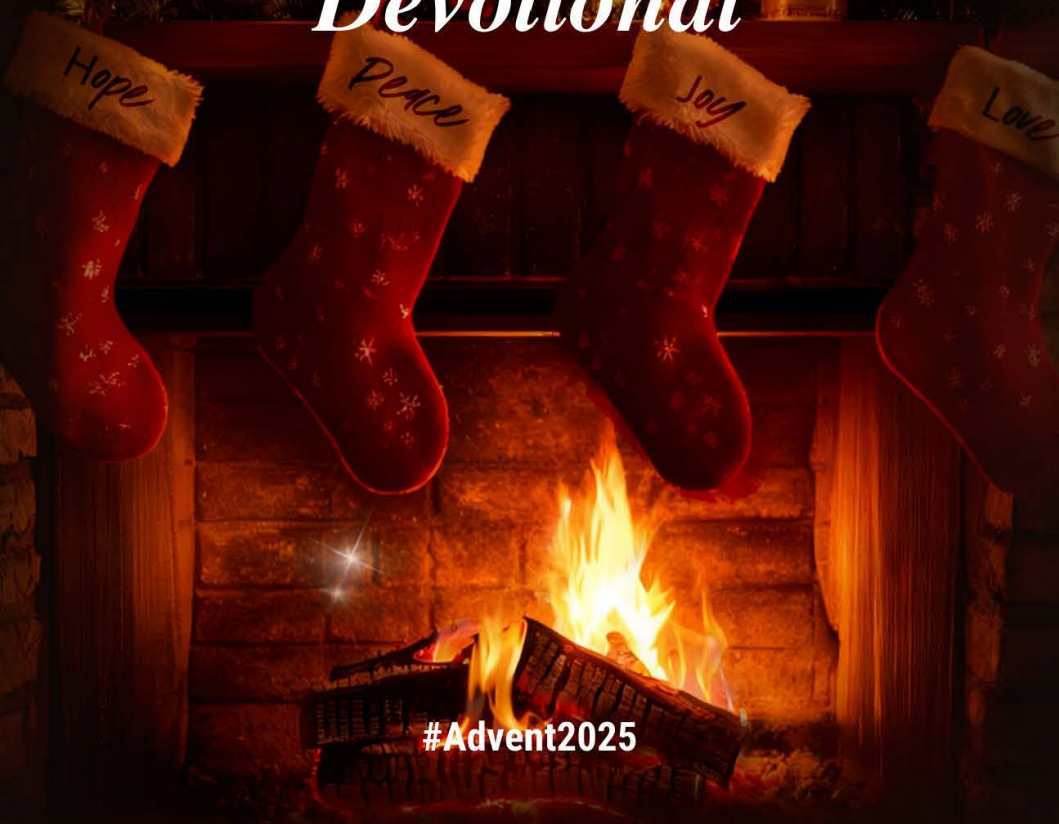


Stocking Stuffers

GIFTING THE THEMES OF ADVENT

Devotional



#Advent2025

Stocking Stuffers

GIFTING THE THEMES OF ADVENT

Week 1

The Gift of Hope

SERMON NOTES

Scripture Psalm 122

Title THE GIFT OF HOPE

NOTES

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

HOPE ON THE MOUNTAIN

Isaiah 2:1-4

DEVOTION

When we seek the Lord and dwell in His presence, He leads us from destruction to production, from ruin to restoration, from despair to hope.

As we enter the Advent season, our hearts are called to focus on hope, not a fragile kind of hope, but a hope that is rooted in the presence and promises of God. Isaiah has a vision of that hope when he speaks of “the mountain of the Lord,” Mount Zion. Though it wasn’t the tallest mountain in the region, it was the most significant, because it was the place where God chose to dwell. And Isaiah declares that one day all nations will seek that presence.

But Isaiah doesn’t stop there. We also hear the nations say, “Come, let us go up... He will teach us His ways so that we may walk in His paths.” God Himself not only invites us into His presence but also into His instruction. His presence doesn’t just comfort us, but it shapes us. His Word doesn’t just inform us, but it transforms us.

And what does that transformation look like for us? Listen, what once was a tool for destruction will be changed into what produces life. What was once used for war will now be used for peace.

Maybe this season, you’re walking through a storm. Maybe hope feels out of reach because of the chaos in your life, and the war that’s around you or within you. But Advent reminds us that Christ has come, Christ is here, and Christ is coming again. So abide in His presence, yield to His instruction, and trust that He will bring about transformation.

Because when we seek the Lord and dwell in His presence, He leads us from destruction to production, from ruin to restoration, from despair to hope.

So remember, the Lord has promised us hope in His presence, His Word, and His transforming power!

Prayer

Lord, as we enter this Advent season, fix our hearts on Your hope. Teach us to walk in Your ways, trust in Your promises, and dwell in Your presence. Transform our fears into faith and our despair into hope, until that glorious day that Christ comes again. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

AWAKENED HOPE: IGNITE THE LIGHT WITHIN

Romans 13:11-14

This isn't just a religious nudge; it's an invitation to grab hold of hope and set your life ablaze with purpose.

