

# Devotions



## The First Sunday of Advent Prepare

Quoted, Paraphrased, and expanded, from Luke 1:11-17, and Luke 3:4-6 (New International Version)

Today is the First Sunday of Advent and we light the first candle to remind us to  
Prepare for the coming of the Messiah

There once was a priest by the name of Zechariah whose wife's name was Elizabeth but although they were getting older they didn't have any children and they wanted a child very badly. They prayed every day asking God to give them one. One day as Zechariah was in the Temple.....

*An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

What a job! Some people, at a young age, think about being a fireman or a teacher or some other interesting job but before John was born God had chosen him to prepare the way for the Messiah WOW!! Actually the truth is his job was announced long before even his Great Grandparents were born

*As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation.'"*

When John grew up he did just as God asked him to do. He went out into the desert and as people came to him, and they came in large crowds, he told them about God and that they needed to ask God to forgive them and help them to live the lives that God wanted them to. Then he baptized them in the river. He prepared the people for Jesus coming by showing them how to remove the

obstacles that were in the way of God reaching their hearts he made the paths straight, fill in the valleys and made the mountains low. The ones in the hearts of the people.

What does this mean for us? How do we prepare for the coming of the Lord? I'm not just talking about buying presents and making Christmas treats - that's preparing for Christmas. I'm talking about preparing for the coming of the Lord. Ask God what you need to do. Do you need to ask someone for forgiveness? Stop doing something you should not be doing? Take a look at your priorities. Are they what God would want them to be? What about your motives: are they Godly or self centered? This first week of Advent is a good time to stop and prepare yourself for His coming. This week's candle is to remind us to prepare for the coming Messiah.

### **Monday - Ephesians 6:15**

*...and with your feet fitted with the **readiness** that comes from the gospel of peace*

**Thought:** Are you prepared to go where God leads? With this comes peace because you know you are in God's Hands and no matter where He asks you to go, whether to a different country, or to talk to a certain person, or go do a certain task, you will be ok because God will not ask you to do something He is not going to help you through and it will always be for the best in the end even if we can't see it before hand

### **Tuesday- 1 Peter 1:13**

*Therefore, **prepare** your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

**Thought:** Is your mind prepared for Action do you know what you believe and can you explain it to someone else? If not what will you do this season to prepare your mind for action?

Are you self controlled do you have Do you have your anger under control do you put yourself or others down instead of building them up? Have you found a good balance between work, church, and family? What will you do this season to improve

this? Do you forgive yourself and other for making mistakes knowing that we have received Jesus' grace? Who are we to take away what He has given?

### **Wednesday- 1Thessalonians 5:6**

*So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be **alert** and self-controlled.*

**Thought:** Do you compare yourself with the Jones' as they say? Don't compare yourself to others, just worry about yourself. Are you ready? Not are you doing better than they are but are you ready to do what God calls you to do?

### **Thursday- Ephesians 4:12**

*...to **prepare** God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.*

**Thought:** What are you doing to help prepare others to do the things God has called them to do? Are you encouraging your friends and family to get prepared? Is the Bible read in your home? Do you teach your children to read it themselves? Do you discuss it with them?

### **Friday-Luke 3:4**

*As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, '**Prepare** the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him'".*

**Thought:** Are you preparing the way for the Lord? Are you making it easier or harder for people to see him? Do they see Jesus when they see you or are you blocking their way by not living as God has asked you to live? Do you Gossip, tell dirty jokes, swear, lie, cheat etc? What will you do to change the way people see you? Do you need to ask their forgiveness for your actions or words?

### **Saturday-Malachi 3:1**

*"See, I will send my messenger, who will **prepare** the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.*

**Thought:** The bible says that now we are God's temple.

*1 Corinthians 3:16: "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"*

If you are God's temple then are you ready for him to come in and see what is really in your heart? Are you ready for him to look in all the corners? What is in there that you need to clear up and ask forgiveness for? Are you ready to ask for His help?

## The Second Sunday of Advent Faithfulness

Quoted, paraphrased and expanded from Luke 1:26-56 (New International version)

Today is the Second Sunday of Advent and we light the second candle to remind us to be Faithful.

