

FIRST things FIRST

Daily Devotionals

December 8-14, 2025

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, Dec. 8 When God Doesn't Fit Our Expectations

Scripture: 1 Kings 19:9-13 and Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expected the Messiah to come with fire, judgment, and quick justice. But from prison he heard that Jesus was healing, teaching, and blessing people. It didn't match what he thought the Messiah would do, so he asked the honest question: "Are You the One?" Elijah understood this same kind of confusion. After defeating the prophets of Baal, he expected a great spiritual turnaround. Instead, he found himself running for his life. In the cave, he looked for God in the strong wind, the earthquake, and the fire. But God came to him in a quiet, gentle whisper. Both John and Elijah learned that God doesn't always work the way we expect, but He always gives us what we truly need. Sometimes our disappointment is really just the gap between what we expected and God's better plan.

Prayer: Lord, when Your ways surprise me, help me trust that You are still near.

Tuesday, Dec. 9 Strength in Times of Doubt

Scripture: Psalm 27:13-14 and Matthew 11:2-11

John's time in prison was filled with suffering, but also with waiting. His doubts grew in the darkness, and Jesus responded with reassurance, not anger. Psalm 27 shows us the same kind of struggle. The writer trusts God deeply, but still feels the weight of waiting. "I believe I will see the goodness of the Lord..." is both a statement of faith and a reminder spoken to a tired heart. Waiting on God takes a strength we don't naturally have. It means holding on to hope even when circumstances point in the other direction. It means believing God is working even when we can't see any evidence of it yet. Your doubts in the waiting do not mean your faith is weak. They show that you are longing for God's goodness to break through.

Prayer: God of hope, give me strength to wait faithfully.

Wednesday, Dec. 10 Recognizing the Works of Christ

Scripture: Isaiah 35:3-6 and Matthew 11:2-11

When John's disciples asked Jesus, "Are You the One?" Jesus didn't argue or explain. He simply pointed to what was happening: the blind could see, the lame could walk, the deaf could hear, and the poor were receiving good news. These were the exact signs Isaiah had spoken about long before Jesus came. Jesus was saying, Look at the evidence! Isaiah 35 reminds us that God's work shows up not in displays of force, but in renewal, healing, restoration, joy, and justice. Today, we see signs of Christ's (over)

presence in many ways. Lives being healed and restored, broken relationships being mended, hope rising where there was once only despair and so much more. If we only look for God in dramatic moments, we may miss Him completely.

Prayer: Jesus, open my eyes to the signs of Your kingdom at work today.

Thursday Dec. 11 Blessed Is the One Who Trusts in God's Timing

Scripture: Habakkuk 2:1-4 and Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist preached that the Messiah would bring judgment and purifying fire. But Jesus began His ministry with compassion. The judgment John expected would come later, and in a very different way. Jesus' timing and mission were far bigger than the moment John found himself in. Habakkuk felt the same tension. He saw injustice and cried out to God, "How long?" Faith is hardest when God feels slow. But God's timing is never a delay. Everything God does has a purpose. He sees the whole picture while we see only our present moment. Like John, we can bring our questions to God honestly. Like Habakkuk, we can choose to wait faithfully. And in both cases, we find that God is always faithful.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to trust Your perfect timing.

Friday, Dec. 12 Finding Assurance in Who Jesus Is

Scripture: John 20:24-29 and Matthew 11:2-11

Thomas and John the Baptist have something in common: both needed reassurance. Both had seen God work. Both believed. And both reached a point where what they expected didn't match what they were experiencing. What stands out is how Jesus responds. To John, He sends a message full of hope and confirmation. To Thomas, He shows His hands and side. In each case, Jesus meets doubt with compassion, not frustration. This shows us that faith grows when we bring our questions to Jesus instead of hiding them. Thomas' doubt led him to one of the strongest confessions of faith in the Bible: "My Lord and my God!" Honest struggle can open the door to deeper, stronger faith.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for meeting me in my doubts.

Saturday, Dec. 13 Reassurance Through God's Faithfulness

Scripture: Lamentations 3:21-24 and Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist needed reassurance in the darkness of a prison cell. In Lamentations, the writer looks over a city that is broken. Yet in that painful place, he remembers a truth that brings hope back to life: "This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases." Hope in the Bible is never just wishful thinking. It is grounded in who God is. His compassion does not wear out. His presence does not leave us. Like the writer of Lamentations, we don't ignore our struggles. But we hold onto a deeper truth: God is faithful, yesterday, today, and forever. The God who reassured John reassures us too.

Prayer: Faithful God, in moments of doubt or confusion, remind me of Your steadfast love.

Sunday, Dec. 14 ADVENT (JOY) Signs and Truth

Worship at 10am by Pastor Clint Phillips Matthew 11:2-11