



St Barnabas Cray

Trusting God's Sovereignty: Past, Present, Future

Weekly Devotional Journey

Monday - The Invitation to Whole-Hearted Worship

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. For the Lord Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth. (Psalm 47:1-2 NIV)

Devotional Thought

There is something remarkable about the opening of Psalm 47. Before a single word of theology is offered, before any argument is made or doctrine explained, the psalm begins with an exhortation — a summons, really — to express worship with the whole of one's being. Clap your hands. Shout to God. This is not a polite invitation to quiet contemplation; it is a call to visceral, embodied, communal praise.

We live in an age that often separates the intellectual from the emotional, the rational from the physical. We can be tempted to think that 'proper' worship is restrained, cerebral, and dignified —

and there is certainly a place for reverent stillness before God. But the psalmist will not allow us to reduce worship to a purely mental exercise. The whole person — hands, voice, heart, and soul — is invited into the presence of the great King.

Consider how naturally we give ourselves to collective expression in other settings. When a goal is scored, when a match is won, when a favourite piece of music reaches its crescendo, something rises within us that demands expression. We clap, we shout, we embrace strangers. There is a power in that shared moment that cannot be replicated alone. The psalmist understood this deeply. Worship, at its fullest, is not a solo performance but a communal act — something we do together, and something that shapes us together.

The reason for this exuberant worship is not vague sentiment but a specific theological conviction: the Lord Most High is awesome. The word 'awesome' has been so diluted in contemporary usage that we must reclaim its weight. To stand before the God who flung galaxies into being, whose voice thundered at Sinai, whose love sent his Son to die — this is not merely impressive. It is overwhelming. It produces in us what the theologians call 'the fear of the Lord': a holy, joyful reverence that is the beginning of all wisdom.

This week, we are invited to rediscover what it means to trust in the sovereignty of God — not as an abstract doctrine, but as a living reality that shapes how we worship, how we remember, how we live, and how we hope.

Reflection Question

When did you last experience genuine, whole-hearted worship — a moment when your heart, voice, and body were all engaged together in praising God? What tends to hold you back from that kind of expression?

From Sunday's Sermon

"When we come together to sing, chant or applaud, there is something very powerful in the collective experience that we cannot achieve on our own. It becomes very visceral and it can help us to express ourselves not just with our hands and voices, but with our whole being."

Today's Application

Begin this week with a deliberate act of worship that engages more than just your mind. This might mean singing along to a hymn or worship song with full voice rather than mouthing the words. It might mean physically kneeling or raising your hands in your private prayer time — not as a performance, but as a bodily act of surrender to God's sovereignty. Consider also what prevents you from worshipping wholeheartedly when you gather with others. Is it self-consciousness? Distraction? A sense that God is somehow distant? Name that barrier honestly before God today. Then, as an act of faith, choose to offer him praise anyway — not because you feel it perfectly, but because he is worthy of it. You might also write down three specific reasons why you believe God is 'awesome' — not generic answers, but drawn from your own experience and from Scripture — and let those truths anchor your worship throughout the day.

Morning Prayer

Lord Most High, you are awesome — and I confess that I do not always live as though I believe that. I let the noise and busyness of life crowd out the wonder of who you are. Today, I want to offer you more than the leftovers of my attention. I want to worship you with my whole being — heart, mind, soul, and strength. Teach me to see you clearly, to be moved by your greatness, and to respond with the kind of praise that you deserve. May my worship today be real, and may it shape the rest of this day. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Reviewing the Day in the Light of His Greatness

Evening Reflection

As this day draws to a close, take a few moments to sit quietly and consider where God showed up in the ordinary moments. Worship is not only what happens on a Sunday morning or in a structured prayer time — it is the orientation of a life turned towards the living God. The psalmist's call to 'clap your hands' is ultimately a call to a posture of the heart: one that recognises God's sovereignty in every moment, not just the sacred ones.

