

## Devotions: 11/30 to 12/5

**Monday:** Advent Season

*John 8:12 - When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Jesus is the Light of the World! Many people celebrate Advent season by illuminating their homes with candles and decorated trees. This is a way of symbolizing His coming into the world; eternal Light breaking through the darkness and opening up the way to heaven. Nothing can reverse this glorious plan of salvation. All who trust Jesus as Savior are adopted into His royal family forever!

His Light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it. No matter how much evil and unbelief we see in this dark world, He continues to shine brightly; a beacon of hope to those who have eyes that really see. So it is crucial to look toward the Light as much as possible. Fix your eyes on Him, beloved! Through thousands of good thought-choices, you can find Him, "see" Him, as we journey through this life. His Spirit can help us persevere in the delightful discipline of keeping our eyes on Jesus. Whoever follows Him will never walk in darkness but will have the Light of Life.

Stay safe, stay healthy, take care and God Bless! Pastor Mary Lou

**Tuesday:** Talking to Jesus

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Jesus is calling us to a life of constant communion with Him. Basic training includes learning to live above our circumstances, even while interacting on that cluttered plane of life. We yearn for a simplified lifestyle so that our

communication with Him can be uninterrupted. But he challenges us to relinquish the fantasy of an uncluttered world. Accept each day just as it comes, and find Him in the midst of it all.

Talk with Him about every aspect of our day, including our feelings. Remember that our ultimate goal is not to control or fix everything around us; it is to keep communing with Him. A successful day is one in which we have stayed in touch with Jesus, even if many things remain undone at the end of the day. Do not let our to-do list (written or mental) become an idol directing our lives. Instead, ask His Spirit to guide us moment by moment. His spirit will keep us close to Him.

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**Wednesday:** Hope of Heaven

*Hebrews 6:19 - We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,*

Heaven is both present and future. As we walk along our live-paths holding Jesus's hand, we are already in touch with the essence of heaven: nearness to Him. WE can also find many hints of heaven along our pathway because the earth is radiantly alive with His Presence. Shimmering sunshine awakens our hearts, gently reminding us of His brilliant Light. Birds and flowers, trees and skies evoke praises to His Holy Name. Keep our eyes and ears fully open as we journey with Him.

At the end of our life-path is an entrance to heaven. Only He knows when we will reach that destination, but He is preparing us for it each step of the way. The absolute certainty of our heavenly home gives us Peace and Joy to help us along our journey. We know that we will reach our home in His perfect timing: not one moment too soon or too late. Let the hope of heaven encourage us as we walk along the path of Life with Jesus.

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**Thursday:**

Peace

*Philippians 4:6-7, 19 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.<sup>19</sup> And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*

Peace is Christ's continual gift to us. It flows abundantly from His throne of grace. Just as the Israelites could not store up manna for the future but had to gather it daily, so it is with His Peace. The day-by-day collecting of manna kept God's people aware of their dependence on Him. Similarly, Christ gives us sufficient Peace for the present, when we come to Him by prayer and petition with thanksgiving. If He gave us permanent peace, independent of His Presence, we might fall into the trap of self-sufficiency. May we never do that!

He has designed us to need Him moment by moment. As our awareness of our neediness increases, so does our realization of His abundant sufficiency. He can meet every one of our needs without draining His resources at all. Approach His throne of grace with bold confidence, receiving His Peace with a thankful heart.

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**Friday:**

Waiting Expectantly

*John 14:1 - Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.*

Waiting, trusting, and hoping are intricately connected, like golden strands interwoven to form a strong chain. Trusting is the central strand because it is the response from God's children that He desires the most. Waiting and hope embellish the central strand and strengthen the chain that connects us to Him. Waiting for Him to work, with our eyes on Him, is evidence that we really do trust Him. If we mouth the words "I trust You" while anxiously trying to make things go our way, our words ring hollow. Hoping is future-directed, connecting us to our inheritance in heaven. However, the benefits of hope fall fully on us in the present.

Because we are His, we don't just pass time in our waiting. We can wait expectantly, in hopeful trust. Keeping our "antennas" out to pick up even the faintest glimmer of His Presence.

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**Saturday:** Immanuel

*Matthew 1:23 - "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").*

Jesus is with us, watching over us constantly. He is Immanuel (God with You); His Presence enfolds us in radiant Love. Nothing, including the brightest blessings and the darkest trials, can separate us from Him. Some of His children find Him more readily during dark times, when difficulties force them to depend on Him. Others feel closer to Him when their lives are filled with good things. They respond with thanksgiving and praise, thus opening wide the door to His Presence.

He knows precisely what we need to draw nearer to Him. Go thorough each day looking for what He has prepared for us. Accept every event as His hand-tailored provision for our needs. When we view our lives this way, the most reasonable response is to be thankful. Do not reject any of His gifts; find Him in every situation.

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