

Be
reM^{St. Mark}ARKable

Let Earth Receive Her King

A 26-DAY ADVENT
DEVOTIONAL THROUGH
MATTHEW & LUKE

WEEK 1: HOPE

NOVEMBER 30TH - DECEMBER 6TH

DAY 1: NOVEMBER 30TH

Scripture: Luke 1:1-4

Why does it matter that Luke wrote a careful, orderly account of Jesus' coming?

Luke opens his Gospel by reminding readers that the Christian story stands on solid ground. He writes not from imagination but from investigation—interviewing eyewitnesses, examining evidence, and arranging the events so believers can have certainty. Hope needs a foundation, and God provides one. Before the miracles and the manger, God ensures that His people know this story is trustworthy. In seasons of waiting, when emotions fluctuate and circumstances shift, our hope is anchored in a faith built on truth—not myth, not rumor, not sentimental spirituality. Advent begins with a reminder: **God's work in Christ is rooted in reality.** Your hope rests on something—and Someone—secure.

This opening also teaches us that biblical hope is intelligent hope. It is not blind optimism or emotional wishfulness, but a confident expectation grounded in revealed truth. Luke wants believers to be assured, steady, and unshakeable in their beliefs. When the world feels unstable, Advent invites us back to the reliability of God's Word. Hope grows when we remember that this story has been examined, declared, and preserved by God's intentional design.

Where does remembering the truth about Christ help steady your hope?

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for grounding my hope in a trustworthy story. Strengthen my confidence in Your Word. Amen.

DAY 2: DECEMBER 1ST

Scripture: Luke 1:5-7

How do you respond when you're faithful but still waiting?

Zechariah and Elizabeth lived righteous lives, yet they carried disappointment. Their barrenness didn't reflect a lack of devotion; it reflected the reality that godly people sometimes wait a long time for God to move. Still, they remained faithful. Scripture highlights their integrity before it describes their sorrow, reminding us that hope grows in the soil of steady obedience. God had not forgotten them. Their waiting was not wasted—it was preparing a moment in salvation history. Advent teaches us that God works even when heaven feels quiet. Hope does not deny difficulty; it trusts that God is still writing the story.

Their story reminds us that delay does not equal denial. The absence of immediate answers does not mean God is absent. Sometimes, He is building patience, shaping character, and positioning our lives for a greater revelation of His glory. Hope in this season is learning to stay faithful even when the outcome remains unclear, believing that God's timing carries eternal purpose.

Where do you need to trust that your waiting is not wasted?

Prayer:

God, deepen my hope when answers delay. Keep me faithful as I wait. Amen.

DAY 3: DECEMBER 2ND

Scripture: Luke 1:8-17

How open are you to God disrupting your daily routine?

Zechariah was performing his priestly duties—ordinary obedience—when heaven broke in. Gabriel announces a child whom he and Elizabeth had long stopped expecting, and that this child would prepare the way for the Messiah. God often moves in moments that look uneventful from our perspective. Hope rises when we remember that our routines do not limit God. The Lord meets Zechariah in faithful service, not dramatic pursuit. Advent reminds us that God often begins His greatest works in quiet spaces, turning ordinary days into holy interruptions.

This moment teaches us that hope frequently arrives in the form of surprise. God's purposes do not depend on our anticipation but on His initiative. What feels routine to us can be the very stage God chooses for revelation. When we remain faithful in the ordinary, we become positioned for extraordinary encounters with His promise.

Where might God be preparing to interrupt your routine with hope?

Prayer:

Lord, help me remain faithful and attentive, ready for Your interruptions of grace. Amen.

DAY 4: DECEMBER 3RD

Scripture: Luke 1:18-25

Why does doubt sometimes feel easier than hope?

Zechariah's response exposes a tension many of us feel—wanting to believe while wrestling with impossibility. God's answer is not anger but silence, a season designed to shape Zechariah's faith rather than punish his weakness. Sometimes God quiets us so He can strengthen us. Hope matures in silence when we learn to listen rather than argue, surrender rather than demand. Elizabeth's conception reveals that God's timing is perfect and His promises stand firm even when our faith wavers. Advent hope acknowledges human doubt but clings to a God who keeps His word.