Perhaps today felt very ordinary — a series of tasks, conversations, and small decisions. But the

God who is 'the great King over all the earth' was present in all of it. He was present in the conversation you had over lunch, in the moment of frustration at your desk, in the quiet walk home. The question is not whether God was there, but whether you noticed him. Worship, in its deepest sense, is the practice of noticing — of training our eyes to see the hand of the sovereign God in the texture of everyday life. As you rest tonight, let that awareness settle over you like a blessing.

Evening Reflection

Where did you sense God's presence today, even in small or unexpected ways? Was there a moment when you could have responded with gratitude or praise but didn't — and what might it look like to offer that to God now?

Evening Prayer

Sovereign Lord, thank you for this day. Even in its ordinariness, you were present. Forgive me for the moments I missed you or forgot you. As I rest tonight, I offer you my whole day — the good parts and the difficult parts alike. You are the great King, and I am glad to be yours. Amen.

Tuesday - Remembering What God Has Done: The Faithfulness of the Covenant God

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved — a reminder that God subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. (Psalm 47:3-4 NIV)

Devotional Thought

One of the most important spiritual disciplines we can practise is the discipline of remembrance. The ancient Israelites understood this intuitively. Their worship was shaped not by abstract theological propositions but by a living memory of what God had done — how he had called Abraham out of obscurity, how he had made an extraordinary covenant with a nomadic herdsman, how he had kept his promises across centuries and generations when every human circumstance seemed to argue against it.

The covenant God made with Abraham was breathtaking in its scope. He promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, that kings would come from him, that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan as a permanent homeland, and — most astonishing of all — that through him all the nations of the earth would receive blessing and redemption. From a human perspective, this was absurd. Abraham was old. Sarah was old. They had no children. The land was occupied by other peoples. The timeline stretched not years but centuries. And yet Abraham trusted God.

Here is the profound theological truth at the heart of this passage: God's faithfulness does not operate on our timetable. The psalmist is celebrating promises that took four hundred years to begin their fulfilment, and some of which are still being worked out today. This challenges our deeply ingrained assumption that if God is truly sovereign, things should happen quickly, clearly, and in ways we can understand. Abraham could not see the full picture. Neither could Isaac. Neither could Jacob. But each of them trusted God for a future they would not live to see in its

entirety.

This is the nature of covenant faith: it is not faith in our own understanding, but faith in the character of the God who makes and keeps promises. When the path is unclear, when the promises seem impossibly distant, when the circumstances argue loudly against hope — the people of God are called to remember. Remember what he has done. Remember who he is. Remember that he has never once broken a promise. And let that remembrance become the foundation of present trust.

Reflection Question

Can you identify a time in your own life when God kept a promise or proved faithful in a way you could only recognise looking back? How does that memory speak to a situation you are facing today?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Like Abraham before them, Isaac and Jacob put their trust in God's promises. Promises they couldn't see being worked out immediately in the present. But they trusted to God for the future."

Today's Application

Set aside ten to fifteen minutes today to practise the discipline of remembrance. Take a piece of paper and write down three to five moments in your life when you can see, looking back, that God was faithful — times when he provided, guided, protected, or restored. These do not need to be dramatic moments; sometimes the most significant acts of God are quiet ones. Once you have written them down, read them back slowly and let gratitude rise within you. Then consider: is there a current situation in your life where you are struggling to trust God because you cannot see what he is doing? Bring that situation to God in prayer, and consciously place it alongside the evidence of his past faithfulness. Ask him to help you trust him now as he has proved trustworthy before. If you keep a journal, this would be a wonderful entry to write and return to.

Morning Prayer

Faithful God, you are the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — the God who keeps covenant across generations. I confess that I am often quick to doubt and slow to remember. Today, I choose to call to mind your faithfulness to me. Thank you for the times you have provided when I could not see the way forward. Thank you for promises kept, prayers answered, and grace given when I did not deserve it. Help me to trust you now with the things I cannot yet see or understand. You have never broken a promise, and I rest my hope in that truth today. Amen.

