

# **FIRST things FIRST** Daily Devotionals

## Devotional Guide for September 23-29, 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. 23<sup>RD</sup> “Has no one condemned you?”**

**Scripture: John 8:3-11** NIV

Compare the blind Christ of the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro to the compassionate one seen by this frightened woman, one morning in Jerusalem. The men came as one mob, but they left one by one. Jesus told the woman to look up: “Is there no one to condemn you?” Maybe she expected Him to scold her, but she got a promise and a commission. The promise: “Then neither do I condemn you.” The commission: “Go and sin no more.” On that morning, there in Jerusalem, she saw Jesus, and Jesus saw her. And if we could take her to Rio de Janeiro and let her stand at the base of the blind Christ statue, she would say, “That’s not the Jesus I saw.” However, if we could transport her to Calvary and let her stand at the base of that cross, you know what she would say. “That’s Him!” She would see His eyes that saw her, not as she was, but as she was intended to be.

*Question: What do you suppose Jesus was writing on the ground?*

### **Tuesday, Sept. 24<sup>TH</sup> “Mercy triumphs over judgment”**

**Scripture: James 2:8-13** NIV

God’s law reflects the person of God Himself; to break any of its commands, therefore, is to fall short of God’s will. Believers who have been brought into a relationship with God by faith must still face a day of judgment to come. While they face this day with assurance rooted in their relationship to Christ, they must also take seriously the scrutiny that their actions in this life will receive on that day. People who display mercy toward others will not have to worry on the day of judgment.

*Question: How can mercy be used to point out sin to help other people?*

### **Wednesday, Sept. 25<sup>TH</sup> “Love keeps no record of wrongs...”**

**Scripture: I Corinthians 13:4-8a** NIV

In this famous chapter describing Christlike love, Paul shares that this love is to be the active expression of our faith. Paul describes the nature of love with 2 positive statements, then 8 negative ones (the last element has a positive counterpart), and then 4 positive ones.

The preponderance of negative statements can be linked with the problems in the Corinthian church that Paul addresses in this letter. All qualities of love are qualities of God the Father and Jesus Christ: the Christian should live as Jesus lived. Our Christlike love must act contrary to the conventions of decent behavior—not in a disgraceful or indecent manner, not narcissistically fixating on ourselves, refusing to become irritated and provoked to wrath, and choosing not to remember the wrongdoings of other people.

*Question: Does your love for others always act in this Christlike manner?*

### **Thursday, Sept. 26<sup>TH</sup> “Judged the same way we judge others”**

**Scripture: Matthew 7:1-6** NIV

Matthew 7:1 is an oft-misused verse. The Greek word for ‘judge’ (krinō) can mean to condemn or judge overly harsh; that is what it means here. The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians: “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1). Paul brings up a difficult topic, for few things seem as politically incorrect then saying that another person is wrong about something he/she believes. But Jesus didn’t imply that we should never make judgments about people. In fact, in John 7:24 Jesus says, “Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.” Jesus was clarifying that it’s alright—in fact, it’s a good thing—to make proper judgments about people. What Jesus condemns is a critical, judgmental attitude or an unholy sense of moral superiority.

*Question: Have you been able to judge someone gently and properly?*

### **Friday, Sept. 27<sup>TH</sup> “The Golden Rule”**

**Scripture: Matthew 7:7-12** NIV

“Ask, seek, knock” are all commands that are given in the present tense in Greek, suggesting continuous or frequent action... for Jesus expects us to remember “Your will be done” in His model prayer (Matthew 6:10). These verses are not quite the ‘blank check’ that they first seem to be. The “Golden Rule” summarizes Jesus’ ethics in this sermon. Other teachers, ancient and modern, made some similar statements negatively: “Don’t do to others what you don’t want them to do to you.” Jesus’ positive phrasing makes our obedience something that can never be complete.

*Question: How do you do at keeping the ‘Golden Rule’ in your life?*

**Fifth Sunday, September 29, 2024**

**9:00 am Sunday School / 10:00 am Worship**

**11:00 am Covered-Dish Luncheon**

**I Corinthians 13:4-8a and Matthew 7:1-12** NIV

**Message: “Judging, Asking, Seeking, Knocking”**

*Worship theme: “The Greatest Sermon Ever!”*

*(Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount)™*