This passage reminds us that silence can be spiritual training. In moments when God seems quiet, He may be deepening our trust and refining our dependence on Him alone. Hope is not proven in noise but in stillness. It grows when we choose to believe despite uncertainty, resting in the unchanging character of God.

Where might God be inviting you into quiet trust?

Prayer:

Father, calm my doubts and strengthen my hope as I listen for Your voice. Amen.

DAY 5: DECEMBER 4TH

Scripture: Luke 1:26-33

How do you respond when God calls you to something beyond your capacity?

Mary receives a staggering announcement: she will bear the promised Messiah. Nothing about her background, age, or status qualified her for such a calling. Yet God chooses her because His work depends on His power, not human strength. The promise of Jesus' eternal reign anchors the message—not Mary's ability but God's sovereignty. Advent hope grows when we remember that our limitations do not limit God's plans. He calls ordinary people into extraordinary purposes so that His glory is unmistakable.

Mary's story reminds us that hope often stretches us beyond what feels reasonable. God's purpose surpasses human logic, yet His presence accompanies His calling. When He invites us into something greater than ourselves, He also invites us into deeper trust. True hope rests not in our competence but in His divine authority.

Where do you need to trust God's ability more than your own?

Prayer:

Lord, give me courage to receive Your calling with hope and confidence in You. Amen.

DAY 6: DECEMBER 5TH

Scripture: Luke 1:34-38

What does faithful surrender look like for you right now?

Mary's question—"How will this be?"—is not resistance but humility. She wants understanding, but she ultimately offers obedience: "Let it be to me according to Your word." Hope deepens when surrender is chosen over control. Gabriel's explanation underscores that this will be God's work from start to finish—the Holy Spirit will overshadow her, and the child will be called holy. Advent reminds us that the impossible becomes possible when God is involved. Our role is not to manufacture outcomes but to yield to His will.

Surrender is the language of hope. It says, "I trust You even when the path is unclear." Mary teaches us that obedience is not passive resignation but active faith. In choosing God's Word over her own comfort, she positions herself within the unfolding purpose of redemption. Hope resides where faith meets obedience.

What area of your life is God inviting you to yield to His Word?

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, teach me to surrender confidently to Your work in me. Amen.

DAY 7: DECEMBER 6TH

Scripture: Luke 1:39-45

Who helps you recognize God's work in your life?

Mary seeks Elizabeth, and God uses their interaction to confirm His promise. Elizabeth, filled with the Spirit, recognizes Mary's calling immediately. Hope grows best in community. The unborn John leaps in her womb—an early sign that God is already orchestrating His redemptive plan. Advent reminds us that we are not meant to carry God's promises alone. He places people in our lives who can speak truth, strengthen our faith, and remind us that God is indeed moving.

This moment reveals that hope multiplies in shared spaces. God often affirms His calling through spiritually discerning voices. Encouragement reinforces obedience, and affirmation deepens confidence. When others recognize God's work in us, our hope takes root more firmly and grows more steadily.

Who has God placed in your life to help nurture hope?

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for relationships that affirm Your work. Strengthen my faith through community. Amen.

WEEK 2: PEACE

DECEMBER 7TH - DECEMBER 13TH

DAY 8: DECEMBER 7TH

Scripture: Luke 1:46-56

How does worship steady your heart during uncertainty?

Mary's Magnificat is an act of peace-filled worship. She magnifies God's character rather than her circumstances. Her song recalls God's faithfulness across generations—His mercy, strength, justice, and covenant love. Peace is not the absence of difficulty but the presence of perspective. Worship shifts our focus from what overwhelms us to the God who sustains us. Advent peace grows when we intentionally lift our eyes and remember who God has always been.

