



## St Barnabas Cray

# Trusting Jesus' Unfailing Promise

## Weekly Devotional Journey

### Monday - The God Who Keeps His Promises

#### Morning Devotion

##### Today's Verse

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

(Luke 24:49 NIV)

##### Devotional Thought

There's something profoundly reassuring about Jesus' final words to his disciples before the ascension. After the emotional whirlwind of crucifixion, resurrection, and forty days of renewed fellowship, he doesn't leave them with vague encouragement or wishful thinking. Instead, he gives them a concrete promise rooted in the Father's unchanging character. Notice the certainty in his words: 'I am going to send you what my Father has promised.' Not 'I might' or 'I hope to,' but 'I am going to.' This is the language of absolute commitment from one who has never broken a promise. The disciples were entering what we might call 'the between time'—that space between promise and fulfilment where faith is tested and trust is refined. Jesus knew they would need more than

memories of his presence; they would need his ongoing power. Yet he asks them to wait, to resist the urge to rush ahead in their own strength. Waiting is never easy, especially when we're eager to serve God and make a difference. But Jesus' instruction to 'stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high' reveals a profound spiritual principle: God's work must be done in God's way and in God's timing. The promise of the Holy Spirit wasn't just about receiving supernatural ability; it was about receiving the very presence of God himself to indwell and empower their witness.

### Reflection Question

Where in your life are you currently in a 'between time,' waiting for God's promises to unfold? How does Jesus' faithfulness in the past encourage your trust today?

### From Sunday's Sermon

"He says, stay and wait and trust. He says, don't go running ahead of yourselves. What you need to do, what you need to do, what I'm asking you to do will be supplied."

### Today's Application

Begin this week by identifying one area where you're tempted to 'run ahead' of God rather than wait for his provision and timing. Perhaps you're pushing for a resolution in a relationship, forcing a career decision, or trying to solve a problem through your own efforts alone. Take time to honestly assess whether you're trusting in your own abilities or truly depending on God's power. Create a simple daily practice this week: each morning, consciously surrender this area to God, asking for his wisdom and timing. Each evening, reflect on moments when you sensed his guidance or provision, however small. Consider starting a 'promise journal' where you record both God's promises from Scripture and the ways you see him fulfilling them in your daily life. This isn't about passive waiting, but about active trust—continuing to be faithful in the tasks before you while holding outcomes with open hands.

### Morning Prayer

Faithful Father, thank you that your promises are not empty words but sure foundations for our lives. Help me to trust your timing even when waiting feels difficult. Give me the wisdom to know when to act and when to wait, and the grace to depend on your power rather than my own strength. As I face the uncertainties of this week, remind me of your faithfulness in the past and your presence with me now. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Evening Devotion

### Resting in His Faithfulness

#### Evening Reflection

As this day draws to a close, take a moment to consider how God's faithfulness has been woven through the ordinary moments you've just lived. The disciples who waited in Jerusalem weren't sitting idle—they were praying, fellowshiping, and preparing their hearts for what was to come. Waiting on God doesn't mean inactivity; it means aligning our hearts with his purposes. Perhaps today brought unexpected challenges or disappointments. Maybe you found yourself wanting to rush ahead or take control. These are not failures but invitations to deeper trust. The same Jesus who promised the Holy Spirit to his first followers promises his presence to you. His track record is perfect—not one promise has ever been broken. As you prepare for rest, remember that even sleep is an act of trust, releasing the day's concerns into his capable hands.

#### Evening Reflection

Looking back on today, where did you sense God's presence or provision, even in small ways? What worries are you tempted to carry into tomorrow that you could instead entrust to him tonight?

#### Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, as I end this day, I thank you for your constant faithfulness. Help me to rest in your promises and release any anxieties about tomorrow into your loving care. May I sleep peacefully, knowing that you never slumber nor sleep. Amen.

## Tuesday - The Power That Raised Christ

### Morning Devotion

#### Today's Verse

His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:19-20 NIV)

#### Devotional Thought

Paul's prayer for the Ephesian church—and for us—contains a staggering claim: the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to believers today. This isn't merely metaphorical language or spiritual hyperbole; it's a theological reality that should transform how we approach every challenge, relationship, and opportunity. Think about the magnitude of resurrection power. Death, humanity's greatest enemy, was not merely defeated but utterly conquered. The grave could not hold the Son of God. Decay was reversed, hopelessness was transformed into joy, and despair gave way to eternal hope. This is the power Paul says is 'for us who believe.' Yet how often do we live as though we're dependent solely on our own limited resources? We worry about our ability to forgive that difficult person, to overcome persistent sin, to find strength for caring responsibilities, or to make a difference in our communities. We strategise and strive as though the outcome depends entirely on our wisdom and effort. Paul's prayer reminds us that we have access to divine power—not as a magic formula that removes all difficulty, but as a source of strength that enables us to live as resurrection people in a world still marked by death and decay. This power works through ordinary people in extraordinary ways, transforming hearts, healing relationships, and bringing hope to hopeless situations.

