



St Barnabas Cray

Jesus: The King We Truly Need

Weekly Devotional Journey

Monday - The Question That Matters Most

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' (Matthew 11:2-3)

Devotional Thought

From his dark prison cell, John the Baptist asks the question that echoes through every generation: 'Are you really the one?' Notice what John doesn't ask for—freedom, favour, or rescue. He asks whether his life's work has meaning. In our darkest moments, when circumstances seem to contradict God's promises, we too wonder if Jesus is truly who He claims to be. John's question isn't doubt—it's verification. He needs to know if he can let go, if the torch has been properly passed. Sometimes our deepest spiritual moments come not when we're proclaiming boldly, but when we're honestly wrestling with whether God's promises are true.

Reflection Question

What questions about Jesus are you wrestling with in your current circumstances?

From Sunday's Sermon

"John is not asking for favours. He is asking whether his life's work is complete."

Today's Application

Today, bring your honest questions to Jesus. Like John, don't ask for an easier path—ask for confirmation that your faith and service matter in God's kingdom story.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, in moments when circumstances cloud my vision of Your kingdom, help me ask the right questions. Give me John's courage to seek truth rather than comfort, and his faithfulness to trust Your timing even when I cannot see the full picture. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Speaking in Kingdom Code

Evening Reflection

Jesus doesn't give John a simple yes or no. Instead, He speaks in the language John will understand—Scripture. 'The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news preached to them.' This isn't evasion; it's invitation. Jesus points John back to Isaiah's prophecies, reminding him that God's promises are being fulfilled exactly as written. Sometimes God's answers come not as direct statements but as invitations to see His faithfulness in the patterns of Scripture.

Evening Reflection

How is God speaking to your questions through His Word rather than through circumstances?

Evening Prayer

Father, when I seek answers, help me listen for Your voice in Scripture. Open my eyes to see Your faithfulness woven throughout Your promises, just as John recognised Your Messiah in the fulfilment of ancient prophecies. Amen.

Tuesday - The Greatest Amongst Us

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:11)

Devotional Thought

John never heard Jesus call him the greatest born of women. He'd already been taken away when Jesus spoke these words to the crowd. But here's the stunning truth: even the least person in God's kingdom is greater than John. Why? Because John stood on the threshold, pointing forward to what was coming. We stand inside the doorway because of Jesus's death and resurrection. John's greatness came from his humility, courage, and single-minded obedience. He was content to decrease so Christ could increase. We live in the reality John could only anticipate. The kingdom he announced, we inhabit.

Reflection Question

How does knowing your position 'inside the kingdom doorway' change how you view your daily struggles and service?

From Sunday's Sermon

"John's greatness comes from his humility, his courage, and his single-minded obedience. He is content to decrease, so Christ may increase."

Today's Application

Identify one area where you need to 'decrease' so Christ can increase. Practice John's humility by pointing others to Jesus rather than seeking recognition for yourself.

Morning Prayer

Lord, help me embrace John's spirit of humble service. May I find my greatness not in being seen or recognised, but in faithfully pointing others to You. Give me the joy of watching You increase as I learn to decrease. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Standing on Holy Ground

Evening Reflection

We often underestimate our spiritual position. John, the greatest prophet, could only point toward the kingdom. Yet because of Jesus's finished work, we stand within it. This isn't about our worthiness—it's about Christ's accomplishment. Every believer, regardless of how 'least' they feel, has access to the very presence of God. We don't just hear about the kingdom; we participate in it. We don't just long for Emmanuel; He dwells within us.

Evening Reflection

How might your perspective on daily challenges change if you truly grasped your position as a kingdom citizen?

Evening Prayer

Father, help me live from the reality of my kingdom citizenship rather than from my circumstances.
May I walk with the confidence that comes from knowing Christ dwells within me. Amen.

Wednesday - The Painful Mystery of Unanswered Prayer

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognise him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands. (Matthew 11:14, 17:12)

Devotional Thought

Here's the question that haunts many believers: if Jesus could heal the blind and raise the dead, why didn't He free John from prison? Why do some prayers receive miraculous answers whilst others seem to echo in silence? This tension between God's power and our pain is real. We live in what theologians call the 'Now and Not Yet'—Christ has come, but His final victory is still ahead. We taste the kingdom through real healing, forgiveness, and transformation, but we don't yet see its fullness. Advent is honest about this tension. We celebrate Christ's first coming whilst longing for His second.

Reflection Question

How do you reconcile God's power to heal with the reality of ongoing pain in your life or the lives of those you love?

From Sunday's Sermon

"This is the glory and the frustration of Advent. We taste the kingdom—real healing, real forgiveness, real transformation. But not yet. Not quite in all his fullness."