Evening Devotion**The Long View of Faith****Evening Reflection**

There is a particular kind of courage required to trust God when the fulfilment of his promises lies beyond your own horizon. Abraham died without seeing the full flowering of what God had promised him. And yet Scripture tells us that he was counted righteous — not because he had seen everything, but because he had trusted the One who had spoken.

As you reflect on this day, consider where you may have been tempted to measure God's faithfulness by the pace of your own expectations. We live in a culture of immediacy — we want answers quickly, resolutions promptly, and clarity now. But the God of the covenant works across generations, weaving together threads of grace and purpose that we often cannot perceive from within the tapestry. Tonight, the invitation is to release your grip on the timeline and rest in the faithfulness of the One who holds it. His purposes are not slow — they are deep. And they are sure.

Evening Reflection

Is there something you have been waiting for God to do — a prayer that feels unanswered, a promise that feels distant? How might the example of Abraham encourage you to hold that waiting with greater trust and patience?

Evening Prayer

Lord, I confess I am not always good at waiting. I want to see, to understand, to know. But tonight I choose to trust your faithfulness more than my own understanding. You are the God who keeps covenant. Help me to rest in that truth and to sleep in peace. Amen.

Wednesday - God Ascended: The Enthroned King and the New Beginning**Morning Devotion****Today's Verse**

God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. (Psalm 47:5-6 NIV)

Devotional Thought

There is a moment in the middle of Psalm 47 that is charged with extraordinary energy. The psalmist describes God ascending — rising to his throne amid shouts of joy and the sounding of trumpets. Whatever the original occasion for this song — perhaps the Ark of the Covenant being carried up to the Temple Mount, a symbol of God's presence ascending to dwell among his people — the language is unmistakably royal. A king is taking his throne. The proper response is celebration.

What the psalmist could not have known was how precisely and profoundly these words would find their ultimate fulfilment centuries later. This is why the Christian Church has long used Psalm 47 on

Ascension Day — the day we remember Jesus rising from the earth after his resurrection and ascending to the right hand of the Father. The disciples watched as a cloud took him from their sight. And we might imagine that their first response was grief — the one who had walked with them, eaten with them, taught them and loved them was gone. What could possibly come next?

But Jesus had already told them. His departure was not an ending but a beginning. 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you,' he promised, 'and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' The ascension of Jesus was not a retreat from the world but an enthronement over it. He ascended not to be distant but to reign — and to send his Spirit to equip his people to carry his name to every corner of creation.

This matters profoundly for how we understand our own lives. We are not waiting for a king who is absent. We are living under the reign of a king who is enthroned, whose Spirit dwells within us, and whose purposes are actively advancing in the world. The shouts of joy at the ascension were not a farewell — they were a coronation anthem. And we are called to live as citizens of that kingdom, empowered by that Spirit, bearing witness to that King.

Reflection Question

How does the truth that Jesus is currently reigning as the enthroned King — not absent but active — change the way you approach the challenges and opportunities of today?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Jesus promised the disciples that his departure was not the end for people of faith, but a new beginning, a new relationship to enter into with the Holy Spirit, who would enable them to be witnesses to the end of the earth."

Today's Application

Today, practise what it means to live consciously under the reign of the ascended King. This begins in the mind: when you face a decision, a difficulty, or a moment of temptation, pause and remind

yourself that Jesus is Lord — not just in theory, but in the immediate reality of this moment. His Spirit is with you. His authority covers you. You are not navigating life alone or without resource. Practically, consider one area of your life where you have been acting as though you are on your own — a relationship under strain, a work situation that feels overwhelming, a habit you have been trying to change in your own strength. Bring that area consciously under his lordship today. Pray specifically about it, ask for his Spirit's help, and then act in the confidence that you are not alone. If you have the opportunity, share with someone today — a friend, a family member, a colleague — something of what it means to you that Jesus is alive and reigning. Even a small, honest word is an act of witness.