#### Reflection Question

In what specific area of your life do you need to stop relying on your own strength and instead draw on God's resurrection power? What would change if you truly believed this power was available to you?

**From Sunday's Sermon**

"And so let's draw on that strength of God's power, not necessarily our own, but the power of God working in us and through us in our church family life."

**Today's Application**

Today, identify one challenging situation you're facing—perhaps a difficult conversation you've been avoiding, a habit you've been trying to break, or a ministry opportunity that feels overwhelming. Instead of approaching it with your usual strategies, begin by consciously inviting God's power into the situation. Before taking any action, spend time in prayer acknowledging your need for divine strength. Throughout the day, when you feel inadequate or overwhelmed, remind yourself: 'The power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in me.' This isn't about becoming passive, but about partnering with God's strength rather than striving in your own. Notice how this shift in perspective affects your stress levels, your interactions with others, and your sense of hope. Consider sharing this truth with someone else who might be struggling, offering to pray with them about accessing God's power in their situation.

**Morning Prayer**

Almighty God, I am amazed that the same power that conquered death and raised Jesus is available to me. Forgive me for the times I've tried to live in my own strength, forgetting the incredible resources you've made available. Help me to depend on your power today, especially in [specific situation]. Transform my heart, strengthen my hands, and work through me for your glory. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

**Evening Devotion****Reflecting on Divine Strength****Evening Reflection**

As you look back over this day, can you identify moments when you sensed something beyond your natural ability at work? Perhaps it was patience you didn't know you possessed, wisdom that

surprised you, or courage that seemed to come from beyond yourself. These glimpses of divine power are often more subtle than we expect—not dramatic miracles, but quiet transformations of heart and circumstance. God's resurrection power is frequently most evident in the ordinary moments when we choose love over resentment, hope over despair, or service over self-interest. Even when the day has been difficult, remember that the same power that raised Jesus is at work in you, slowly but surely conforming you to his likeness. Tomorrow brings fresh opportunities to depend on his strength rather than your own.

### **Evening Reflection**

Where did you sense God's power at work today, even in small ways? What does it mean for your identity to know that resurrection power dwells within you?

### **Evening Prayer**

Father, thank you for the ways your power has been at work in me today, even when I didn't recognise it. Continue your transforming work in my heart as I sleep. Help me to wake tomorrow with fresh confidence in your strength. Amen.

## Wednesday - Great Joy in Uncertain Times

### Morning Devotion

#### Today's Verse

While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. (Luke 24:51-52 NIV)

#### Devotional Thought

The disciples' response to Jesus' ascension is remarkable and, frankly, counterintuitive. Their beloved teacher, the one they had followed for three years, had just disappeared from their sight. They were facing an uncertain future, unclear about what lay ahead, and tasked with an impossible mission. Yet Luke tells us they returned to Jerusalem 'with great joy.' This wasn't denial or false optimism; it was profound spiritual insight. They understood that Jesus' ascension wasn't an abandonment but a coronation. Their teacher was now seated at the right hand of the Father, ruling over all creation. More importantly, they trusted his promise that they would not be left alone. Their joy was rooted not in their circumstances but in their certainty about Jesus' identity and faithfulness. This challenges our modern tendency to equate joy with favourable circumstances or clear outcomes. The disciples teach us that Christian joy is fundamentally different from happiness—it's a deep confidence in God's character and purposes that can coexist with uncertainty, difficulty, and even loss. In our own 'between times'—those seasons when we're waiting for answers, healing, provision, or direction—we can choose joy because we know who holds the future. This doesn't mean pretending everything is fine or suppressing genuine concerns. Rather, it means anchoring our hearts in the unchanging reality of Christ's lordship over every situation we face.

#### Reflection Question

What circumstances in your life are currently challenging your joy? How might focusing on Jesus' identity and promises, rather than your circumstances, change your perspective?

**From Sunday's Sermon**

"Now the disciples, all the roller coaster emotions they've been feeling at this point, they're not down. Even though they've lost, they've seen their leader go, they don't walk away crushed, they walk away with great joy."

