

FIRST things FIRST Daily Devotionals

Devotional Guide for April 29-May 5, 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, April 29TH “The Lord our God, the Lord is One”

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NIV

This Old Testament lesson for this Sunday is often referred to as the Shema, the Hebrew word for ‘hear’ because of its initial word. It is one of the three texts in Orthodox Judaism to be recited every day. Jesus said this particular text was the most important commandment. When God stated in the first verse “The Lord our God, the Lord is One” (v.4), this double use of the divine name is unique in the Old Testament. The Lord is not just the God for Israel; He is God for all. The Lord is one of a kind, who is absolutely unique. This is in stark contrast to ancient world polytheism—the belief in many gods.

Question: How do you strive to live out the belief that the Lord is One?

Tuesday, April 30TH “One body with many members”

Scripture: Romans 12:1-8 NIV

The apostle Paul wrote quite a lot for the early church that dealt with the emphasis of one Lord and one body. The first two verses in this passage are most often seen to describe the individual believer’s body being kept “holy and pleasing to God” (v.1). Yet, I believe that these same goals should be lifted up for the body of Christ—the church. The church, as the body of Christ, should “not conform to the pattern of this world” (v.2) in order to know and show to the world the will of the Lord. While the body is made up of many members, it is still one body—striving to work together for Christ.

Question: Where do you use your God-given talents for the church?

Wednesday, May 1ST “One loaf for one body”

Scripture: I Corinthians 10:14-17 NIV

Another passage that Paul wrote to emphasize the need for the church to see itself as one body dealt with fleeing idolatry, as well as how we participate in the sacrament of communion. The Corinthian Christians compromised with the secular values and lifestyles of their contemporary society also in other areas: visiting pagan temples, participating in pagan banquets, and eating food that was known to have been sacrificed to idols. *(continued on the other side...)*

Paul urged them not to compromise their faith or the faith of fellow Christians. Verse 17 underlines the unity of the community of believers, which Paul regarded as Christ’s body... where all believers were to observe the Lord’s Supper, in unity with Christ alone.

Question: How do you seek to remain pure from worldly compromise?

Thursday, May 2ND “God’s chosen people, holy & dearly loved”

Scripture: Colossians 3:12-17 NIV

Again, Paul emphasized the need to discern the old morality from the new way of life for the Christian believers. Paul explained the vices of the old morality that need to be abandoned (back in vs.5-9), the new creation (vs.10-11), and here in these verses, the virtues of the new morality that needs to be practiced, along with the new worship. God’s chosen people must reflect godly qualities in their lives. Paul outlines the new morality that is to replace their former life... a list, similar to the fruits of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22–23). The all-inclusive commandment of love is the foundation for all the other virtues. The peace of Christ reigns where the message of Christ dwells and is lived out. The church—as the body of Christ—should display harmony and thankfulness as a result. The message of Christ’s love is to be the reliable and profound teaching that conveys that we are to live lives that honor and glorify Him. At times, that means that the church must “teach and admonish one another” to no longer conform to the world, but to be renewed by the Holy Spirit.

Question: How have others taught and admonished you with your faith?

Friday, May 3RD “One Lord, one faith, one baptism”

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-6 NIV

This passage from Paul is the New Testament lesson for this Sunday. God’s Holy Spirit works to create unity, and believers are responsible to maintain (“to keep” in v.3) this unity. The peace of Christ is the bond that binds believers together. Paul gave seven confessional statements of oneness that provide the basis for the unity in vs.1–3. Although declaratory, these statements also implicitly exhort the community to unity. The early church affirmed that Jesus is “one Lord” on the basis of His resurrection and glory; that there is to be a common set of core beliefs (“one faith”), and that the initiatory rite of water baptism symbolizes the spiritual union with Christ (“one baptism”).

Question: What does your baptism and place in the church mean to you?

Sunday, May 5, 2024
Sacrament of Holy Communion
Reaffirmation of Baptismal Covenant
8:30 and 10:45 am (Livestream @10:45 am)
Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NIV, **Ephesians 4:1-6** NIV
Pastor’s message: **“One Bread, One Body”**