Morning Prayer

Ascended Lord, I confess that I sometimes live as though you are far away — as though I must manage life by my own wisdom and strength. But you are not absent; you are enthroned. Your Spirit lives within me. Your purposes are at work in the world. Help me today to live in the reality of your reign — to draw on your Spirit's power, to speak your name with confidence, and to trust that you are actively at work even when I cannot see it. You are King. I am glad. Amen.

Evening Devotion

The Spirit Who Stays

Evening Reflection

Jesus told his disciples that it was actually for their benefit that he was going away — because if he went, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would come to them. This is one of the most astonishing promises in all of Scripture. The disciples had experienced the presence of Jesus as something external — a person they could see, hear, and touch. But the Spirit would dwell within them. Closer than a friend walking beside you. More intimate than a voice across the room.

As you close this day, take a moment to consider the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life. Not as a theological concept but as a living reality. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you. He is the Spirit of wisdom, of comfort, of courage, of truth. In the moments today when you felt alone, uncertain, or inadequate — he was there. In the moments when you found unexpected grace or quiet strength — that was him. Tonight, rest in the knowledge that you are not merely

accompanied by God; you are indwelt by him.

Evening Reflection

In what moment today did you most need the presence of God's Spirit? Did you draw on that resource — and if not, what might help you to do so more readily tomorrow?

Evening Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank you for not leaving me alone. Thank you for being closer than my own breath. Forgive me for the times today when I forgot you were there. As I sleep, rest over me. Renew me. And tomorrow, may I be more aware of your presence and more responsive to your leading. Amen.

Thursday - Children of Abraham: The Inheritance of Faith

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. (Galatians 3:7-9 NIV)

Devotional Thought

One of the most remarkable truths in all of Scripture is that the covenant God made with Abraham was never intended to be the exclusive property of one ethnic group. From the very beginning, when God promised Abraham that 'all nations will be blessed through you,' the scope of grace was universal. The inheritance was always meant to overflow the boundaries of any single people and flood the whole earth.

Paul's argument in Galatians is breathtaking in its boldness. He insists that the defining characteristic of Abraham's children is not ancestry but faith. Those who rely on faith — regardless of their background, nationality, or history — are blessed along with Abraham. They share in the same inheritance. They are heirs of the same promise. They belong to the same family.

For those of us who are not Jewish by birth, this is extraordinarily good news. We have no natural claim on the covenant. We are, as Paul says elsewhere, wild branches grafted into a cultivated olive tree. We receive an inheritance we did not earn and do not deserve. And this is precisely the point. The inheritance was never earned — not by Abraham, not by Isaac, not by Jacob, and not by us. It has always been a gift of grace, received through faith.

This should produce in us a profound and lasting humility. We stand before God not on the basis of our moral record, our religious performance, or our spiritual achievements. We stand on the basis of what Jesus has done — his death bearing our sin, his resurrection guaranteeing our future. And we receive that standing through faith: a trusting, resting, depending on him rather than on ourselves.

But this truth should also produce in us a radical generosity of spirit towards others. If we received an inheritance we did not deserve, then we have no grounds for spiritual pride or exclusivity. Every person we encounter is someone for whom Christ died — someone who could, through faith, become a fellow heir of the same extraordinary promise. How does that change the way we see the people around us today?

Reflection Question

How does knowing that your place in God's family is entirely a gift of grace — not earned or deserved — affect your attitude towards yourself, towards God, and towards others who do not yet know him?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Those of us who have faith in Jesus Christ and the power of his death and resurrection to forgive sins can claim the same inheritance as direct descendants of Abraham, a place in God's eternal kingdom. We are justified in that hope by our faith, and we too are destined to receive an inheritance that we do not deserve."

