

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS
ADVENT DEVOTIONAL
WEEK THREE



Welcome to this Advent devotional.

This devotional was born from the questions you shared during our Can I Ask? sermon series, questions about faith, life, Scripture, suffering, and what it means to follow Jesus in a complicated world. Those questions were brave. They were honest. And they revealed something beautifully human: every one of us carries deep wonderings in our hearts, and God is not afraid of any of them.

Advent is the perfect season to keep asking. This is the time of year when we slow down, pay attention, and dare to explore the mystery of Christ coming among us. Advent is not sentimental. It is not polished. It is the honest story of God entering a world filled with fear, doubt, division, and longing and meeting people right where they are.

In these pages, you will find space to reflect, wrestle, breathe, and be open to how God is already at work in your life. Advent invites us to bring our questions, our hopes, our uncertainties, and our grief into the presence of a God who chooses to come close. The incarnation, God with us, is not just a doctrine. It is a powerful experience of love meeting us in our most honest places and offering us what we most need: answers when we are searching, faith when we are struggling, and assurance when we feel unsteady.

My hope is that this devotional will help you journey toward Christmas with intention and imagination. May these reflections draw you deeper into the mystery of Christ, who steps into our world and into our lives for such a time as this.

You are not alone on the journey.
You are loved.
And you are free to ask.

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December 14, 2025 – Small Lights in a Heavy World

Matthew 5:14

"You are the light of the world."

Question

What can I do to make this society less of a depressing hellscape?

Reflection

It's easy to feel powerless before the world's pain. Yet Jesus never told His followers to fix everything. He told them to shine. Light doesn't eliminate night in an instant. It reveals a path one step at a time.

Peace begins locally: kindness at the checkout line, patience in traffic, advocacy for the unseen neighbor. The Kingdom of God grows through mustard seeds, not grand scale projects. Each small act of goodness interrupts despair's narrative.

Let's remember that the world is not saved by our brilliance but by God's presence refracted through us. When the church lives as a community of peace, not panic, we become living candles that shine the light of Christ in a heavy world.

Prayer

Light of the world, kindle my courage to act with compassion. Let my ordinary choices radiate Your extraordinary love. Make me a small, steady flame against the darkness. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

December 15, 2025 – Engaging Misrepresentation

Matthew 10:16

“Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

Question

How should I engage with those who misrepresent You and Your teachings?

Reflection

It's painful to see Christ used as a weapon, and to watch people twist His words to defend cruelty or exclusion. We want to shout back, to correct every distortion. Yet Advent reminds us that truth rarely shouts; it shines.

Jesus lived among the self-righteous and the skeptical alike. He confronted hypocrisy but never mirrored it. His truth was carried on the back of grace. When we meet misrepresentation, our first call isn't to win but to witness by embodying the Jesus we wish others could see.

This requires both wisdom and innocence. Wisdom discerns when to speak; innocence keeps our hearts free from cynicism. You can disagree without dehumanizing. You can defend truth without losing tenderness.

Advent joy arises when we realize that Christ doesn't need louder defenders. He needs clearer reflections. Let your integrity, your gentleness, your consistency become a quiet protest against distortion.

Prayer

Teacher of truth, guard my heart from anger that corrodes. Give me courage to speak with wisdom and humility, so that when I am misunderstood, Your compassion is still visible in me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

December 16, 2025 – Countering Negativity About the Church

John 13:35

By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”

Question

What do You want me to do to counter the negativity of church and religion?

Reflection

Many hear the word church and think judgment, politics, or hypocrisy. What a contrast from what the earliest Christians were known for! They were known for the way they loved through their open tables, shared bread, and sacrificial compassion. The church at its best is full of compassion and kindness.

We cannot fix centuries of failure overnight, but we can embody something different. Every act of kindness, every welcome extended to someone who expects rejection, is an act of re-branding, not of words but by the Spirit.

Advent joy comes when love outshines reputation. Jesus never asked His followers to defend His image; He asked them to reflect His heart. If you feel small against the enormity of the Church’s negative reputation, let’s remember that one small candle can make a monumental difference in the dark.

Prayer

God of compassion, let love be my best argument. Make my life a testimony stronger than words, so that through simple acts of compassion others might glimpse Your goodness and grace. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen

December 17, 2025 – When the Church Feels Rotten

Matthew 13:30

"Let both grow together until the harvest."

