



## Devotional Guide for April 12-18, 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, April 12<sup>TH</sup>**

**“Test me in this and see”**

**Scripture: Malachi 3:1-12** NIV

The prophet Malachi tells of a time that a messenger prepares the way of the Lord to come to the Temple for worship. Malachi cries out to God’s people, “But who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears?” (v.2) This describes the second coming of Christ to the world, to bring about the fulfillment of His Kingdom. The prophet speaks and then shares God’s own words, regarding the way the Israelites have been living spiritually: “Return to Me, and I will return to you” (v.7). God speaks of His people ‘robbing’ Him of His tithes and gifts, and then He issues a challenge: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse... test Me in this, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it” (v.10). This is the promised covenant blessing from the Lord.

*Question: What motivates you to give God’s tithe and your offerings?*

**Tuesday, April 13<sup>TH</sup>**

**“And who is my neighbor?”**

**Scripture: Luke 10:25-37** NIV

As the conversation between Jesus and the lawyer began, Jesus was asked, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” This is a question that misses the point of salvation and grace. We do not inherit eternal life or a place with God in heaven on our own merits, but purely because of the grace of God who teaches us to love Him with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and also to love others as we love ourselves. This love’s motivation enables us to be giving, general followers of Jesus. Yet, far too often, like this lawyer, we choose to be ‘selective’ in how we love others. With the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus turns the lawyer’s question on its head, by asking which one proves he is the good neighbor by his actions? The lawyer is so caught up in his prejudice against Samaritans that he cannot bring himself to even mention him by that title, as he answers, “The one who had mercy on him” (v.37). We give because we love, and we love, because God loved us first.

*Question: How do you show love for God and for your neighbors?*

**Wednesday, April 14<sup>TH</sup>**

**“Give me an undivided heart”**

**Scripture: Psalm 86:1-12** NIV

In a time of need, David prays to the Lord because he is confident that—out of His kindness and love—God answers prayer. What would be the benefit, if God were to save him from his enemies, but abandon him to his own waywardness? David’s dependence on God is complete, and so is his devotion to God—to have God save him from the enemy outside, but also from his frailty within. Only one who is thus devoted to God may expect God’s help, and will truly fulfill the vow. The purest request to seek from God is to receive “an undivided heart” (v.1).

*Question: Is your heart ‘divided’ or conflicted, when it comes to your need to surrender your life in all of its ways to the Lord?*

**Thursday, April 15<sup>TH</sup>**

**“You have lied not just to humans but to God”**

**Scripture: Acts 5:1-11** NIV

The story of Ananias and Sapphira is a hard lesson. It is given as a bad example of sharing. Ananias had a divided heart, seeking the love of praise for his (pretended) generosity; his love for money led to the first recorded sin in the life of the church. It is a warning to those who hear it that “God cannot be mocked” (Galatians 6:7). If no dire consequence had followed this act of sin, the results among believers would have been serious, when the deceit became known. Not only would dishonesty appear profitable, but the conclusion that the Spirit could be deceived would follow. It was important to set the course properly at the outset, in order to leave no doubt that God will not tolerate such hypocrisy and deceit.

*Question: What are your thoughts and feelings about this story?*

**Friday, April 16<sup>TH</sup>**

**“Many signs and wonders”**

**Scripture: Acts 5:12-16** NIV

Because of the fate of Ananias and his wife, no pretenders or half-hearted followers risked identification with the believers, or perhaps no one tried to associate too closely with the twelve disciples. Luke cannot mean that no one joined the Christian community, since verse 14 indicates that many were coming to Christ. Luke wrote about “men and women” coming to be in the church, preparing the reader for women’s future prominence in the mission to the Gentiles. The church serves best, when it serves the Lord wholeheartedly.

*Question: How can you serve God more wholeheartedly in your life?*

**Sunday, April 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**Worship @8:30 & 10:45 a.m./Sanctuary**

**Online @10:45 a.m. via Livestream**

**Psalm 86:1-12 NIV, Acts 5:1-16 NIV**

**Pastor’s message: “Am I Ready to Surrender?”**

*Worship theme: “UNLEASHED!”*