Today's Application

Today, let the truth of undeserved inheritance shape two specific areas of your life. First, in your inner life: if you have been carrying a sense of unworthiness — a feeling that you have not done enough, prayed enough, or been good enough to deserve God's love — bring that feeling to the cross today. You are right that you don't deserve it. None of us do. But that is the whole point of grace. Receive it afresh. Let it settle into the places where shame or inadequacy has taken root. Second, in your relationships: think of one person in your life who seems far from God — perhaps someone you have quietly written off, or someone whose lifestyle or background feels very different from your own. Remember that Abraham's blessing was for all nations. Pray specifically for that person today. Ask God to open their eyes to the grace that is also available to them. And consider whether there is a small, genuine act of kindness or interest you could show them this week as a reflection of the God who reaches across every boundary to welcome people home.

Morning Prayer

Gracious God, I am humbled by the truth that I have received an inheritance I did not earn and do not deserve. Thank you for the grace that reaches across every boundary — of time, of ethnicity, of sin — to bring people into your family. Forgive me for the times I have taken that grace for granted, or been slow to extend it to others. Today, help me to live as a person who has been profoundly loved and freely forgiven — and to let that shape how I love and treat the people around me. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Grace Received, Grace Extended

Evening Reflection

There is a beautiful symmetry in the gospel: those who have received grace freely are called to extend it freely. The inheritance we have been given — unearned, undeserved, given purely out of God's love — is not meant to be hoarded but shared. The blessing of Abraham was always intended to flow outward, through his descendants by faith, to the ends of the earth.

As you reflect on this day, consider the moments when you encountered people who do not yet know the grace you have received. Perhaps a colleague under pressure, a neighbour going through difficulty, a family member wrestling with questions of meaning or purpose. Each of those people is someone for whom Christ died. Each of them is a potential heir of the same extraordinary promise. You may be the most natural bridge between them and the God who loves them.

You do not need to have all the answers or deliver a polished presentation of the gospel. You simply need to be someone who has genuinely received grace and who genuinely cares about others. That combination — authenticity and love — is remarkably powerful. Tonight, ask God to give you eyes to see the people around you as he sees them.

Evening Reflection

Did you encounter anyone today who seemed to be searching for something, struggling under a burden, or in need of the kind of grace you have received? How might you respond to them tomorrow?

Evening Prayer

Lord, you gave me something I did not deserve. Help me not to keep it to myself. Give me eyes to see the people around me as you see them — beloved, valuable, and within reach of your grace. Use me, in whatever small ways you choose, to be a channel of your blessing to others. Amen.

Friday - Witnesses to the End of the Earth: Living Under God's Sovereignty Today

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8 NIV)

Devotional Thought

We have spent this week tracing the arc of God's sovereignty — from the exuberant call to worship in Psalm 47, through the long faithfulness of the covenant God, through the enthronement of the ascended King and the gift of his Spirit, to the extraordinary truth that all who have faith share in Abraham's inheritance. Today we arrive at the question that all of this raises for our daily lives: how, then, shall we live?

The psalmist's vision at the close of Psalm 47 is of a future gathering — the nobles of the nations assembling as the people of the God of Abraham, worshipping before his throne. It is a vision of consummation, of all things drawn together under the sovereign reign of God. But we do not yet live in that consummation. We live in the in-between time — after the ascension of Jesus, after the giving of the Spirit, but before the final gathering of all things. And in this in-between time, we are called to be witnesses.

The word 'witness' is important. A witness is not an expert, a debater, or a professional communicator. A witness is simply someone who has seen something and tells others what they have seen. The disciples were called to witness because they had encountered the risen Jesus. We are called to witness because we too have encountered him — in Scripture, in prayer, in community, in the moments of grace and transformation that mark a life lived with God.