Mary teaches us that peace flows from a heart anchored in God's unchanging nature. She names the truth of who God is before the situation around her fully unfolds. This kind of peace does not ignore reality; it interprets reality through the lens of God's power and promise. Worship becomes the avenue through which our anxiety is quieted and our trust is strengthened.

What attribute of God brings you peace today?

Prayer:

God, fill my heart with peace as I remember Your faithfulness. Amen.

DAY 9: DECEMBER 8TH

Scripture: Luke 1:57-66

How does witnessing God's work bring peace to your heart?

John's birth confirms God's promise, bringing amazement to all who hear. The neighbors recognize that "the Lord's hand was with him." Peace grows when we see God working in real, tangible ways—both in our lives and in the lives of others. This passage reminds us that every fulfilled promise, big or small, is evidence of God's steady hand. Advent peace is rooted in remembering that God doesn't merely speak—He acts.

The wonder surrounding John's birth also reveals how peace spreads through testimony. When people recognize God's activity, it calms fear and strengthens collective faith. Seeing God at work in someone else's story reassures us that He is still active in our own. Peace flourishes when the community remembers together that God has not lost control.

Where have you recently seen the Lord's hand at work?

Prayer:

Lord, let the works of Your hands quiet my anxious heart. Amen.

DAY 10: DECEMBER 9TH

Scripture: Luke 1:67-80

How does God's faithfulness bring peace to your waiting?

After his season of silence, Zechariah declares that God has visited and redeemed His people. He sees clearly what God is doing through John's life and through the coming Messiah. Zechariah speaks of God's covenant mercy, fulfilled promises, and the peace that comes from forgiveness. Advent reminds us that peace flows from God's reliability. Even after long silence, God proves faithful. When we reflect on His unchanging character, our hearts settle into the peace He provides.

Zechariah's prophecy reveals that peace is tied to redemption. It comes from restored relationship with God and the assurance that our sins are forgiven. True peace touches both the heart and the conscience, bringing freedom from guilt and renewed confidence in God's grace. This peace stands firm because it is rooted in divine mercy, not human performance.

How has recalling God's faithfulness brought you peace?

Prayer:

Faithful God, thank You for the peace that comes from Your steady promises. Amen.

DAY 11: DECEMBER 10TH

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-21

How does God bring peace into fearful situations?

Joseph faces a crisis he didn't ask for and doesn't understand. Yet God meets him in a dream and says, "Do not be afraid." The peace Joseph receives is not circumstantial—it's rooted in God's presence and purpose. The Holy Spirit conceives the child within Mary, and His mission is clear: "He will save His people from their sins." Peace comes when we remember that God is sovereign over what confuses us. Advent peace rests not in clarity but in God's compassion and authority.

Joseph's peace is shaped by obedience. Once he trusts God's word, fear loosens its grip. This teaches us that peace often arrives after we choose to trust, not before. When God speaks assurance into our uncertainty and we respond in faith, our hearts begin to rest in His guidance rather than our own reasoning.

What fear do you need to surrender to God's reassuring presence?

Prayer:

Lord, speak Your peace into the places where fear tries to rule. Amen.

DAY 12: DECEMBER 11TH

Scripture: Matthew 1:22-25

What brings you peace when obedience is difficult?

Matthew emphasizes that everything happening in Joseph's life fulfills Scripture. God's Word provides Joseph with confidence to obey. He takes Mary as his wife and names the child Jesus—steps that show trust in God rather than reliance on his own understanding. Peace is often found on the other side of obedience. Advent teaches us that God's plans are trustworthy even when they disrupt our own. Peace flourishes when we align our lives with His purposes.

Joseph models a peaceful obedience that submits to Scripture's authority. His willingness to follow God's direction becomes a source of inner stability. When our actions reflect trust in God's promises, peace becomes more than a feeling—it becomes a settled posture of confidence in God's will.

Where is God inviting you to obey even when it stretches you?

Prayer:

God, give me peace as I align my steps with Your Word. Amen.

DAY 13: DECEMBER 12TH

Scripture: Luke 2:1-5

How do you experience God's peace in life's disruptions?

