

FIRST things FIRST Daily Devotionals

Devotional Guide for July 8-14, 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, July 8TH “Seed for the sower, bread for the eater”

Scripture: Isaiah 55:6-12 NIV

The prophet Isaiah shares the thought that we should not attempt to reduce God’s works for our salvation to an explanation that we can understand. His ways are higher than ours. Those who heard Isaiah’s prophecy most likely had many questions... perhaps as did Isaiah himself. Even after Christ appeared and fulfilled these prophecies, theories of the atonement abound. A saving relationship with God depends not on our complete understanding of what He has done, but on our complete acceptance of His “Word” as it is sown into our lives. It will not return empty to God, but will accomplish and achieve the purpose for which the Lord sent it (v.11).

Question: How was God’s Word first sown into your life?

Tuesday, July 9TH “The sower and reaper may be glad together”

Scripture: John 4:27-38 NIV

Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, and after she realized that He could be the Messiah, she ran into town to share this news with anyone and everyone. To the curious disciples, Jesus explained that the harvest had already begun in the history of salvation. Jesus Himself engaged in that harvest. Jesus brings to mind the image from Amos 9:13, perhaps implying that those coming days have dawned in His ministry, as sowing and reaping now coincide. Jesus has sent His disciples to reap what others had sowed.

Question: How have you reaped the benefit of the faith in God’s Word that others had sowed?

Wednesday, July 10TH “The Word of the Lord endures forever”

Scripture: I Peter 1:22-25 NIV

Because a Christian is someone who has been born of God the Father and has the Holy Spirit within, Peter expects a transformation of character that is expressed in love for others. Such love is expressed by putting off all the things that can damage our relationships with others. When Peter speaks of the perishable and imperishable seed, the conception of new life that believers enjoy through the Word of God is both living and enduring.

The seed we sow as humans is indeed perishable, displayed in withering grass and falling flowers... but because God is eternal, the life that He conceives is imperishable and eternal.

Question: Have you grasped the eternal nature and power of God’s Word in your journey of faith?

Thursday, July 11TH “A farmer went out to sow his seed”

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-9 NIV

This is probably the parable that I remember first from my earliest childhood. Farmers used broadcast sowing, taking a bag of seeds in their hands and scattering them across the ground in which they wanted them to grow, often plowing them into the dirt afterward. Thus, not every seed would take root in good soil, and there would be varied growth based on the kind of soil into which each seed landed. Verse 8 reveals the only result from the farmer’s sowing. While we might think that having only 25% of the sown seed come to harvest, what is described here would have been an outstanding harvest by ancient standards.

Question: Have you ever planted seeds in a garden? What was the result of your seed sowing?

Friday, July 12TH “This is what the parable of the sower means”

Scripture: Matthew 13:18-23 NIV

Matthew probably places this parable here to explain the different reactions to Jesus found earlier in chapters 11–12. This parable also explains that Jesus has not come to bring an immediate end to evil, something which John the Baptist may have expected. Here, Jesus proceeds to explain that the parable He has just told refers to the four main ways that people may respond to “the message about the Kingdom” (v.19). The seed sown along the path stands for those who completely fail to grasp Jesus’ teaching, so that the gospel takes no root at all. The seed falling on rocky ground may find just enough soil to produce a plant, but it will only have a short life with no harvest provided—like people attracted to the gospel’s benefits, but are not willing to endure the hardships associated with it. The seed falling among thorns represents spurious believers who are choked out by worldly desires. The seed that landed in good soil shows the power of God’s Word to take root in our lives and thus produce something of value for God’s Kingdom.

Question: How has the seed of God’s Word grown in your life?

Sunday, July 14, 2024

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

Church Picnic @12:30pm ~ Mt.Odin Park

I Peter 1:22-25 and Matthew 13:1-9,18-23 NIV

Pastor’s message: **“Going Deeper—
the Parable of the Sower”**

Worship theme: “Powerful Parables!”