Let me tell you about a girl named Mary. She was born to a respected but poor family who loved God and served Him well. But more importantly for this story she was wholly devoted to Him. She had been raised knowing what was expected of her. She knew all God's laws and tried hard to keep them. She did her best to help those around her even at an early age. She didn't go to school but stayed home with her mother learning how to run a household. She learned to cook and clean do laundry and most importantly to her she learned about God. She loved the stories about Moses and the parting of the Red Sea; stories about David and Goliath, and Daniel and the Lions den, and the Passover. But most of all she love the story about the coming Messiah. She would beg her mother and Father to tell her about it all the time till her parents started getting tired of telling it and got her to tell it to them instead. She knew all the Prophecies like in Micah 5:2 About Him being born in Bethlehem

*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*

and Isaiah 7:14 Where it talks about the virgin birth

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

And Psalm 102:25-27 where they talk about Him being anointed and eternal

*In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.*

*They will perish, but you remain they will all wear out like a garment Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.*

*But you remain the same, and your years will never end.*

And so many more

One day much to her shock an Angel came to her. His name was Gabriel

(Luke 1:28-38ew International Version)

*The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."*

*"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*

*The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.'*

She didn't hesitate to agree to do it. At first she was very excited. Just think! God chose her! Of all the women He could have chosen, He, the Almighty God, chose her. The woman she had been hearing about all her life was her. WOW!!! Then she started to think about it. How would she tell Joseph? How would she tell her parents? How would she explain it to her friends? Would anyone believe her, and should she tell? Of course it would become obvious soon. How much should she tell? Would she become an outcast? She knew that God would be with her and help her but that didn't mean it would be easy. But she would be faithful to her Lord. Although she did not regret saying yes to God she needed time to think and pray about what to do. Mary decided to go visit her relative Elisabeth she could get advice and pray with her. She would understand.

It would be a long dusty trip but she new she would be welcome there. When she arrived Mary called out to Elizabeth.

*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"*

**Mary's Song**

*And Mary said:*

*"My soul glorifies the Lord  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has been mindful  
of the humble state of his servant.  
From now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—  
holy is his name.*

*His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
from generation to generation.*

*He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.*

*He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
but has lifted up the humble.*

*He has filled the hungry with good things  
but has sent the rich away empty.*

*He has helped his servant Israel,  
remembering to be merciful  
to Abraham and his descendants forever,  
even as he said to our fathers."*

After about 3 months Mary knew it was time to go home she was still scared but after many talks and a lot of time praying with Elizabeth she knew she was ready for whatever came next. She would be faithful to God and she knew He would be faithful to her.

If God asked you to do something that was hard would you remain faithful? Would you trust Him to help you, giving you the strength and wisdom you need or would you say no and walk away? This week's candle is to remind us of Faithfulness

### **Monday- Matthew 25:21**

*His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!*

**Thought:** Do you want to do great things for God?\_Are you faithful in a few things? If not, God will not trust you with the big things. Are you faithful with your money? If not, He will not give you more. And your promises, do you keep



them? If you are not faithful to your word God can not give you great things to say because no one will believe them

### **Tuesday- Proverbs 31:26**

*She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue*

**Thought:** Do people know they can trust what you say? Do you know what you are talking about, or do you just pretend to know so you won't look bad?

### **Wednesday-1 Corinthians 4:2**

*Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.*

**Thought:** God tests us by giving us big and little things to do. Will you be faithful no matter what the job, or what it costs?

### **Thursday- 3 John 1:5**

*Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you.*

**Thought:** Are you only faithful to your friend and family or are you also faithful to strangers? What can you do for a stranger this season?

### **Friday- Revelation 14:12**

*This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.*

**Thought:** Sometimes God doesn't do things in our timing. Are you willing to be faithful even if the answer to your prayer seems slow in coming?

Saturday- Revelation 2:10b

*Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

**Thought:** Are you willing to be faithful even to the point of death or will you turn you back on God when the going gets rough? Pray that God will give you the strength to do as He asks, no matter the cost.

## The Third Sunday of Advent Obedience

Quoted, Paraphrased, and expanded, from Matthew 1:18-25, 2:13-18 (New International Version)

Today is the Third Sunday of Advent and we light the third candle to remind us to be Obedient to God.

I would like to tell you about a young man named Joseph. He was very much in love with a young woman named Mary and had asked her to marry him. When she said yes he was so excited he told all his friends and just about drove them crazy by talking about her all the time.

He talked about the house he was building for her and the furniture he was making, about the things they would do together, about the children they would have. He worked long hours to make sure their home would be ready on time.

When Mary went away to visit her cousin Elizabeth he thought he would go crazy not being able to see her for 3 months. He spent all his free time on the house trying to make it perfect for her, counting the days until she came home.

The day came and he watched for her. Every sound of wheels drove him to the window to see if it was her. Then as if it was a dream suddenly she was there. He ran to her. He couldn't get to her fast enough. There she was! She hadn't seen him yet she was looking for him from the direction of his house but he had been working on theirs so he was behind her.

Then he was there right behind her; he could almost touch her. He spoke and she turned around and all at once he saw all his dreams go up in smoke. He could see right away. There was no hiding it. She was pregnant. He knew the babe wasn't his. He came from a very religious family and so did she, the whole town was. They grew up knowing that they couldn't sleep together until after they were married. He knew there was no way the baby was his.