DEVOTION

As the holiday season kicks in, many of us feel the weight of the world pressing down. In Romans 13:11-14, Paul delivers a powerful wake-up call to us: “The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber.” **This isn't just a religious nudge; it's an invitation to grab hold of hope and set your life ablaze with purpose.**

Let's be real—life can be tough. We juggle work, relationships, and the constant pressure to “have it all together.” But what if you could flip the script? Paul challenges us to cast off the darkness of doubt and despair and step into the light of possibility. Imagine transforming your daily grind into a journey of genuine connection, where your actions spark hope in others.

This Advent, think about how you can embody that hope. It might be a kind word to a stranger, a helping hand to a friend, or simply being present with those you love. Each small act has the power to ignite change—both in your life and in the lives of those around you.

Hope isn't just a feeling; it's a fire within you waiting to be unleashed. Let it shine!

Prayer

Lord, ignite the hope within me and help me share that light with everyone I encounter. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NO ONE KNOWS

Matthew 24:36-44

If Jesus said it, then it's our job to believe it and live life in a way that confirms our belief.

DEVOTION

In 2018, South African Joshua Mhlakela dreamed that Jesus would return on September 23 or 24, 2025. That prediction gained traction on Tik Tok and then went viral on other media outlets. Many people made the mistake of altering their lives because they believed the prediction. They gave away houses, cars and money to get ready for the return of Jesus. However, the prediction did not happen. They were left disappointed and embarrassed by their actions. If history is any guide, this will not be the last time someone falls for a false prophecy.

In Matthew 24, Jesus is teaching his disciples about the end times. He promised them he would leave them but come again. They wanted to know when he would return. Jesus tells them that no one knows the exact day or hour of his return. Only God the Father knows these details.

Far too many people are not satisfied with Jesus' answer. They feel the need to make up a day and time for his return. Here is the good news for true believers in Christ. We do not need the details to trust in Jesus. We know that when he gives us a promise, he will fulfill it. **If Jesus said it, then it's our job to believe it and live life in a way that confirms our belief.**

During this holiday season we celebrate the virgin birth of our Savior. The miracle of God wrapping himself in flesh and dwelling with humanity. This was the fulfilment of a promise made by God to mankind thousands of years earlier. During the same time we look in the past and celebrate Jesus' birth we also look to the future for his promised return. We have a blessed hope that our Savior will come back for his church, therefore we stay alert and active.

Prayer

Father God, thank you for sending your Son into the world to save mankind. As we look forward to his promised return bless us to be ready no matter the day or hour. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A CALL TO PERSEVERE IN FAITH

Hebrews 10:23

What He has spoken over your life still stands, even if your situation looks uncertain.

DEVOTION

Life has a way of testing your hold on hope. Bills pile up, health issues develop, dreams delay, and sometimes the weight of injustice can make us wonder if God still sees us. But the Word reminds us to hold fast to the hope we profess. We know the track record of Christ. Our view on God's ability is a byproduct of our spiritual amnesia. He hasn't failed us, he hasn't left us, and yet we grow impatient with waiting for his promise to produce in our pathway.

Hope isn't wishful thinking. It's unwavering trust that the same God who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, delivered Jonah out of a dark place, snatched the key from hell will bring us through whatever we're facing. He is faithful. **What He has spoken over your life still stands, even if your situation looks uncertain.** His promises are STILL yes and amen.

So keep showing up. Keep praying. Keep building. Keep believing. Your hope is not wasted when it's placed in the God who never fails.

This week, speak hope into your situation. Write down one promise from God's Word and declare it over your life each morning. Encourage someone else who's weary by sending a text, making a call, and praying together. Let us be a people who hold fast to hope and remind the world that our God is still faithful.

Prayer

Lord God, thank you for being a faithful God even when I'm faithless! Forgive me for moments when I've wavered in my faith. Help me every day to be hopeful, to be content, and to be steadfast! I recognize that there is a lot in the world that can make it seem hopeless, but I'm grateful that my hope is in you! In Jesus Name, Amen.

WAITING WITH HOPE

Isaiah 40:31

DEVOTION

To wait for the Lord is to rest in His timing, trust in His promises, and lean into His strength, not our own.

When we consider Advent, it is the season of waiting. It is the season of hope, expectancy, and anticipation. When we look at Isaiah 40:31, Israel is weary and overwhelmed. Isaiah offers a promise that those who wait on the Lord will be renewed.

Biblical hope is not a passive wishing but an active waiting grounded in the faithfulness of God. It is the quiet, unshakable confidence that God will do what He has promised—even if we do not yet see it.

- John Piper, Future Grace

To wait for the Lord is to rest in His timing, trust in His promises, and lean into His strength, not our own. It's the same kind of waiting that Mary embraced when she heard the angel's announcement. It's the same kind of waiting that Zechariah endured in silence, and that Simeon practiced faithfully in the temple - knowing the Messiah would come, even if they didn't know when.

This Advent, we too wait - not for the first coming, but for the second. And in the meantime, God doesn't just ask us to hold on; He promises that we will be renewed in the process.

Prayer

Lord, in this season, teach me how to wait on you with hope. Please help me not to grow weary in the wait. Help me not to run ahead of You. In this season, renew my strength and help me to trust that, in my waiting, You are working—even when I can't see it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTIONS

A large, faint, stylized illustration of a red sock with yellow stars, positioned diagonally across the page. The sock is red with several yellow stars of varying sizes scattered on it. The heel and toe patches are a lighter shade of red. The cuff at the top is white with a yellow border. The entire illustration is semi-transparent, allowing the horizontal lines of the notebook paper to be seen through it.