The census forces Mary and Joseph to travel at the worst possible time. Yet God uses this disruption to fulfill prophecy and position them in Bethlehem. Peace grows when we trust that God governs the details of our lives—even the inconveniences. Advent peace doesn't mean life goes smoothly; it means God is sovereign in every step. The journey may be uncomfortable, but the destination is filled with divine purpose.

This passage reminds us that peace is not passive resignation but active trust in God's orchestration. Even when circumstances disrupt our plans, our peace rests in knowing that God is guiding each step. His purposes are never derailed, even when our schedules and expectations shift unexpectedly.

What disruption might God be using for your good?

Prayer:

Lord, help me find peace in Your sovereign guidance, even in disruption. Amen.

DAY 14: DECEMBER 13TH

Scripture: Luke 2:6-7

How does humility lead to deeper peace?

Jesus enters the world quietly—in a stable, wrapped in cloths, laid in a manger. The humility of His arrival reveals a Savior who comes close to the lowly and overlooked. Peace is found in recognizing that God meets us in ordinary spaces. Advent reminds us that God's greatest work often unfolds in simplicity, not spectacle. When we embrace humility, we make room for His peace to dwell in us.

This moment calls us to let go of our need for recognition and grandeur. True peace develops when we learn to honor God's presence in small, unseen places. The quiet humility of Christ's birth invites us to approach God with gentleness, trust, and reverence, allowing His peace to rest fully upon our hearts.

Where might humility be the path to deeper peace in your life?

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for the peace found in Your humble coming. Shape my heart to mirror Yours. Amen.

WEEK 3: JOY

DECEMBER 14TH - DECEMBER 20TH

DAY 15: DECEMBER 14TH

Scripture: Luke 2:8-12

Why does the gospel bring such joy?

The angel announces “good news of great joy” to the shepherds—ordinary workers considered insignificant by society. Yet God chooses them as the first recipients of the Messiah’s birth announcement. The joy comes from what the message declares: a Savior has been born, Christ the Lord. Joy springs from God’s initiative, not our worthiness. Advent joy is rooted in the reality that God has come near to save, redeem, and restore. Joy flows wherever the gospel is heard and believed.

This joy is not shallow excitement but deep assurance. It rises from knowing that God has acted decisively on behalf of His people. The shepherds’ joy is rooted in revelation—they now know that deliverance has arrived. True joy grows when we understand the significance of Christ’s coming: hope fulfilled, salvation secured, and God’s promises realized.

Where do you need to let the good news renew your joy?

Prayer:

Lord, restore the joy of my salvation as I reflect on the good news of Christ. Amen.

DAY 16: DECEMBER 15TH

Scripture: Luke 2:13-14

How does praise fuel your joy?

A multitude of angels fills the night sky, praising God for the arrival of Christ. They proclaim peace and God's goodwill to all. Joy expands when we join heaven's worship. Praise lifts our hearts above our circumstances and reminds us of God's glory, God's peace, and God's initiative in sending His Son. Advent joy grows when we align our voices with heaven, celebrating what God has done and who He is.

This moment reminds us that joy is sustained through worship. As we focus on God's greatness, our joy strengthens and deepens. Praise clears the fog of discouragement and restores perspective. When we lift our voices in adoration, we participate in heaven's response to Christ's arrival, and the joy of His presence reshapes our hearts.

Where do you need to let worship rekindle your joy?

Prayer:

God, fill my heart with joy as I join in heaven's praise. Amen.

DAY 17: DECEMBER 16TH

Scripture: Luke 2:15-20

How does encountering Jesus transform your joy?

The shepherds hurry to find Jesus. Their response shows the natural progression of joy—seek, see, share. Upon encountering the newborn Messiah, they spread the good news and glorified God. Joy moves outward; it can't remain silent. Mary treasures these events, demonstrating that joy also leads to holy reflection. Advent joy is active and contemplative—a joy that proclaims and a joy that ponders.

This passage reminds us that joy grows through testimony. When we speak of what God has done, our joy is reinforced and multiplied. Joy deepens not only in celebration but also in reflection, as we store God's works in our hearts and allow them to shape our faith long after the moment has passed.