Whose was it? Who had disgraced both of them? Who would believe him if he said it wasn't his? Did he force himself on her? Did he hurt her?

All his dreams gone! He couldn't even speak to her he just walked away.

He went up into the hills and just walked trying to decide what to do. He loved her. Even though she had hurt him badly that had not changed. He walked and prayed for hours. He suddenly realized his legs ached he hadn't even noticed until then. He sat down under a tree and looked at the stars he knew he should go home but he couldn't yet. He sat there crying out to God to give him wisdom. He decided to break off the engagement quietly or at least try to. He had made such a big deal about it everyone would know, but it had to be done. He would do it in the morning. The decision made, he fell into a restless sleep where he was.

Some where in the night, God sent an Angel to comfort him. He dried the tears from his eyes and said

*"Do not be afraid to take her home as your wife, because the child inside her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins."*

He then woke up and immediately obeyed God. No longer worrying about what others thought but more about how he would raise the son of God. He did not end the engagement but proceeded with their plans to marry.

About that time the government told the people they had to go to the city where their family came from to be counted. So He took Mary and off they went to Bethlehem. Mary was very close to having her baby but that couldn't be helped they had to go.

When they arrived there was no place for them to stay because of all the people who had come to be counted. Joseph knew that Mary was counting on him and that the son of God was about to come.

After a lot of searching they were finally offered a stable to sleep in. Joseph was so relieved, as wrong as it seemed to him that the son of God would be born in a stable, it was much better than the street. The stable was warm and dry and he made a nice bed of straw for Mary. Mary soon had the baby and Joseph's huge job of raising and protecting the Son of God had begun. He prayed hard for wisdom as he laid the baby Jesus in a manger for his bed.

Joseph worked hard to obey God and do just what he asked. They stayed in Bethlehem for a little while. Visitors came to see the precious child and Joseph moved his new family in to a small house.

One night God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you for the King Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

Again, Joseph obeyed immediately. He didn't even wait for morning. He got the family packed up and left.

Joseph is often not really thought about in the Christmas story. We talk a lot about Jesus, Mary, the Shepherds and the Wise Men. Joseph is often an afterthought but Joseph was a great man in that he obeyed God even when it scared him; even when it seemed like it was too much. He obeyed knowing that if God had asked him to do something God would not fail to give him the wisdom and strength to do it. We can learn a lot from Joseph! As the bible says (and Joseph did!) in [Psalm 119:60](#)

*"I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands"*

I pray that this Christmas, and throughout the New Year, you will have the courage to ask God what He wants you to do, and then do it immediately. This candle is to remind us of Obedience

**Monday- Philemon 1:21**

*Confident of your **obedience**, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.*

**Thought:** Do more than is expected of you, not what you can get away with. Remember whatever you do, do it as if you were doing it for God because you are. No matter how small the job, or no matter how much you don't want to do it, remember that you are doing it for God. Ephesians 6:7-8. *Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, & because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free*

## **Tuesday- Acts 5:29b**

*"We must **obey** God rather than men!"*

**Thought:** When what others ask you to do goes against what God says, you must obey God, no matter what you believe the cost will be. That is in God's hands. He will care for you. Your job is to obey God and trust Him.

## **Wednesday- Romans 6:16**

*Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to **obedience**, which leads to righteousness?*

**Thought:** Who are you going to offer yourself to? Who will you obey?

## **Thursday- Jeremiah 42:6**

*Whether it is favourable or unfavourable, we will **obey** the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will **obey** the LORD our God.*

**Thought:** We obey God even if it looks like we may be hurt. Even if we think God should do it our way instead. He is our Lord and He knows what is best even if we don't understand it at the time.\_

## **Friday- 1 Samuel 15:22a**

*But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To **obey** is better than sacrifice."*

**Thought:** Sometimes, instead of doing what God asks, we do something else hoping to impress Him by distracting him. If He has asked you to go talk to someone and instead you send a large cheque to a charity He will not be distracted, just disappointed.

**Saturday- 1 John 5:3**

*This is love for God: to **obey** his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.*

**Thought:** Do you really love God? You can check by whether or not you obey him. He never asks you to do more than you can do with His help.

## The Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship

Quoted, Paraphrased, and expanded, from Luke 2:8-20 (New International Version)

Today is the Fourth Sunday of Advent and we light the fourth candle to remind us to Worship to God.

There were others that are important to the Christmas story: those who came to worship.

Some came from far away, and others from close by. Some from Earth and some from Heaven but they all came to see the new King, The King of Kings, the Saviour.

It was night time in the fields by Bethlehem and the Shepherds were settling down for the night. They could hear their sheep bleating close by and the sounds of the night.

