



## St Barnabas Cray

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# God With Us: Embracing the Ordinary and Extraordinary

## Weekly Devotional Journey

### Monday - Our Family Tree Matters to God

#### Morning Devotion

##### Today's Verse

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.  
(Matthew 1:18)

##### Devotional Thought

We live in an age fascinated by ancestry and family history. Television programmes like 'Who Do You Think You Are?' captivate us because we long to understand where we come from. Matthew begins his Gospel with Jesus's genealogy, not as a tedious list, but as a declaration that our backgrounds matter to God. Jesus didn't emerge from a perfect family tree—His lineage includes some rather questionable characters. Yet God worked through ordinary, flawed people to bring about His extraordinary plan. Whatever your family history looks like, however complicated or messy your background might be, God can use it. He specialises in working through imperfect

people to accomplish His perfect purposes.

### **Reflection Question**

How does knowing that Jesus came from an imperfect family line encourage you about your own background and God's plans for your life?

### **From Sunday's Sermon**

"Jesus did not come from any ordinary family or from a good proper family. He came from a family with some very strange differences. So don't worry if that's how you feel about yourself."

### **Today's Application**

Today, thank God for your family history—both the parts you're proud of and the parts you'd rather forget. Ask Him to show you how He might use your unique background to serve others.

### **Morning Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You that Jesus came through an imperfect family line, showing us that You can work through anyone. Help me to see my own history through Your eyes and trust that You can use every part of my story for Your glory. Amen.

## **Evening Devotion**

### **God's Purposes Beyond Our Understanding**

#### **Evening Reflection**

Joseph faced a situation that didn't make sense. His fiancée was pregnant, and he knew it wasn't his child. The natural response would be confusion, hurt, perhaps anger. Yet God was working out His purposes in ways Joseph couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we find ourselves in

circumstances that seem impossible to understand or explain. Like Joseph, we're called to trust that God's purposes are being worked out, even when we can't see the full picture. His ways are higher than our ways.

### **Evening Reflection**

What situation in your life currently doesn't make sense, but where you need to trust God's greater purposes?

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord, when life doesn't make sense and circumstances seem overwhelming, help me to trust in Your greater purposes. Give me Joseph's faith to believe that You are working, even when I cannot understand how. Amen.

## **Tuesday - Do Not Be Afraid**

### **Morning Devotion**

#### **Today's Verse**

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.' (Matthew 1:20)

### **Devotional Thought**

'Do not be afraid'—these words echo throughout Scripture whenever God's people face impossible situations. Joseph was afraid. Afraid of scandal, afraid of misunderstanding, afraid of what people would think. The angel's message wasn't just about taking Mary as his wife; it was about trusting God in the midst of fear. Fear often paralyses us when God calls us to step into His plans. We worry about what others will think, whether we're capable, or if we've heard correctly. But God's consistent message remains: 'Do not be afraid.' Why? Because He is with us. He will strengthen us. He will lead us through whatever He calls us to face.

**Reflection Question**

What fears are currently holding you back from fully trusting and obeying God's leading in your life?

**From Sunday's Sermon**

"Do not be afraid. This appears throughout the Bible—the word of God to His people when they're facing some difficult situation. Do not be afraid. Why not be afraid? Because God is in it. God is with you."

**Today's Application**

Identify one specific fear that's been hindering your faith or obedience. Bring it to God in prayer today, asking Him for courage to trust His leading despite your fears.

**Morning Prayer**

Dear God, You know the fears that grip my heart and hold me back. Help me to hear Your voice saying 'Do not be afraid' and to trust that You are with me in every situation. Give me courage to step forward in faith. Amen.

## Evening Devotion

### God's Strength in Our Weakness

#### Evening Reflection

Joseph's obedience wasn't born from understanding everything perfectly—it came from trusting God's character. He didn't need to comprehend how the virgin birth was possible; he needed to believe that God was faithful to His promises. Sometimes we wait for complete understanding before we obey, but faith often requires us to act on what God has revealed, even when questions remain. Our weakness becomes the perfect canvas for God's strength to be displayed.

#### Evening Reflection

Where is God asking you to trust Him without having all the answers?

#### Evening Prayer

Father, I don't need to understand everything to trust You completely. Help me to follow Your leading even when questions remain, knowing that Your character is completely trustworthy. Amen.

## Wednesday - Jesus: The Name That Saves

### Morning Devotion

#### Today's Verse

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

#### Devotional Thought

Names in biblical times carried profound significance—they revealed character, destiny, and purpose. When the angel instructed Joseph to name the child Jesus, he was declaring the child's mission. Jesus means 'the Lord saves,' and this wasn't just a nice sentiment—it was a promise. This baby would grow up to save people from their sins. What seemed like an ordinary name in first-century Palestine carried extraordinary power and purpose. Today, that same name still carries the power to save, heal, and transform lives. Every time we speak the name of Jesus, we're declaring His authority over sin, death, and every force that would seek to destroy us.

#### Reflection Question

How does the meaning of Jesus's name—'the Lord saves'—speak to your current circumstances and needs?

#### From Sunday's Sermon

"The angel says to Joseph he will save his people from their sins. Right at the beginning there is this amazing promise."