Who can you share Christ's joy with this week?

Prayer:

Lord, deepen my joy in encountering You and help me share it freely. Amen.

DAY 18: DECEMBER 17TH

Scripture: Luke 2:21-24

How do everyday acts of obedience strengthen joy?

Mary and Joseph present Jesus at the temple in obedience to the Law. Their faithfulness in small things reflects a heart devoted to God. Joy is nurtured through steady obedience and spiritual rhythms. Advent joy thrives when we honor God consistently—not only in dramatic moments but in quiet faithfulness. Obedience aligns our hearts with God's will, creating space for joy to grow.

This passage teaches us that joy is often cultivated through routine faithfulness. When we walk in obedience day after day, our joy becomes rooted rather than reactive. Steady devotion establishes a rhythm of rejoicing that is not dependent on circumstance but grounded in our ongoing relationship with God.

What simple act of obedience can strengthen your joy today?

Prayer:

God, help me walk in faithful obedience that produces lasting joy. Amen.

DAY 19: DECEMBER 18TH

Scripture: Luke 2:25-32

What does fulfilled hope do to your joy?

Simeon waited his entire life to see the Messiah. When he holds Jesus, his joy overflows as he recognizes God's salvation. His song acknowledges that God keeps every promise. Joy rises when we witness God's faithfulness firsthand. Advent teaches us that joy does not depend on speed—it depends on God's certainty. When hope becomes sight, joy becomes uncontainable.

Simeon's experience reminds us that joy matures through long waiting. His joy is deep, reverent, and full of peace because it is rooted in lifelong trust. True joy is shaped through patience and culminates in worship when God's promises are finally realized.

Where has God's faithfulness recently increased your joy?

Prayer:

Lord, give me joy as I trust Your perfect timing. Amen.

DAY 20: DECEMBER 19TH

Scripture: Luke 2:33-35

How do you maintain joy when faith is costly?

Simeon blesses Mary but also warns her of future sorrow. Following Jesus brings deep joy but sometimes deep pain. Mary's path will involve both. Advent joy doesn't ignore the weight of discipleship—it anchors itself in God's greater purpose. Joy is sustained not by comfort but by confidence that God's salvation is worth every cost.

This passage reveals that joy and sorrow often coexist. Mary's joy is not removed by the prophetic warning; it is refined. This teaches us that mature joy is not fragile but resilient, able to endure hardship because it is rooted in God's redemptive plan rather than circumstantial ease.

Where do you need God to restore joy in a costly area of faith?

Prayer:

Jesus, sustain my joy even when obedience is difficult. Amen.

DAY 21: DECEMBER 20TH

Scripture: Luke 2:36-38

How does perseverance shape your joy?

Anna's lifelong devotion—worship, fasting, prayer—positions her to recognize Jesus instantly. Her joy is immediate and contagious. She speaks about Him to everyone, waiting for redemption. Advent joy thrives in hearts formed through perseverance. A life anchored in spiritual practices becomes a life ready to rejoice when God moves.

Anna's joy springs from decades of faithful waiting. Her devotion prepared her heart to respond with sincere celebration. This reminds us that joy grows strongest in those who remain steady in faith over time. Perseverance does not dull joy; it deepens it, shaping a joy that is rich, enduring, and rooted in God's saving work.

What practice helps you cultivate steady, lasting joy?

Prayer:

God, produce joy in me as I persevere in devotion. Amen.

WEEK 4: LOVE

DECEMBER 21ST - DECEMBER 25TH

DAY 22: DECEMBER 21ST

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-2

How does seeking Jesus draw you deeper into God's love?

The Magi journey far to find the newborn King. Their seeking is an act of love from hearts drawn by God's guidance. Love begins with desire—a longing to be near Christ. Advent love is not passive; it pursues. God drew the magi with a star, showing that He leads all who are willing to seek Him. His love goes ahead of us, guiding our steps toward Christ.