**Today's Application**

Practice the discipline of 'joy in uncertainty' today. When you encounter situations that typically trigger anxiety or discouragement—perhaps checking the news, facing a work challenge, or dealing with a family concern—pause and consciously redirect your thoughts to Jesus' lordship over that situation. Create three simple affirmations based on biblical truth that you can repeat when uncertainty threatens your peace: 'Jesus is Lord over this situation,' 'His promises never fail,' and 'He is working all things for good.' Write these on a card or in your phone and refer to them throughout the day. Additionally, look for opportunities to encourage others who might be struggling with uncertainty. Share a specific way you've seen God's faithfulness in difficult times, or simply remind someone of a biblical promise that speaks to their situation. Joy is often multiplied when shared and can be a powerful witness to God's goodness in a world that often feels chaotic and unpredictable.

**Morning Prayer**

Lord Jesus, help me to find my joy not in my circumstances but in your unchanging character and promises. When uncertainty threatens to steal my peace, remind me that you are seated at the Father's right hand, ruling over all creation. Fill me with the same joy the disciples experienced—a joy rooted in who you are rather than what I can see. Use my joy today to encourage others and point them to you. Amen.

## Evening Devotion

### Choosing Joy Over Worry

#### Evening Reflection

Tonight, consider how your perspective on today's challenges might have been different if you had consistently remembered Jesus' lordship over every detail. Joy isn't always our first response to difficulty, and that's understandable—we're human beings living in a broken world. But the disciples' example shows us that joy can be chosen even when circumstances are unclear or challenging. Perhaps today brought moments when worry tried to overwhelm you, or when the future seemed particularly uncertain. These are opportunities to grow in the same kind of trust the disciples demonstrated. Their joy wasn't based on having all the answers but on knowing the one who does. As you prepare for rest, choose to entrust tomorrow's concerns to the one who never fails to keep his promises.

#### Evening Reflection

What worries did you carry today that you could transform into prayers of trust? How can you cultivate a habit of choosing joy over anxiety?

#### Evening Prayer

Heavenly Father, forgive me for the times today when I chose worry over trust. Help me to remember that true joy comes from knowing you are in control, not from having perfect circumstances. As I sleep, work in my heart to deepen this joy that transcends understanding. Amen.

## Thursday - Open Hands and Faithful Service

### Morning Devotion

#### Today's Verse

Each of you should use whatever gift you have to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10 NIV)

#### Devotional Thought

One of the most challenging aspects of faithful discipleship is learning to hold our roles, plans, and preferences with open hands. The sermon reminds us that we must be willing to 'hold roles and ways of doing things with open hands,' serving not because we're attached to particular positions or methods, but because Christ served us so amazingly. This principle strikes at the heart of our human tendency toward control and self-importance. We naturally want to feel needed, to have our contributions recognised, and to see things done 'our way.' Yet Jesus models a different approach—one of humble service that prioritises God's kingdom over personal recognition or comfort. Consider how Jesus himself held everything with open hands: his reputation, his comfort, his very life. He served not from a position of grasping but from a heart of love. When we serve with closed fists—clinging to our roles, insisting on our methods, or serving primarily for what we receive in return—we miss the joy and freedom that comes from true stewardship. Open-handed service recognises that every gift, opportunity, and role is ultimately God's, entrusted to us for a season. This perspective transforms how we approach both the mundane tasks and the significant responsibilities in our lives. Whether we're leading a ministry, caring for family members, or simply showing kindness to a neighbour, we serve as stewards rather than owners.

#### Reflection Question

What roles, relationships, or responsibilities are you holding too tightly? How might God be calling you to serve with more open hands in a specific area of your life?

**From Sunday's Sermon**

"We serve others because Christ served us so amazingly and we hold roles and ways of doing things with open hands."

**Today's Application**

Examine your current commitments and identify one area where you've been serving with 'closed hands'—perhaps clinging to control, recognition, or a particular outcome. This might be in your workplace, family relationships, church involvement, or community engagement. Today, practice consciously 'opening your hands' in this area. If you're leading a project, invite input from others rather than insisting on your approach. If you're caring for someone, focus on their needs rather than your need to feel helpful. If you're involved in church ministry, ask yourself whether you're serving to build God's kingdom or your own sense of importance. Additionally, look for a new way to serve this week—something small and likely to go unnoticed. This could be as simple as tidying up after others, writing an encouraging note, or offering practical help to someone in need. The goal isn't to add to your to-do list but to practice the joy of selfless service that expects nothing in return.