Dinner had been cleaned up, the sheep checked on, and the bed rolls laid out. The shepherds were sitting around the fire telling stories that they had been told all their lives about great heroes in the past like Abraham and Moses Elijah, and King David and about the Prophecies that said a Saviour would be coming; that he would be born in Bethlehem, and he would be the son of God. They probably even sang some of the songs written by King David and others that we now have in the book of Psalms. They were at peace but watchful. They had to be alert enough to know if there was any danger to them or the sheep.

They were suddenly startled. Right in front of them was one of God's Angels. They were so afraid they had never seen anything like this. The Angel shone with the Glory of God and was so bright it was like daylight. They just sat there, frozen, wanting to run. But they were so afraid they couldn't move. Then the Angel spoke.

*"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

Then instantly there were hundreds of Angels joining the first. Angels singing praises to God. The singing was more beautiful than anything they had ever heard. They sang song after song, praising and worshiping God. The shepherds



joined in the worship. They had to! The excitement and the Spirit of God filled them so full, that the praise and worship just bubbled out.

After the Angels left the Shepherds just sat there stunned. They didn't know what to do. Then they knew. They would go to Bethlehem and see the baby the Angels had told them about. They picked up a baby lamb each and left the rest on the hills and they walked all the way to Bethlehem.

When they got there, they didn't know where to go. So they stopped and prayed. God directed their steps to a stable. They thought maybe they had misunderstood. Why would the King of Kings be born in a stable? Then one of the Shepherds remembered that the Angel had said "you will find him in a manger". They decided to knock on the door. Joseph opened it and let them in.

As soon as they saw the baby, they knew they had found the king. Not because he looked any different than any other baby, but because there he was in a manger, wrapped in cloths. They also knew by the feeling they had when they looked in his eyes, they bowed down and worshiped him giving the family the lambs as a gift. They were so excited that when they left they had to tell everyone they saw all about what had happened.

Have you taken time to praise God for his amazing gift this season? Have you chosen a gift for Jesus this Christmas? This week's candle reminds us to Worship God.

**Monday- Luke 4:8**

*Jesus answered, "It is written: '**Worship** the Lord your God and serve him only.*

**Thought:** Without even realizing it, it is so easy to worship something other than God. We know who or what we worship by what is most prominent in our thoughts. Is it money, our job, sports our looks, etc? Or do we truly put God first? Do thoughts of Him, and what He would want us to do, flavour our thoughts about everything else?

Tuesday-Romans 12:1

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of **worship**.*

**Thought:** How can we offer our body as a living sacrifice? By giving it to God.

Galatians 2:20 says: *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

We must die to ourselves and allow God to live through us. Our bodies are no longer ours, but God's instrument. That means that we must care for our body as if it were God's, not ours, and do with it as God would.

Are you doing things with your body that God's would not approve of? Are you using it for things that you know God would not use it for? Are you putting things in it that God would not approve of? Or are you using it as God guides you to? Going where God leads and doing what God directs and saying what God asks you to say?

Wednesday- John 4:24

*God is spirit, and his worshipers must **worship** in spirit and in truth.*

Philippians 3:3

*For it is we who are the circumcision, we who **worship** by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—*

**Thought:** When you worship God do you really worship Him or do you just sing? Something that helps me to get into the spirit is to picture God sitting on His throne and then picture myself worshipping Him there. Suddenly the rest of the world seems to disappear and it's just me telling God how much I love Him.

Thursday-Isaiah 25:1

*O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and **praise** your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvellous things; things planned long ago.*

**Thought:** Isn't it great knowing that God has things all planned out? He knew what was going to happen now as He was creating the world, and He planned for it. Therefore, we know that whatever happens, He already knew what would have to be done to make things work out. What a Great reason to Praise God!

Friday-Psalm 42:11

*Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet **praise** him, my Saviour and my God.*

2 Corinthians 1:3

***Praise** be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,*

1Peter 4:16

*However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but **praise** God that you bear that name.*

Psalm 68:19

***Praise** be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens*

Psalm 56:4

*In God, whose word I **praise**, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?*

**Thought:** If you are afraid, hurting or scared try singing praises to God. You will find that God will lift your spirits and fill you with peace and strength. He will never ask you to go through anything that you and God can't get through together.

### Saturday-**Psalm 40:3**

*He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of **praise** to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.*

### 2 Corinthians 9:13

*Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will **praise** God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.*

### Romans 15:7

*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring **praise** to God.*

**Thought:** Have you ever wanted God to use you to reach others for Him but didn't know what to say? You can often help people find God by the way you act. Try giving God the praise. Just showing people that you know that things were not done in your power but God's, can make them think maybe they should check out what you have, when they need help.