Today's Application

Bring one persistent prayer concern to God today, acknowledging both His power to intervene and His wisdom in timing. Rest in the 'Now and Not Yet' rather than demanding immediate resolution.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, I struggle with unanswered prayers and delayed healing. Help me trust Your heart when I cannot understand Your ways. Give me grace to live faithfully in the tension between what You've begun and what You will complete. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Living in the Tension

Evening Reflection

The Christian life is like supporting a football team that's winning 3-0 with ten minutes left, but the pitch is waterlogged. Victory is certain, but you still must slog through the mud. This captures our spiritual reality perfectly. Christ's victory is secure—He is risen. But we still navigate the muddy terrain of grief, illness, and unanswered questions. Advent trains us not to lose heart in those final muddy minutes whilst we wait for the final whistle.

Evening Reflection

What 'muddy terrain' are you currently navigating, and how can you maintain hope in Christ's certain victory?

Evening Prayer

Father, when life feels like slogging through mud, remind me that victory is already secured in Christ. Help me persevere with hope, knowing the final whistle is coming. Amen.

Thursday - Patient Like a Farmer

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming.
See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop,
patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. (James 5:7)

Devotional Thought

Palestinian farmers understood that crops needed both autumn and spring rains. One shower wasn't enough—growth required patience and the full cycle of seasons. James uses this agricultural wisdom to teach us about spiritual formation. Growth takes time. Character takes time. Healing, reconciliation, and kingdom living all require patient cultivation. Advent isn't passive waiting; it's active, hopeful, faithful waiting. We're not sitting idle but cooperating with God's Spirit as He develops Christlike character within us. Like farmers who prepare soil and tend crops between the rains, we engage in spiritual disciplines whilst trusting God's timing for the harvest.

Reflection Question

What area of spiritual growth requires more patience from you right now?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Growth takes time. Character takes time. Healing, reconciliation, kingdom living—take time."

Today's Application

Choose one spiritual discipline to practice consistently this week, trusting that small, faithful actions contribute to long-term spiritual growth, even when you can't see immediate results.

Morning Prayer

Lord, give me a farmer's patience with spiritual growth. Help me tend faithfully to the disciplines of faith whilst trusting You for the timing of the harvest. Teach me to value the process, not just the outcome. Amen.

Evening Devotion**Active Waiting****Evening Reflection**

Advent waiting isn't passive resignation—it's active participation in God's unfolding kingdom. Between the autumn and spring rains, farmers don't simply sit and hope. They prepare soil, plant seeds, remove weeds, and watch for signs of growth. Similarly, our spiritual waiting involves prayer, service, worship, and obedience. We wait with expectation, not desperation. We wait with purpose, not aimlessness. We wait knowing that God is working even when we cannot see the full picture.

Evening Reflection

How can you make your waiting more active and purposeful?

Evening Prayer

Father, transform my waiting from passive endurance to active participation in Your kingdom work. Show me how to serve faithfully whilst I wait for Your perfect timing. Amen.

Friday - Solid Signposts, Not Swaying Reeds

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? (Matthew 11:7-8)

Devotional Thought

Jesus asks the crowd what they expected when they went to see John. Someone impressive? Someone fashionable? Someone like Herod, who literally had reeds printed on his coins and bent with every political breeze? No—John was a solid signpost, not a swaying reed. In our age of opinion polls and social media trends, we're surrounded by 'reed leaders' who shift direction with every change in popular sentiment. But the kingdom needs signposts—people who point steadily toward Christ regardless of cultural pressure. Jesus offers us leadership that is both 'Meekness and Majesty'—the King who bridges the divide between God and humanity, showing us mercy and authority in perfect balance.

Reflection Question

In what areas of your life are you tempted to be a 'swaying reed' rather than a 'solid signpost' pointing to Christ?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Don't follow leaders like Herod—leaders who bend with every breeze, or leaders who silence God's truth."

Today's Application

Identify one situation where you can stand firm in Christian principles despite social pressure. Practice being a signpost that points to Christ rather than bending to popular opinion.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me be a solid signpost pointing to You rather than a reed swaying with popular opinion. Give me courage to stand firm in Your truth whilst showing Your love and grace to others. Amen.

Evening Devotion

How Shall We Wait?

Evening Reflection

As Advent draws us deeper into waiting, Jesus offers a beautiful invitation: Wait with John's humility—keep pointing to Christ even when confused. Hope with Isaiah's confidence—the kingdom has begun. Live with James's patience—let God's grace grow Christlike character in you. Worship the King who has come and will come again. We follow not the reeds of this world, but the King who brings healing, justice, and joy—a kingdom rooted in God's gracious love, unshaken by any wind.

Evening Reflection

Which aspect of faithful waiting—humility, hope, patience, or worship—do you most need to cultivate?

Evening Prayer

King Jesus, as I wait for Your kingdom's fullness, shape me into Your likeness. Help me wait with humility, hope, patience, and worship, becoming a person who brings Your good news to a world in need. Amen.