**Morning Prayer**

Gracious God, thank you for the example of Jesus, who served with perfect love and open hands. Help me to examine my own motivations for service and to release any areas where I've been grasping for control or recognition. Show me how to serve others today as a faithful steward of the gifts you've given me. Transform my heart to find joy in serving you, whether or not anyone notices. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Evening Devotion****The Freedom of Letting Go****Evening Reflection**

Serving with open hands brings a surprising freedom. When we release our grip on outcomes, recognition, and control, we discover the joy that comes from simply being faithful stewards of

God's gifts. Perhaps today you experienced moments of this freedom—times when you served without thinking about what you might receive in return, or when you let go of needing things done your way. These glimpses of open-handed living remind us that we were created not to be owners but caretakers of God's good gifts. Even when it's difficult to let go, remember that God's hands are far more capable than ours. What feels like loss of control is actually an invitation into partnership with the one who holds all things together.

### **Evening Reflection**

Where did you experience the freedom of open-handed service today? What is God inviting you to release more fully into his care?

### **Evening Prayer**

Lord, thank you for the freedom that comes from serving you with open hands. Help me to continue releasing my grip on the things I cannot control and to trust more fully in your perfect care. May my service tomorrow flow from gratitude rather than obligation. Amen.

## Friday - Hope That Anchors the Soul

### Morning Devotion

#### Today's Verse

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. (Hebrews 6:19-20 NIV)

#### Devotional Thought

Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers included that they would know 'the hope to which he has called you.' This hope is not wishful thinking or optimistic speculation about the future. It's an anchor—something that holds firm when storms rage and circumstances threaten to overwhelm us. The imagery is profound: just as an anchor prevents a ship from drifting despite wind and waves, Christian hope keeps our souls steady regardless of what we face. This hope is grounded in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who has gone before us into the very presence of God. When we speak of Christian hope, we're not talking about hoping things will work out as we'd prefer, but about the certain expectation that God's purposes will ultimately prevail. This hope encompasses both present confidence and future assurance. In the present, it means trusting that God is at work even when we cannot see his hand clearly. For the future, it means knowing that every promise he has made will be fulfilled, every tear will be wiped away, and every injustice will be made right. This hope transforms how we face uncertainty, disappointment, and even suffering. It doesn't eliminate difficulty, but it provides an unshakeable foundation beneath our feet. When everything else feels unstable, we can return to this anchor point: Jesus has gone before us, he understands our struggles, and he has prepared a place for us in his Father's house.

#### Reflection Question

What situations in your life feel unstable or uncertain right now? How does the reality of Jesus as your 'forerunner' and anchor change how you approach these challenges?

**From Sunday's Sermon**

"This is hope that's not just wishful thinking or empty promises, but the hope in Jesus, who is Lord, who is on the throne of his kingdom."

**Today's Application**

Create a 'hope inventory' today. Write down three current situations that are causing you anxiety or uncertainty. For each situation, identify one specific aspect of Christian hope that applies. For example, if you're worried about a relationship, remember that God is in the business of reconciliation and healing. If you're concerned about provision, recall his promise to supply all your needs. If you're facing health challenges, anchor yourself in the hope of his presence and ultimate healing. Next, find one concrete way to act on this hope today. This might mean having a difficult conversation you've been avoiding (trusting God for the outcome), taking a step toward reconciliation with someone, or offering practical help to another person who needs hope. Hope is not passive waiting but active trust that expresses itself in faithful action. Finally, look for an opportunity to share hope with someone else. This could be as simple as listening to their concerns and gently pointing them toward God's faithfulness, or sharing a specific way you've experienced his provision in difficult times.

**Morning Prayer**

Faithful Father, thank you that in Jesus I have an anchor for my soul that will never fail. When circumstances feel overwhelming and the future seems uncertain, help me to return to this hope again and again. Strengthen my trust in your promises and help me to live today with the confidence that comes from knowing you are in control. Use me to share this hope with others who are struggling. In Jesus' strong name, Amen.

## Evening Devotion

### Anchored in His Presence

#### Evening Reflection

As this week draws to a close, reflect on the journey from promise to hope, from waiting to trusting, from striving to resting in God's power. The disciples who waited in Jerusalem between ascension and Pentecost discovered what we're still learning: that the space between promise and fulfilment is not empty but filled with God's presence. Their hope was not disappointed, and neither will ours be. Whatever uncertainties tomorrow may bring, you can rest tonight knowing that your hope is anchored not in changing circumstances but in the unchanging character of God. Jesus, your forerunner, has gone before you into every situation you'll face. His promises remain sure, his power remains available, and his love remains constant. This is the hope that enables us to sleep peacefully and wake with expectation.

#### Evening Reflection

How has your understanding of Christian hope deepened this week? What specific promises of God do you want to hold onto as you move forward?

#### Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for being the anchor of my hope. As I rest tonight, help me to release all my worries into your capable hands. May I wake tomorrow with renewed confidence in your promises and fresh eagerness to serve you with joy. Thank you for your faithful presence throughout this week. Amen.