This scene reminds us that God's love awakens a holy hunger within us. The magi were not content with distant knowledge of the King—they traveled to behold Him. Their journey teaches us that love deepens as we respond to God's invitation. Seeking Jesus is not merely intellectual; it is relational, driven by a heart stirred by divine love.

How is God drawing you toward Jesus in this season?

Prayer:

Lord, lead me in love as I seek Christ with all my heart. Amen.

DAY 23: DECEMBER 22ND

Scripture: Matthew 2:3-12

What offering reflects your love for Christ?

The magi present gifts that reflect Jesus' identity—gold for a King, frankincense for deity, myrrh pointing to His sacrifice. Their worship is costly and intentional. Love expresses itself in giving, not out of obligation but devotion. Advent love calls us to offer God our best—our obedience, generosity, time, and devotion. Love is never abstract; it shows itself through action.

Their gifts reveal that true love honors both who Christ is and what He will do. Worship rooted in love recognizes His worth and responds with sacrifice. The magi's actions challenge us to examine the depth of our devotion. Love that truly values Christ moves beyond words into tangible acts of reverence and surrender.

What offering is God inviting you to bring to Him?

Prayer:

Jesus, receive my love through the gifts of obedience and devotion. Amen.

DAY 24: DECEMBER 23RD

Scripture: Matthew 2:13-15

How does God's protective love comfort you?

God warns Joseph in a dream, and Joseph immediately obeys, taking his family to Egypt. God's protective love is proactive, precise, and personal. He safeguards His purposes and His people. Advent love assures us that God sees danger before we do and provides guidance to keep us within His care. His love watches, protects, and directs—even when the path is unexpected.

This passage reveals that love often expresses itself through divine protection and timely intervention. God's care is not passive sentiment—it is active supervision over our lives. He guards His promises with unwavering commitment. When we walk under His guidance, His love surrounds us with safety and direction.

Where do you see God's protective love at work?

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for Your protective love that guards my life and purpose. Amen.

DAY 25: DECEMBER 24TH

Scripture: Matthew 2:16-23

How does God's faithfulness reveal His love in difficult seasons?

Herod's violent actions show the world's brokenness, yet God faithfully guides Joseph step by step—first to Egypt, then back to Israel, then finally to Nazareth. Love is not sentimental; it is steadfast. God's love is steady even in dark or dangerous circumstances. Advent love reassures us that God is committed to His people and His plan. He leads, protects, and positions us because His love is constant.

This moment reminds us that God's love does not remove us from hardship but sustains us through it. His guidance through uncertainty reveals a love that refuses to abandon. In every transition, His presence affirms that His purpose is secure and His care unfailing. Love proves itself through faithful endurance.

How is God revealing His steadfast love in your current season?

Prayer:

God, thank You for Your unchanging love that guides me through every circumstance. Amen.

DAY 26: DECEMBER 25TH

Scripture: John 1:1-14

What does the incarnation reveal about God's heart for you?

John pulls back the curtain and shows Jesus' true nature—the eternal Word, fully God, stepping into human history. The One who created all things becomes flesh and dwells among us. This is not merely a touching birth story; it is the central miracle of our faith. God does not remain distant. He enters our world, our struggle, our humanity. In Christ, we see glory wrapped in grace, divinity clothed in humility, and power expressed through presence. Christmas marks the moment when God's promise becomes a living reality. The King has come, not to dominate but to redeem. Love is no longer an abstract idea—it has a face, a name, and a saving mission.

The incarnation reveals that God's love is personal and intentional. He does not shout salvation from heaven; He walks it out on earth. Jesus' coming declares that God desires closeness, reconciliation, and restored relationships. His dwelling among us testifies that our lives matter, our brokenness is seen, and our redemption is secured. Christmas is God's definitive statement: He is with us, for us, and committed to bringing light into every darkness.

How does Christ's coming deepen your understanding of God's love?

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for becoming flesh and dwelling among us. Let Your presence transform my heart and my life, and help me live in the light of Your saving grace. Amen.