe in Jesus. Amazingly, Jesus died for us "while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8).

QUESTIONS

We daily pray to God for His Kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). What do you think God's Kingdom coming to earth would look like?

PRAYERS

[Ethnos Asia](#)

Nepal. Recently, the Tibetan Evangelical Alliance Convention was held in Nepal. Fifty-five church leaders attended. The convention focused on leadership, church discipline, identity in Christ, and community life. Pray for attendees' renewed commitment to discipleship and unity; pray that unreached people groups will be reached. Finally, pray that God's Kingdom will be expanded in Nepal and beyond.

Sources



- John Ortberg, *Steps: A Guide to Transforming Your Life When Willpower Isn't Enough* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2025).

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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