

# **FIRST things FIRST** Daily Devotionals

## Devotional Guide for September 9-15, 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, Sept. 9<sup>TH</sup> “Come and pray to Me”**

**Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11-13** NIV

The Israelites had their homeland stripped away from them and had been exiled to the land of Babylon. This had been due to their own unwillingness to trust in God and follow His guidance. But the Lord would not abandon the exiles forever. After 70 years, God would fulfill His good promise from Deuteronomy 30:3-5, to bring them back to their homeland. God is the ultimate source of blessings and curses. The plans He has for those in exile were for a good future... unlike the plans He had for those in Judah (see vs.16-19). God is willing to listen to their prayers and allow them to call upon Him.

*Question: How often, when you pray, do you feel like you are throwing yourself upon the mercy of the court?*

### **Tuesday, Sept. 10<sup>TH</sup> “If we know that He hears us...”**

**Scripture: 1 John 5:13-15** NIV

Near the end of his first letter, the apostle John wrote, to reassure his readers concerning their possession of eternal life. He explains what this means regarding prayer, reassures them that they are no longer under the power of the evil one, and reminds them that they have been given knowledge of the truth in Jesus Christ. Earlier in chapter 3, John had linked believers' confidence in prayer with pleasing God, by keeping His commands. Here, John links it with asking according to God's will. To pray effectively, believers' requests need to be in accordance with the teaching of Scripture, concerning what pleases the Lord.

*Question: Do you have confidence that the Lord hears your prayers?*

### **Wednesday, Sept. 11<sup>TH</sup> “Father, hallowed be Your name”**

**Scripture: Luke 11:1-4** NIV

This is the gospel of Luke's account of Jesus' teaching on prayer... what we now refer to as the Lord's Prayer. It is an abbreviated form of the same lesson mentioned in Matthew 6:9-13; both gospels will emphasize the centrality of the Kingdom of God. In those days, one's name represented your standing and reputation.

As Israel's disobedience had profaned the name of God, God would sanctify His own name at the end of time (see Ezekiel 36:22-23). This phrase, “hallowed be Your name” (v.2) is directed towards God, and thus is a call to believers to be faithful to the Lord. To pray for God's Kingdom to come anticipated the ultimate consummation of God's promises, while asking God to continue to extend His reign among His people.

*Question: Do you daily recite the Lord's prayer as an offering to God?*

### **Thursday, Sept. 12<sup>TH</sup> “Lord, teach us to pray”**

**Scripture: Luke 11:5-10** NIV

Following the prayer in verses 2-4, Jesus uses a parable, to urge His disciples to boldly pray for God to provide the Holy Spirit. He gave the disciples a good example by praying constantly Himself, and this parable showed them that they should be persistent in prayer. I like the King James translation of this verse: “He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Hebrew 11:6). ‘Diligently’ is a great word. We are to be diligent in our search for God, in our journey of faith. Don't be satisfied with the opinions of others—be diligent to speak with and to listen to God. Don't be content with seeking answers from the stars in the sky—be diligent to see the very Creator of those same stars. Ask, seek, and knock—be active in your diligence to be in constant communication with your Savior.

*Question: How have you felt blessed by God after seeking His guidance in a time of prayer?*

### **Friday, Sept. 13<sup>TH</sup> “This, then, is how you should pray...”**

**Scripture: Matthew 6:1-15** NIV

Another part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount included His teaching on prayer. Jesus had addressed three common Jewish practices of devotion to God: giving to the needy, prayer, and fasting. His point was to warn against calling attention to one's good behavior for the sake of earning human praise. Most prayer should be personal and done in a private place. It is particularly hypocritical to parade one's piety in prayer since, by definition, to pray means to talk to God, not other people. And yet, as we will see in an interesting take on the Lord's Prayer this Sunday in worship, we are also to be expectant to hear from the Lord, as part of a two-way means of communication.

*Question:*

**Sunday, September 15, 2024**

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

**Luke 11:1-10 and Matthew 6:5-15** NIV

**Pastor message: “The Lord's Prayer—Answered!”**

*Worship theme: “The Greatest Sermon Ever!  
(Jesus' Sermon on the Mount)”*

