



St Barnabas Cray

"Israel's Calling: Blessing All Through Christ"

Weekly Devotional Journey

Monday - Called to Be a Blessing

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. (Genesis 12:2-3 NIV)

Devotional Thought

Abraham's calling reveals something profound about God's heart: His blessings are never meant to be hoarded. From the very beginning, God's choice of Israel was strategic and missional—not favouritism, but a rescue operation for the entire world. The phrase 'you will be a blessing' carries the weight of divine purpose. God wasn't simply creating a privileged people; He was establishing a conduit of grace that would eventually reach every corner of creation. This calling required both receiving God's goodness and radiating it outward. The tragedy, as our sermon reminded us, is that

Israel 'turned inward—grasping its chosen-ness for itself rather than sharing it.' This isn't a uniquely Jewish failing; it's a human tendency we all face when we receive God's gifts. Whether it's spiritual insight, material provision, talents, or opportunities, we're prone to clutching rather than channelling God's blessings. The same God who called Abraham continues to call His people today—not just to experience His love, but to become agents of His love in a world desperately needing hope.

Reflection Question

What blessings has God given you that you might be holding onto rather than sharing? How might you be called to be a blessing to others today?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Israel's calling from day one was never just about itself. It was chosen — yes, to be blessed — but also to be a blessing, A rescue operation for the whole world."

Today's Application

Take inventory of the ways God has blessed you—perhaps through education, financial stability, spiritual community, or natural gifts. Choose one specific blessing and identify a concrete way to share it this week. If you've received encouragement in faith, reach out to someone struggling spiritually. If you have financial resources, consider supporting a local charity or family in need. If you possess skills or knowledge, offer to mentor someone or volunteer your expertise. Additionally, examine your heart for areas where you might be 'grasping' God's gifts. Are there ways you use your blessings to create barriers rather than bridges with others? Practice gratitude that leads to generosity, remembering that every good gift comes from above and is meant to flow through us to others. Set a reminder on your phone to pray daily this week: 'Lord, help me receive Your blessings with open hands and share them with an open heart.'

Morning Prayer

Gracious Father, thank You for choosing to bless us not as an end in itself, but as a means to bless others. Forgive us when we grasp Your gifts selfishly rather than holding them with open hands. Help us to see ourselves as conduits of Your grace, not containers of Your favour. Give us eyes to see the needs around us and hearts willing to share what You've entrusted to us. Make us a blessing to our families, communities, and world, just as You intended from the beginning. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Devotion

Reflecting on Our Calling

Evening Reflection

As this day draws to a close, consider how Abraham must have felt receiving such a weighty calling. The promise was magnificent, but the responsibility was equally profound. Every conversation, every decision, every relationship carried the potential to either advance or hinder God's rescue mission for the world. Tonight, reflect on the moments today when you had opportunities to be a blessing. Perhaps you offered a kind word to a colleague, listened patiently to a family member, or simply smiled at a stranger. These seemingly small acts participate in God's ancient promise to bless all peoples through His chosen ones. Don't be discouraged if you missed opportunities; God's grace covers our failures and His calling remains constant. Tomorrow brings fresh chances to live out this beautiful purpose.

Evening Reflection

Looking back on today, when did you sense God inviting you to be a blessing to someone? How did you respond?

Evening Prayer

Lord, as I rest tonight, I'm grateful for the privilege of being part of Your blessing to the world. Thank You for the opportunities You gave me today to show Your love. Help me sleep peacefully, knowing that Your purposes will prevail through Your people. Amen.

Tuesday - Jesus: Israel's Story Fulfilled

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

(Luke 4:18-19 NIV)

Devotional Thought

When Jesus stood in that Nazareth synagogue and declared, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing,' He was making the most audacious claim imaginable. The long wait was over—but not in the way anyone expected. Jesus wasn't just another prophet pointing toward future hope; He was the embodiment of Israel's entire story and calling. As our sermon beautifully illustrated, Jesus personally lived out Israel's narrative: passing through water at baptism, facing temptation in the wilderness for forty days, choosing twelve disciples echoing the twelve tribes, delivering the law from a mountain. But Jesus didn't merely repeat Israel's story—He perfected it. Where Israel failed in the wilderness, Jesus succeeded. Where Israel turned inward, Jesus opened wide the doors of God's kingdom. He fulfilled Israel's calling to be a light to the nations by becoming that light Himself. This wasn't replacement theology; it was completion theology. Jesus didn't discard Israel's story but brought it to its intended climax. The Good Shepherd became the Final Sacrificial Lamb, and through His resurrection, He inaugurated the New Creation that Israel's story had always been pointing toward. Every promise finds its 'Yes' in Christ.