#### Today's Application

Throughout today, when you pray or face challenges, consciously use the name of Jesus, remembering that His name carries the power to save and transform every situation.

### **Morning Prayer**

Lord Jesus, Your very name declares Your purpose—to save. Thank You that in Your name there is power over every situation I face. Help me to call upon Your name with confidence, knowing that You are my Saviour. Amen.

## **Evening Devotion**

### **The Promise Fulfilled**

#### **Evening Reflection**

Matthew connects Jesus's birth to ancient prophecy, showing that God's promises span generations. What Isaiah prophesied hundreds of years earlier was being fulfilled in a young couple's extraordinary circumstances. This reminds us that God's timing is perfect, even when it seems delayed from our perspective. The promises He makes to us may not be fulfilled immediately, but they are certain. His faithfulness extends across time, and what He has promised, He will accomplish.

#### **Evening Reflection**

What promises from God are you waiting to see fulfilled in your life?

### **Evening Prayer**

Faithful God, thank You that Your promises are certain, even when the timing isn't what I expect. Help me to trust in Your perfect timing and remain faithful while I wait. Amen.

## Thursday - Emmanuel: God With Us

### Morning Devotion

#### Today's Verse

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us').

(Matthew 1:22-23)

#### Devotional Thought

Emmanuel—perhaps the most comforting name in all of Scripture. God with us. Not God watching from a distance, not God occasionally checking in, but God with us. Through Jesus, God entered into human experience completely. He knows what it's like to be tired, misunderstood, rejected, and sorrowful. He's experienced the full range of human emotions and circumstances. This means that when we pray, we're not speaking to someone who can't relate to our struggles. We're speaking to Emmanuel—God who has walked in our shoes, felt our pain, and understands our deepest needs. He's not just sympathetic; He's empathetic because He's been there too.

#### Reflection Question

In what areas of your life do you most need to experience the reality that God is with you?

#### From Sunday's Sermon

"Emmanuel God with us. God with us because he's experienced the life of being a human being... whatever experiences we have, when we pray he'll understand."

#### Today's Application



Today, in moments of loneliness, stress, or difficulty, remind yourself that you are not alone. Emmanuel is with you, understanding exactly what you're going through.

### **Morning Prayer**

Emmanuel, God with us, thank You that You didn't remain distant but came to be with us in every experience of human life. Help me to feel Your presence today in both ordinary moments and difficult circumstances. Amen.

## **Evening Devotion**

### **Shared Human Experience**

#### **Evening Reflection**

Jesus's life wasn't simple or straightforward. He experienced displacement, uncertainty, and challenges just like we do. His family had to flee to Egypt as refugees. They faced social stigma and difficult circumstances. This means that whatever you're going through, Jesus understands. There's no experience too difficult, no emotion too complex, no situation too messy for Him to comprehend. He's been there, and He's with you now in the midst of it all.

#### **Evening Reflection**

How does it comfort you to know that Jesus experienced many of the same challenges and difficulties that you face?

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord Jesus, thank You that Your life wasn't sheltered from difficulty. You understand my struggles because You've faced them too. Help me to draw strength from knowing that You are with me in every circumstance. Amen.

## Friday - God in the Ordinary and Extraordinary

### Morning Devotion

#### Today's Verse

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. (Matthew 1:24-25)

#### Devotional Thought

God works in both the ordinary and the extraordinary. The conception of Jesus was miraculous, but the pregnancy, the birth, and the raising of this child involved all the ordinary experiences of family life. God doesn't just show up in the dramatic moments—He's present in the everyday, mundane experiences as well. As we go through life, we need to have our eyes and ears open to God's presence. He may not send an angel or a dream, but He might send someone who says just what we need to hear, or guide us into situations where we can serve others in unexpected ways. God is at work in both the supernatural and the natural.

#### Reflection Question

Where do you need to open your eyes to see God at work in the ordinary circumstances of your daily life?

#### From Sunday's Sermon

"God is at work in the ordinary, in the everyday, in the natural. But he's also extraordinary... in those ordinary situations God may work in an extraordinary way."

## Today's Application

Look for God's presence today in ordinary moments—conversations, routine tasks, unexpected encounters. Ask Him to help you recognise His hand at work in the everyday details of your life.

### Morning Prayer

Heavenly Father, help me to see Your hand at work not only in dramatic moments but in the ordinary details of my daily life. Open my eyes to recognise Your presence and Your leading in both the natural and supernatural. Amen.

## Evening Devotion

### Eyes and Ears Open

#### Evening Reflection

Joseph's obedience changed everything. He listened to God's voice and acted on it, despite the personal cost and social implications. God is still speaking today, perhaps not through dreams and angels, but through His Word, through circumstances, through other people. The question isn't whether God is speaking—it's whether we're listening with eyes and ears open to recognise His voice and respond with obedience like Joseph did.

#### Evening Reflection

How can you cultivate a heart that's more attentive to God's voice and more ready to respond in obedience?

### Evening Prayer

Lord, give me Joseph's heart—willing to listen for Your voice and ready to obey even when it's costly. Help me to keep my spiritual eyes and ears open to recognise how You're leading me each day. Amen.