



First Things First

Daily Devotionals

Devotional Guide for April 22-28, 2024

These devotions are prepared for you each week by Pastor Kevin to use for your own personal devotions with the Lord, and are designed to prepare you for the message next weekend.

Monday, April 22ND “That Your ways may be known on earth”

Scripture: Psalm 67:1-7 NIV

No other psalm captures more clearly and simply the grand vision that God is the God of all people and nations, that He wants all of them to embrace Him, and He wants His own people to reflect that blessing to the nations. The psalm is rooted in God’s promise to Abraham that He would bless him and his descendants, so that they would be a blessing to others. The people are asking God to shine among them, radiating His light and truth outward as a testimony to the nations, precisely so that His ways and His salvation “may be known on earth” everywhere (v.2). God wants to be known!

Question: How can you make the ways of God known to others?

Tuesday, April 23RD “Known, yet regarded as unknown”

Scripture: II Corinthians 6:1-14 NIV

The apostle Paul longed, more than anything, to make Jesus Christ known to all the world. He faced persecution from his own people as he converted from Judaism to follow Christ. He lists his hardships here, to provide the Corinthians with material to defend him and to validate his credentials as an ambassador of Christ; also as a suffering servant, therefore a true apostle. Paul connects his message and his ministry, which is a full-color display of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. People see resurrection power, when Paul endures in the midst of affliction. Paul longs to make God known!

Question: As you consider the hardships Paul had to face, which of them stand out to you as something that may occur with Christians today?

Wednesday, April 24TH “Rooted and built up in Christ”

Scripture: Colossians 2:6-10 NIV

Paul encountered opposition to the Christian faith from non-believing, worldly philosophers. Here, he encourages the Colossians to be “strengthened in the faith as you were taught” (v.7) in order to serve as faithful witnesses to the hope and love of Jesus Christ. Paul does not dismiss the importance of critical thinking and also of sound learning in the modern discipline of philosophy; what makes worldly

philosophy worthless is that it derives from human speculation, in this present evil age, and it does not recognize nor seek Godly wisdom. All Christ-less teaching, no matter how high-sounding, is hollow at its core. As worldly philosophy seeks to diminish the truth of God, it offers nothing as a sufficient substitute; indeed, there is none. Paul still seeks to make God known to anyone and everyone!

Question: Have you had to defend your faith and beliefs to those who scoff at or disbelieve in God?

Thursday, April 25TH “They escorted Paul to Berea then Athens”

Scripture: Acts 17:10-15 NIV

Wherever the apostle Paul found himself—whether traveling there intentionally or accidentally—he would witness to his faith in Jesus. The believers sent Paul and Silas by night to Berea. The Bereans had become famous because, unlike the Jews of Thessalonica who used disreputable men to start a riot, they “received the message with great eagerness, and examined the Scriptures every day, to see if what Paul said was true” (v.11). Some believers today use this example, to encourage fellow believers to read their Bibles in this manner. Next, for his safety, the believers took Paul to the city of Athens.

Question: Where was the most unusual place you ever shared your faith?

Friday, April 26TH “I even found an altar to an ‘unknown god’”

Scripture: Acts 17:16-32 NIV

As Paul found himself in Athens—the center of Greek philosophy—he noticed statues of false idols. He began conversations “with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks” and was overheard by non-believers. Some philosophers began to debate Paul, intrigued by his teaching of a foreign god. I love how Luke wrote about this scene, because it rings true to our time as well: “All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas” (v.21). As he speaks with these non-believers, he does not lead off with a resounding denunciation of idolatry. Instead, he mentions the people’s altar to the unknown god, then takes this teaching moment to share with them who the unknown God is. In this way, Paul intrigued many of them to learn more about this ‘known God’ whose reality Paul exemplified.

Question: How can you make known to people what may be unknown?

Sunday, April 28, 2024

8:30 and 10:45 am (Livestream @10:45 am)

Colossians 2:6-10 NIV and **Acts 17:16-32** NIV

Pastor’s message: **“Making the Unknown Known!
(the Apostle Paul in Athens)”**

Worship theme: “Altar’d People”

