

FIRST things FIRST

Daily Devotionals

For February 17-23, 2025

These devotions are prepared for you to use in your Quiet Time with the Lord and are designed to prepare you for the sermon next Sunday.

Monday February 17, 2025

Judging Others

Romans 2:1-4_{NIV}

It is so easy to pass judgment on someone else. We are sometimes quick to criticize. Next time you are tempted to do that, pause for a moment. Do a little self-evaluation. If God is willing to forgive someone for their bad behavior, then our judgment of others shows contempt for God's grace.

Question: Am I so quick to judge others that I miss out on God's gift of forgiveness?

Tuesday February 18, 2025 Honoring God--Lending to God

Proverbs 14:31 and 19:17_{NIV}

What an odd concept is the notion of lending to the Lord. What does God need that we could possibly supply? Honoring God is more easily understood. God is certainly worthy of our honor. In both proverbs, how we relate to the poor is coupled with how we are relating to God. Oppressing the poor shows contempt for God. Being kind to the poor is lending to the Lord. Obviously, God does not need to borrow anything from us. But being kind to the poor somehow provides something that God desires.

Question: How do I relate to the poor? Does benign neglect of the poor also mean benign neglect of God?

Wednesday, February 19, 2025 Jonah's displeasure with God

Jonah chapters 3 and 4_{NIV}

After Jonah had his run-in with the great fish, he returns home. In Chapter 3 he is ordered to go to Nineveh again and proclaim God's message. Jonah does, the Ninevites repent, God forgives, and Jonah is outraged. The people of Nineveh were foreigners, Jonah did not like them. He knew that God would spare them if they repented, for that is the nature of God. Jonah was put out when the grace of God was extended to those who were not of Jonah's people. Note the story of the bush and its lesson.

Question: Am I ever offended by God's grace when extended to those I think are not worthy? (I'm sorry; I know this is a difficult question to answer. I hope it is worth the struggle.)

Thursday, February 20, 2025

Imitating God

Ephesians 5:1-2_{NIV}

We are the recipients of God's grace. Because of that, we should live a grace-filled life. Jesus gave Himself up as a sacrifice for us. His sacrifice was as God the Father desired. Jesus' sacrifice should inform the way we live life. We cannot do what Jesus did; for His sacrifice was a once-for-all sacrifice. But we can imitate Jesus.

Question: Over the last week, have I imitated Christ?

Friday, February 21, 2025

And Even More

Mark 4:24_{NIV}

"The measure you use" seems to be a comment referring to what a merchant does in measuring out a person's purchase. Some merchants might use a measure that shorts the customer. (The old thumb on the scale trick.) But in terms of our dealings with God, when we are using a measure that shorts God, we are only shorting ourselves. The measure we use will be the measure God uses. In fact God will give even more.

Question: In comparison to what I have given, have I experienced the "even more" as I look at what God has given me?

Sunday, Feb. 23, 7th Sunday of Epiphany

Worship @ 10:00am

Sermon: "God Wants Us to Get

More Than We Deserve"

by Pastor Dick Markle