Reflection Question

How does understanding Jesus as the fulfilment of Israel's story deepen your appreciation for His identity and mission? What does this mean for your own calling as His follower?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Jesus was revolutionising what worship of God required. Not bloodlines. Not devotion to one place or one building. Not rituals of washing, eating, circumcision or patriarchy. He called people to draw near through Bible, Prayer and Worship as gathered believers & in personal lifestyle."

Today's Application

Jesus revolutionised worship by making it accessible to all people, not dependent on bloodlines, buildings, or rituals. Examine your own approach to faith: Are there ways you've made following Jesus more complicated than He intended? Perhaps you've created personal 'requirements' for spiritual maturity or unconsciously excluded others who don't fit your expectations of what a Christian should look like. This week, practice Jesus' revolutionary inclusivity. Invite someone different from yourself to join you for a meal or coffee. Look for opportunities to worship and pray outside traditional settings—perhaps while walking in nature or serving others. Challenge yourself to see past surface differences and recognise God's image in people you might normally overlook. Additionally, spend time this week reading through one of the Gospels, paying special attention to how Jesus interacted with outcasts, foreigners, and those considered 'unclean' by religious standards. Let His example shape your own interactions.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for fulfilling all of God's promises in ways far greater than anyone imagined. Help us to see You not just as our personal Saviour, but as the completion of God's grand story of redemption. Give us hearts that mirror Yours—welcoming, inclusive, and revolutionary in love. May we worship You in spirit and truth, breaking down barriers rather than building them. Amen.

Evening Devotion

The Wait Is Over

Evening Reflection

The Jewish people in Jesus' day had been waiting for centuries—through exile, return, and continued oppression—for God to act decisively. Their wait felt endless, their hope sometimes dim. Yet when God's answer finally came in Jesus, it exceeded their wildest expectations while challenging their deepest assumptions. Tonight, consider your own seasons of waiting. Perhaps you're waiting for healing, reconciliation, provision, or clarity about the future. Jesus' declaration that 'today this scripture is fulfilled' reminds us that God's timing is perfect and His solutions are often more wonderful and unexpected than our limited imaginations can conceive. The wait may feel long, but God is always working, always faithful, always preparing something beautiful.

Evening Reflection

What are you waiting for God to do in your life right now? How might Jesus' fulfilment of ancient promises encourage you in your current season of waiting?

Evening Prayer

Jesus, thank You that in You, every promise of God finds its 'Yes.' Help me trust Your timing and Your ways, especially when they differ from my expectations. Give me patience in waiting and eyes to see how You're already at work. Amen.

Wednesday - Boundaries Blown Wide Open

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:28-29 NIV)

Devotional Thought

One of the most revolutionary aspects of Jesus' ministry was how He 'blew the boundaries wide open.' He commended the faith of a Canaanite woman, a Roman centurion, a Samaritan woman, and countless others who stood outside the traditional boundaries of God's people. This wasn't an accident or mere kindness—it was the fulfilment of God's original plan to bless all nations through Abraham's seed. Paul's words to the Galatians represent one of the most radical social statements ever made: in Christ, the divisions that separate humanity—ethnicity, social status, gender—are transcended. This doesn't erase our distinct identities, but it means they no longer determine our access to God or our value in His kingdom. The early church wrestled with this reality, sometimes disagreeing about how inclusive the Gospel should be. But the Spirit consistently led them toward greater inclusion, not exclusion. Today, we face similar challenges. It's easier to build churches, communities, and friendships with people who look, think, and live like us. Yet Christ calls us to cross boundaries—economic, racial, political, and cultural—that the world uses to divide people. The Gospel creates a new kind of family, one that reflects the beautiful diversity of God's creation while sharing the unity of Christ's Spirit.

Reflection Question

What boundaries in your life—whether social, economic, racial, or cultural—might God be calling you to cross in order to better reflect His kingdom?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Think of it like a relay race. Israel carried the baton for centuries, but the baton was always meant to be passed. Jesus ran the final leg and crossed the line. Now everyone who belongs to Jesus joins the winning team — regardless of background."

Today's Application

Examine the boundaries in your life that might be limiting your witness or fellowship. Look at your social circles, your church involvement, and your daily interactions. Are they primarily homogeneous? This week, intentionally cross a boundary. If your friendships are mostly within your economic bracket, reach out to someone in different circumstances. If your church or social groups lack diversity, consider how you might build bridges. Attend a cultural event different from your background, volunteer with an organisation serving a community unlike your own, or simply strike up conversations with people you wouldn't normally engage. Additionally, examine your heart for subtle prejudices or assumptions about other groups of people. Pray for God to reveal blind spots and give you His heart for all people. Consider supporting ministries or organisations working for racial reconciliation, economic justice, or cross-cultural understanding. Remember, this isn't about political correctness—it's about reflecting the radical inclusivity of Christ's kingdom.

