



Devotional Guide for January 4-10, 2021

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, Jan. 4TH "The heavens declare the glory of God"

Scripture: Psalm 19:1-14 NIV

This psalm praises the Lord for His two great gifts to humanity: creation and the law. To use modern terminology, the psalm speaks of God's general revelation in nature and His special revelation in Scripture. God is revealed in His creation, but people resist what they see. The law--God's special revelation--reflects His character. Different names are used here for the law, synonyms that point to the whole of God's special revelation to humanity.

Question: How do you see God when you admire His creation?

Tuesday, Jan. 5TH "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

Scripture: John 1:43-49 NIV

As Jesus called His first disciples, two of the first disciples (Andrew in John 1:40-42, and Philip in this passage) go and tell their brothers. Philip identifies Jesus to his brother, Nathanael, as the one "whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (v.45). Nazareth was an insignificant village at that time, and is also never mentioned in the Old Testament or any other Jewish literature of that era. Nathanael expressed his skepticism that a prophet could arise from Galilee, let alone a place like Nazareth. He was wrong!

Question: What do people say about your hometown?

Wednesday, Jan. 6TH "Jesus returned to Galilee"

Scripture: Luke 4:14-15 NIV

Jesus had performed quite an extensive ministry, before going back to His hometown of Nazareth. He had become quite popular, all throughout that region. He explains what His messianic role means in the times in which they live. Strong opposition will rise up against Jesus and His followers, and He will be rejected as Messiah. In the midst of such opposition, Jesus begins to instruct the disciples that they must love differently than sinners do, for they must love their enemies. God's love was the chief focus of Christ's teachings.

Question: What are you known for in your hometown?

Thursday, Jan. 7TH

"Isn't this Joseph's son?"

Scripture: Luke 4:16-22 NIV

In the synagogue, at the time of Jesus, it was customary to stand for the reading of Scripture, as a mark of respect for God's Word and to sit for the sermon. The reading chosen shows a strong concern for the poor, something dear to the heart of the Messiah. By presenting the rejection at Nazareth at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, here Luke highlights certain main characteristics of that ministry: the response of wonder at His teachings coupled with persistent unbelief and rejection, His ministry as the fulfillment of Scripture, His concern for the poor and oppressed, and His ultimate aim of including Gentiles among the people of God. The people's amazement in v.22 stems not so much from what Jesus said about the passage, but more about who He was to them. They knew Him as the son of Joseph, and the gossiping buzz around Nazareth was the alleged illegitimate birth of Jesus to an unwed couple named Joseph and Mary.

Question: How have you changed from your past?

Friday, Jan. 8TH "No prophet is accepted in his hometown"

Scripture: Luke 4:23-30 NIV

Jesus spoke from Isaiah 61 about His anointing. Even as the people at the synagogue in His hometown didn't like what He had to say (4:28, 29), He moved on to the next town to continue His work. He would not let anything drain His anointing or distract Him from His mission. Although Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He was brought up in Nazareth in Galilee. Jesus' reference where God helped two non-Israelites reflects Luke's special concern for the Gentiles. Jesus' point was that when Israel was in rebellion and rejected God's messengers of redemption (Elijah and Elisha), God caused non-Israelites to receive the covenant blessings that were properly Israel's. This is what aroused the anger of the crowd. When we read that Jesus "walked right through the crowd" (v.30), Luke does not explain whether the escape was miraculous or simply the result of Jesus' commanding presence. In any case, Jesus' time to die had not yet come. He had more work to do for His Heavenly Father.

Question: What from your past still has a grip on your life in the present?

Sunday, January 10TH

Worship @8:30 and 10:45 am/Sanctuary

Online @10:45 am via Livestream

Psalm 19:1-14 NIV. Luke 4:14-30 NIV

Pastor's message: "Hometown Blues"

Worship theme: Skeletons in the Closet—

Don't let your past get in the way of your future!