Question

How could You let so much of Your church become so rotten?

Reflection

Disillusionment with the church is not new. The early believers quarreled, Peter failed publicly, Paul rebuked hypocrisy. Yet Christ never abandoned His people. He keeps calling the Church to repentance and renewal.

The parable of the wheat and weeds reminds us that the field is mixed. God is patient because love always hopes for transformation. Our task isn't to burn down the field but to nurture the wheat, which is another way of saying to cultivate goodness where we are.

We can rise from the ashes and the rubble of despair. Advent helps us look at corruption and destruction, and still believes transformation is possible. It trusts that resurrection follows crucifixion, even for institutions. If you've been hurt by the church, know that Jesus sees you and grieves with you. Healing can happen, and Jesus invites you to help rebuild the Church with compassion and grace.

Prayer

Redeeming God, heal the wounds the Church has caused in this world. Grow new life in the soil of repentance through the power of Your love. Make your Church a people of grace again. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

December 18, 2025 – Rediscovering the Word

John 5:39

"These are the Scriptures that testify about Me."

Question

What should the role of the Bible be?

Reflection

Some wield Scripture as a weapon. Others leave it on a shelf out of guilt. Advent invites us to hold it differently. The Bible is a window, not a wall. The Bible's pages are not the destination. They are the pathway to an encounter.

When we read through the lens of Christ, even difficult texts pulse with mercy. The Word became flesh so that words on a page could become life in us. Let the stories of promise, exile, birth, and redemption draw you back into wonder.

The joy of Scripture is not in mastering it through memorization and cognitive understanding. The joy of Scripture is found in being overcome by the love of God found in its content. Read slowly. Let the Holy Spirit illuminate its meaning in your heart, and let that resonate with life, not death. Allow the Spirit to translate the contents into compassion. When this happens, the Word will become alive again—in you.

Prayer

Living Word, open my heart as I open Your book. Let each page, chapter, and verse lead me closer to the face of Jesus and to the joy of Your truth alive in me. Amen.

December 19, 2025 – When Faith is Misinterpreted

Matthew 23:24

"You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."

Question

How is Christianity being misinterpreted today?

Reflection

Every generation remakes God in its own image. Some mistake moral superiority for holiness; others confuse comfort with blessing. But Jesus still stands among us, calling us back to mercy, justice, and humility. To follow Christ is not to escape the world but to love it sacrificially. When faith becomes a power grab, we have lost the plot. True Christianity looks like washing feet, not pointing fingers. Faith becomes misinterpreted when we isolate the belief statements and disconnect it from the lived our experience of God's goodness and grace. There, our joy is depleted, and Christianity becomes a a religious chore.

Joy returns when we strip away the noise and rediscover the heart of the gospel: God loves the world, not just our "in-group." Advent is our annual reminder that the divine arrived among the poor, the marginalized, the misunderstood. If that's where He showed up then, that's where He still is now. Wherever compassion is, offered wherever grace is experienced, and wherever kindness is received, there Jesus is. Wherever Jesus is, we will not misinterpret our faith.

Prayer

God of truth, expose the distortions and renew the witness of Christ. Let me live and walk in Your compassion and grace. Let the world see through my life a Christianity that looks like Christ. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

December 20, 2025 – Reaching the Wary

Mark 10:45

"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve."

Question

How do I reach people who think church equals conversion tactics?

Reflection

In a skeptical age, words about faith often sound like sales pitches. Yet Jesus won hearts not by pressure but by presence. He touched lepers, ate with outcasts, told stories that awakened dignity. Service was His sermon.

To reach the wary, we must lead with friendship, not agenda. We should listen longer than we speak. We should meet people's practical needs before addressing spiritual ones. When they ask why we care, then we can tell them about God's extravagant love found in Christ.

Advent joy flows through humble service. When we serve people, barriers come crumbling down. The gospel spreads best not through argument but through hospitality. The Christ who came to us in Christmas, revealed that we would know God's love most clearly when we see His humility and how He came to serve the world.

Prayer

God of humility and grace, make my love believable by those who are skeptical of the Church. Help me offer care without condition and friendship without strings, so that others might glimpse the joy of Your unlimited welcome. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

At Restoration, we exist to restore
the wonder of Christ
the beauty of the Church
and the wholeness of our Communities