Morning Prayer

Father, thank You for tearing down the walls that separated us from You and from each other. Forgive us when we rebuild barriers that You've demolished. Give us courage to cross boundaries and wisdom to build bridges. Help us see every person as a potential brother or sister in Your family. Make our lives and our churches beautiful reflections of Your diverse kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Devotion

One Family in Christ

Evening Reflection

The early church's discovery that Jews and Gentiles could worship together as equals was nothing short of miraculous. Imagine the wonder of that first shared meal, that first baptism where former enemies became family. The boundaries that had seemed so permanent, so necessary, suddenly revealed themselves as temporary scaffolding that God was removing to reveal His true architecture—a family drawn from every tribe and tongue. As you reflect on today, consider the moments when you experienced or witnessed this kind of boundary-crossing love. Perhaps it was a conversation that bridged a political divide, a kindness that crossed economic lines, or simply the recognition of shared humanity with someone very different from yourself. These moments are glimpses of God's kingdom breaking into our divided world.

Evening Reflection

When have you experienced the joy of Christian fellowship that transcended normal social boundaries? How did that experience change your perspective?

Evening Prayer

Lord, thank You for making us part of Your diverse, beautiful family. Help me see beyond surface differences to the hearts You love. May Your kingdom come and Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Thursday - A Bigger Promise Land

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God. (2 Corinthians 1:20 NIV)

Devotional Thought

Paul's teaching is revolutionary: 'the whole world is now God's holy land.' The 'promised land' was never meant to be a final destination but a signpost pointing to something infinitely greater—the renewal of all creation. This doesn't diminish the significance of God's promises to Abraham; it reveals their true magnitude. As our sermon wisely noted, we must resist reading the Bible backwards, using end-times prophecy to justify contemporary politics or violence. The ultimate fulfilment of the 'great return' isn't a political state in the Middle East, but people from every tribe, language, and nation being gathered under King Jesus. This perspective transforms how we view both current events and our daily lives. Every promise God made—about land, blessing, peace, and restoration—finds its 'Yes' in Christ, but in ways that exceed the original scope. The promised land becomes the promised world. The chosen people become all who choose Christ. The temple becomes our bodies, individually and collectively. The sacrifice becomes complete and final. This isn't replacement; it's fulfilment on a cosmic scale. Understanding this helps us avoid both supersessionism (the idea that the church has replaced Israel) and narrow nationalism (the idea that God's purposes are limited to one ethnic group or geographic region).

Reflection Question

How does understanding God's promises as finding their ultimate fulfilment in Christ change your perspective on current world events and your own spiritual journey?

From Sunday's Sermon

"The Old Testament promises about land, temple and people aren't cancelled — they're completed in Jesus, in a bigger and better way than a strip of land in the Middle East."

Today's Application

This expanded understanding of God's promises should transform both your worldview and your daily practices. First, resist the temptation to read current events through narrow prophetic speculation. Instead, pray for peace, justice, and reconciliation in troubled regions, supporting organisations working for human flourishing rather than political agendas. Consider supporting Embrace the Middle East or Open Doors, as mentioned in the sermon, to aid Christians caught in conflict. Second, live as a citizen of God's expanding kingdom. Since the whole world is now God's holy land, treat your neighbourhood, workplace, and community as sacred space where God's purposes can be advanced. Practice environmental stewardship, work for social justice, and seek the welfare of your city. Third, expand your prayer life beyond personal concerns to include global needs—refugees, persecuted Christians, political leaders, and peace in conflict zones. Finally, examine whether your faith has become too small, too focused on personal blessing rather than cosmic restoration. Ask God to enlarge your vision of His purposes and your role in them.

Morning Prayer

Almighty God, thank You that Your promises are bigger and better than we ever imagined. Help us see the whole world as Your holy land and all people as potential citizens of Your kingdom. Give us wisdom to navigate current events with both biblical faithfulness and compassionate love. Expand our vision and use us as agents of Your peace and justice. In Christ's name, Amen.

Evening Devotion

God's Expanding Kingdom

Evening Reflection

Tonight, as you consider God's expanding kingdom, let your imagination be stirred by the scope of His promises. The God who called Abraham to look at the stars and count them if he could—promising descendants as numerous—had an even grander vision in mind. Every person who comes to faith in Christ becomes part of that stellar promise, regardless of their earthly ancestry. The land promise that seemed so specific to one geographic location was actually God's way of saying, 'I want to make the whole earth My dwelling place.' As you rest tonight, remember that you're not just saved from something, but saved into something magnificent—a kingdom that

knows no borders, a family that transcends all human divisions, a restoration project that encompasses all creation.

