

FIRST things FIRST Daily Devotionals

Devotional Guide for Sept.30-Oct.6, 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. 30TH “Joseph’s brothers went to buy grain”

Scripture: Genesis 42:1-17 NIV

The regional famine forced Joseph’s brothers to leave Canaan and go to Egypt, where they begged the official in charge of the food supply to sell them food. Unbeknownst to them, this high-ranking Egyptian official was their brother, Joseph, whom they had sold into slavery when he was a teenager (see Genesis 37:1–36). In the many years since Joseph’s brothers had last seen him, we can understand that Joseph’s physical appearance had changed dramatically from being a teenager to a fully-grown man. He also looked and dressed like an Egyptian, different from their shepherds’ garb. As Pharaoh’s second-in-command of all Egypt, Joseph was also a very powerful person. He did not appear to have any connection with the visitors, including their language (he spoke through an interpreter to communicate with them). Joseph’s brothers would not have expected to encounter him holding a powerful position in the prestigious reign of Egypt.

Question: Ever been in the presence of a celebrity without knowing it?

Tuesday, Oct. 1ST “Bring your youngest brother to me”

Scripture: Genesis 42:18-38 NIV

When Joseph addressed his brothers after three days, he reversed his prior decision to retain all the brothers in Egypt, apart from one. Joseph kept one of them hostage, and he permitted the others to go to Canaan to bring Benjamin back to prove their honesty. Allowing most of the brothers to return to Canaan, they would be able to take grain back for their starving households. Joseph justified this change of heart on the basis that he feared God.

Question: If you were one of Joseph’s brothers, how would you react?

Wednesday, Oct. 2ND “Go back to your father in peace”

Scripture: Genesis 44:1-17 NIV

As part of the ruse by which Joseph intends to discern the attitude of his brothers, he sends his steward after them. Possibly with a sense of irony, Joseph describes his cup as one used for gaining knowledge through supernatural means. It seems unlikely Joseph ever practiced divination, something God later prohibited. *(CONTINUED on REVERSE SIDE)*

However, he obviously wished to make his brothers believe that he could discern things supernaturally. Ironically, the cup becomes the means by which he gains an insight into the present inner nature of his brothers.

Question: Can you imagine the guilt and anguish felt by the brothers?

Thursday, Oct. 3RD “Judah offers to trade places with Benjamin”

Scripture: Genesis 44:18-34 NIV

Joseph had instigated a plan to determine how his older brothers viewed their youngest brother, Benjamin. Would they treat him as callously as they had Joseph? How will they react when Benjamin is accused of misappropriating Joseph’s silver cup? Humbly, Judah pleaded passionately for Benjamin’s release, outlining in some detail how the loss of Benjamin would severely affect his father. Having guaranteed the safe return of Benjamin, Judah offered himself as a slave in his place. More than anything else, Judah wanted to prevent his father from suffering further grief. This impassioned appeal to Joseph sharply contrasted with his previous proposal to sell Joseph into slavery (see Genesis 37:26–27). Now, Judah himself is prepared to suffer loss of freedom and great hardship, in order that Benjamin would not be enslaved in Egypt.

Question: Would you be willing to substitute yourself for someone else’s guilt?

Friday, Oct. 4TH “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?”

Scripture: Genesis 45:1-7 NIV

Joseph now realized that his brothers were genuinely sorry for their sinful plot to get rid of him, so he revealed his identity to them. The emotions of the moment overcame him and he cried out loud, enough that the Egyptians in the palace heard him at a distance. Here, Joseph exemplified God’s forgiveness. We, too, must learn not to harbor a grudge. Our Savior kneels down and gazes upon the darkest acts of our lives. But, rather than recoil in horror, He reaches out in kindness and grace and says, “I can clean that if you want.” But that’s not all He does. Because He lives in us, you and I can do the same. Because He has forgiven us, we can forgive others. Because He has a forgiving heart, we can have a forgiving heart. We can have a heart like His. Who seems impossible, in your life, for you to forgive? What keeps you from fully forgiving the one who hurt you? God’s love outweighs any harmful experience. Will you obey God and forgive?

Question: Have you thanked and praised God recently, for the grace and mercy He offers you in your forgiveness?

World Communion Sunday
Sunday, October 6 at 8:30 and 10:45 am
Genesis 44:1-34 and Genesis 45:1-7 NIV
Message: “Joseph—No Ordinary Joe!”

Worship theme: “Ordinary People, Extraordinary God”

