

FIRST things FIRST Daily Devotionals

Devotional Guide for January 6-12, 2025

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, Jan. 6TH “Where there is no vision, the people perish”

Scripture: Proverbs 29:18 KJV

Without the love and fear of God, the nation of Israel made many mistakes. Without restraint and discipline, sin took over. You see, God’s standards are crucial to our lives. Those who ignore them drift apart from God... but loving, God-fearing people will prosper. What happens when a society rejects God’s vision—His revelation for us—and everyone does as they see fit? You get a culture that looks like the perverted one described in the book of Judges... and that culture is doomed to failure. This is something that our culture should take heed of and come to understand.

Question: How do you see our society rejecting God’s vision for us?

Tuesday, January 7TH “For God so loved the world...”

Scripture: John 3:11-18 NIV

In His conversation with Nicodemus at night, Jesus shared a vision that the Jews were failing to see. When Nicodemus began his chat with Jesus, he used the pronoun “we” to tell Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the signs You are doing if God were not with him” (v.2). Jesus then ironically imitates the plural that Nicodemus used, as if to say, “WE know one or two things too, WE do!” (see verse 11). When Jesus revealed God’s vision, He spoke in the third person: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son” (v.16). God did this—not because the world was loveable or because we loved God first. God’s love is amazing—not because the world is so big, but because the world is so bad. Whoever believes thus captures this vision being cast by Jesus; whoever does not will perish, since this is the only alternative to belief in God’s love.

Question: When did you first learn of John 3:16?

Wednesday, January 8TH “Son of man, can these bones live?”

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1-3 NIV

This passage is the third of four visions Ezekiel receives from the Lord. The image is of a large slain army that miraculously comes to life on the battlefield. *{continued on reverse side}*

An open graveyard like this suggests an undignified “burial” of the slain soldiers. As Ezekiel begins to see this vision, he notices the very dryness of the bones... suggesting they were long dead. This image of scattered bones on a battlefield magnifies hopelessness and the seeming impossibility of change.

Question: What is your first impression of this valley of dry bones?

Thursday, January 9TH “Prophecy to these bones”

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:4-6 NIV

The Lord asks Ezekiel to do something that may have seemed useless or frivolous to some—to prophesy to the dry bones. This command, together with the notion that the dry bones can “hear” God’s Word, strikes a hopeful note about the possibility of life. How would God revive these disconnected, lifeless bones of Israel? Through His Word and Spirit. When Ezekiel and the nation of Israel would see these things taking place, they would know that God is a life-giving God, who longs to have His children capture a glimpse of His vision for their lives. The dry bones would become a new nation.

Question: How useless might it appear to prophesy/preach to dry bones?

Friday, Jan. 10TH “I will put My Spirit in you and you will live”

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:7-14 NIV

The people of Israel had felt hopeless and abandoned by the Lord. God told Ezekiel to prophesy life and breath to the bones, thus symbolizing how He would revive and reestablish them in their land. God also promised to put His Spirit within them. In our own darkest valleys, we can trust that God’s life and breath are not far away. His Spirit is always close. God then caused the bones to begin knitting themselves together with flesh... but the Word had to also be accompanied, by the giving of the Spirit for breath to enter into these bodies. This provides a classic illustration of spiritual renewal, which is a vision that the church needs to regain today. The title for this Sunday’s message is taken from a quote by Walt Disney... when he had addressed the board of directors and his fellow visionaries, to remind them how the grand Disney experiment had come about (“Let’s never forget that it all started with a mouse!”) God’s vision begins with the simple truth that He loves us and wants us to have an eternal relationship with Him.

Question: How has God’s Spirit breathed new life into your life lately?

Sunday, January 12, 2025

Worship time of 10:00 am (Livestream @10:00 am)

John 3:11-17 and Ezekiel 37:1-14 NIV

Pastor’s message: **“It All Started with A Mouse!”**