Evening Reflection

How does the vastness of God's kingdom purposes make you feel? What role might He be calling you to play in His global mission?

Evening Prayer

Father, as I sleep tonight, fill my dreams with visions of Your kingdom coming in all its fullness. Thank You for including me in promises that began with Abraham and will culminate in the renewal of all things. Help me wake tomorrow ready to participate in Your grand design. Amen.

Friday - Don't Have Too Low a View of Jesus

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Whatever God has promised gets stamped with the Yes of Jesus. In him, this is what we preach and pray, the great Amen, God's Yes and our Yes together, gloriously evident. God affirms us, making us a sure thing in Christ, putting his Yes within us. By his Spirit he has stamped us with his eternal pledge—a sure beginning of what he is destined to complete. (2 Corinthians 1:20-22 MSG)

Devotional Thought

The sermon's concluding challenge resonates powerfully: 'Don't have too low a view of Jesus.' It's possible to diminish Christ by seeing Him merely as a good teacher, a moral example, or even just a personal Saviour, while missing His cosmic significance. Jesus isn't simply the Jewish Messiah or the Christian Lord—He's the fulfilment of every promise God has ever made, the answer to every human longing, the resolution of every conflict, and the hope of all creation. When we have too low a view of Jesus, we settle for too small a gospel. We make Christianity about personal piety rather than cosmic restoration, individual salvation rather than universal reconciliation, private devotion rather than public transformation. But the Message paraphrase captures something glorious: in Christ, God's 'Yes' and our 'Yes' come together. Every divine promise finds its fulfilment, and every human need finds its answer. This should fill us with both humility and confidence. Humility, because we're part of something infinitely greater than ourselves. Confidence, because the One who began this good work will complete it. We're not just trying to be good people or even just trying to get to heaven—we're participating in God's plan to reconcile all things to Himself. This high view of Jesus should transform our evangelism, our worship, our social engagement, and our hope for the future.

Reflection Question

In what ways might you have too low a view of Jesus? How would a higher, more cosmic view of Christ change your daily priorities and eternal perspective?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Let's be glad of the gracious gift of salvation in Jesus Christ, not to also squander opportunities our inheritance and inviting others to know Jesus. The Gospel is for Jews. For Gentiles. For all of us. Yes & Amen."

Today's Application

Spend time this week expanding your understanding of Christ's cosmic significance. Read Colossians 1:15-20 and Ephesians 1:9-10, meditating on the scope of Christ's work. Consider how this high view of Jesus should affect your evangelism—you're not just inviting people to a better life,

but to participate in the restoration of all creation. Examine whether you've been 'squandering opportunities' in your inheritance as the sermon warned. Are there gifts, callings, or opportunities you've neglected because you had too small a vision of God's purposes? Make a list of people in your life who don't yet know Jesus—family members, colleagues, neighbours, friends. Pray for them daily, asking God to open their hearts and give you opportunities to share the good news. But remember, the Gospel isn't just about individual salvation—it's about God's plan to make all things new. Look for ways to demonstrate this through acts of justice, mercy, and creation care. Finally, let your worship be enlarged. Praise Jesus not just as your personal Saviour, but as the cosmic Lord in whom all God's promises find their 'Yes.'

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, forgive us for having too low a view of who You are and what You've accomplished.

You are not just our Saviour, but the Saviour of the world, the fulfilment of every promise, the hope of all creation. Expand our vision of Your glory and our role in Your mission. Help us live worthy of our calling and share this magnificent Gospel with others. All things are 'Yes' in You, and through You we say 'Amen' to God's glory. In Your mighty name, Amen.

Evening Devotion

Yes and Amen

Evening Reflection

As this week of reflection concludes, let the phrase 'Yes and Amen' resonate in your heart. Every promise God made to Abraham, every prophecy spoken through Isaiah, every hope expressed in the Psalms, every vision recorded by the prophets—all find their ultimate fulfilment in Jesus Christ. This isn't just theological truth; it's deeply personal reality. Every longing of your heart for love, purpose, peace, and belonging finds its answer in Him. Every broken promise you've experienced, every disappointed hope, every unmet need—Christ is God's 'Yes' to all of it. And because He is faithful, you can confidently say 'Amen'—so be it, let it be so. The story that began with Abraham's call continues through you. You are part of God's great 'Yes' to the world, carrying forward the mission to bless all nations.

Evening Reflection

As you look back on this week's journey, what has God stirred in your heart about His purposes and your place in His story?

Evening Prayer

Jesus, You are God's great 'Yes' to every human need and divine promise. Thank You for including me in this magnificent story. As I rest tonight, seal these truths in my heart. Tomorrow and always, may my life be a resounding 'Amen' to Your glory. Yes and Amen, Lord Jesus. Amen.