But witnessing is not only verbal. It is the whole texture of a life shaped by the sovereignty of God. When we interact with others with unusual grace, when we face difficulty with unexpected peace,

when we speak honestly about our own faith and struggles, when we act with generosity and justice in a world that prizes self-interest — these are all acts of witness. They point, however imperfectly, to a King who is real, a grace that is genuine, and a future that is sure.

The late Queen Elizabeth II modelled something of this in her public life. She spoke openly about her personal faith in Jesus, describing his teachings as her 'inner light' and his life as her 'inspiration and anchor.' She did not preach at people, but she did not hide her faith either. She witnessed — through her words, her service, and the way she carried herself — to a King greater than herself. That is the calling of every follower of Jesus.

Reflection Question

When you tell the story of your life to other people, do you include the moments when God has been active or present? What might it look like to be a more natural and honest witness to God's work in your life?

From Sunday's Sermon

"When we tell our life story to other people, do we think to mention the times when God has been active or present in what we've experienced? I'm not good at doing that, I know that. But I should be encouraged to do it more."

Today's Application

As you close this week, take stock of the five themes we have explored: whole-hearted worship, the discipline of remembrance, living under the reign of the ascended King, receiving and extending grace, and bearing witness in everyday life. Ask yourself honestly: which of these is most underdeveloped in your life right now? Choose one concrete step for the coming week in that area. It might be committing to a regular time of worship and prayer. It might be keeping a journal of God's faithfulness. It might be one honest conversation with a friend about your faith. It might be a specific act of grace towards someone who needs it. Whatever it is, make it specific, make it achievable, and tell someone about it so that you can be held gently accountable. We are not

called to transform ourselves overnight. We are called to take the next faithful step — and to trust that the sovereign God who has been faithful across millennia will be faithful in our small, ordinary, precious lives too.

Morning Prayer

Sovereign Lord, as this week draws to a close, I am grateful for the vision of who you are — the great King over all the earth, faithful across generations, enthroned in glory, near by your Spirit. I am grateful that through faith in Jesus I have been welcomed into your family and given an inheritance I could never have earned. Now, help me to live accordingly. Give me courage to worship you wholeheartedly, to remember your faithfulness, to draw on your Spirit's power, to extend your grace to others, and to bear witness — in word and in life — to the King who is worth everything. Like Abraham, may I face the future not with trepidation but with trust. You are sovereign. You are faithful. And you are mine, and I am yours. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Facing the Future with Trust

Evening Reflection

We began this week with a summons to clap our hands and shout to God with cries of joy. We end it with a choice. The psalm, the sermon, and this week of reflection have all been pointing us towards the same decision that Abraham faced, that the disciples faced, and that every generation of God's people has faced: will we face the future with trepidation and uncertainty, or will we put our trust in a sovereign God?

This is not a call to naïve optimism or to pretend that life is not sometimes hard and bewildering. Abraham had his moments of doubt. The disciples were terrified when Jesus was taken from them. The psalms themselves are full of honest wrestling with darkness and confusion. Trust in God's sovereignty is not the absence of struggle — it is the choice to hold on to the character and promises of God even when circumstances argue against it.

As you close this week, let the great arc of God's faithfulness — from Abraham to the ascension, from the covenant to the coming kingdom — settle over you like a cloak. You are held by the same

God who has been faithful across all of human history. He will not let you go. And one day, the vision of Psalm 47 will be fully realised: all the nations gathered, all things made new, the great King worshipped by his people for ever. Until that day, we walk by faith — and we are not alone.

Evening Reflection

As you look back over this week and forward to the week ahead, what one truth about God's sovereignty do you most want to carry with you? How will you hold on to it when things become difficult?

Evening Prayer

Great King, thank you for this week — for your Word, your Spirit, and the community of faith that walks this road with me. I do not know what next week holds, but I know who holds it. I choose trust over trepidation, faith over fear. You are sovereign, you are faithful, and your purposes will prevail. I rest in you tonight. Amen.