



TOPSAIL FAMILY

**CHRISTMAS**

---

ADVENT



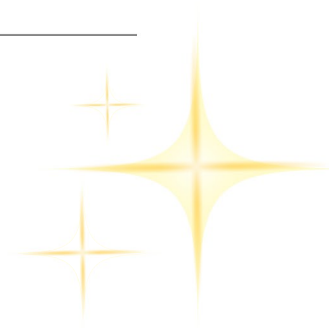
---

Introduction	1
Day 1 - In Christ	3
Day 2 - Intertestamonial Period	4
Day 3 - Waiting for a Messiah	5
Day 4 - Do Not Be Afraid	6
Day 5 - What is in a Name?	7
Day 6 - God of the Impossible	8
Day 7 - Servanthood	9
Day 8 - Hannah's Song & Mary's Song	10
Day 9 - Waiting: The Davidic Covenant	11
Day 10 - Making Due in Inconvenience & Discomfort	12
Day 11 - The Mundane	14
Day 12 - Humility	15
Day 13 - All People	16
Day 14 - Obedience	17
Day 15 - Treasuring and Meditating	18
Day 16 - Obedience	19
Day 17 - Waiting Like Anna	20
Day 18 - Upside Down	21
Day 19 - The Not Yet	22
Day 20 - The Now	23
Day 21 - The Not Yet	23
Day 22 - Merry Christmas!	25

---

---

Introduction





The Advent season, often celebrated by the Church Body takes place in the weeks leading up to Christmas. While there is no Biblical mandate for Advent, the practice points us to our place in history. The place where we find ourselves between the Resurrection of Christ and His Second Coming.

Jesus taught us to pray your kingdom come, your will be done.

The Christmas advent season gives us hope because we are in a perpetual season of advent - the season that we as Christians wrestle with the now and the not yet.

While we are redeemed, we are still waiting for our total and complete redemption - the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:23)

While we have been saved, we are still being saved through sanctification, and we look forward to complete salvation in eternity.

This life, therefore, is not righteousness  
but growth in righteousness,  
not health but healing,  
not being but becoming,  
not rest but exercise.

We are not yet what we shall be,  
but we are growing toward it;  
the process is not yet finished  
but it is going on;

This is not the end but it is the road;  
all does not yet gleam in glory  
but all is being purified.

~Martin Luther





---

## Day 1 - In Christ

Ephesians 1:7-14, Hebrews 12:1-12

To fully grasp this concept of the Now and the Not Yet, we need to start with what it means to be "In Christ". The doctrine of Union with Christ is foundational. This doctrine tells us that because Jesus was fully man and fully God, Christ's life, death, and resurrection have resulted in our justification. As believers, we are IN Christ. His Holiness is credited to us. The triumph of His resurrection is our triumph. We are seated with Him in Heaven, and we will share in the glory of His return. As impossible as it sounds, we are as He is.

Throughout all of the Pauline letters, the apostle Paul explains this unique relationship of the believer. Ephesians 1:7-14, for one, gives us a glimpse at some of these benefits: redemption, forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps understanding this doctrine should cause us to question our view on suffering. If the mission of Christ was to reject the comfort of Heaven and live a life of humility, what have we signed up for in following Him? And opposite of that, what do we have to look forward to? Are we living for the Now, or do we fix our eyes on the Not Yet that is waiting for us?

Friend, if you are suffering fix your eyes on the One who suffered on your behalf. If you are walking through a season of discipline, consider the love of your Heavenly Father.

Endure.

It will be worth it.





---

## Day 2 - Intertestamonial Period

Luke 1:26-38; Hebrews 1:1-4;

There is a period of time between the Old Testament and the New that spanned about 400 years. It feels long and dark. It reminds us of the 400 years the Israelites lived in slavery to the Egyptians. No prophets brought words of exhortation or even rebuke. We know from historical accounts that the Jewish people continued to live scattered from one another and persecuted. We can't help but wonder about the prayers that were sent as the Jewish people were persecuted. Did God hear? Did God remember His promise? Did He delay in His answer? Or was He reminding us that at the right time, He would reveal His purpose?

It would be easy for us to mistake this Intertestamonial period as God not working for the good of His people. But God is always at work and never not working. And He is working all things for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). We have evidence of the way He was working, knitting together his purpose all throughout the gospels.

We see it in the genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. We see it when we read the story of Jesus being presented in the temple through the witness of Anna and Simeon. We know at least Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, and Zechariah were faithfully waiting for the Messiah. In John, we see that Jesus acknowledged and celebrated the Festival of Dedication (known as Hannukah) established during the Intertestimonial Period. This provides us with Hope that even in the times we feel distant from God, we can have confidence that He is there, listening, working on our behalf, providing more grace.

This time in history may have felt a little like the way we view our waiting. The tension of knowing God's promises are real, and yet not realized. May we remain steadfast as those who have gone before us without realizing the promise - they heard from God through the prophets and we through His Word, Jesus. Surely He says to us as He did to Mary - "you have found favor with God."





---

## Day 3 - Waiting for a Messiah

Luke 1:26-38; Genesis 3:15

Right after humanity fell into sin the Gospel was promised. For centuries God's chosen people the Israelites waited for their Messiah. And waited. And waited. Knowing they were chosen did not keep them from wandering, from forgetting. Time and time again, God sent reminders via prophets and others to remain devoted.

We read the passages of the Exodus, and books like Judges, or the failings of our great heroes like David and shake our heads in frustration. Why can't they get it right? Why can't they see they are promise breakers? We wonder at a Father who forgives time and time again, patiently calling His children back to Him, and lavishly loving them without prejudice. And we wait for the Hero to be revealed.

And then one day it happens. The moment everyone was waiting for, in the most unexpected way. Through a lowly girl, overshadowed by the power of the Most High.

And so we wait. We break promises. We fail time and time again to get it right because we live in the Now and the Not Yet. But we remember that our Father, through the death and resurrection of His Son, forgives us and calls us back to Him. He lavishly loves us even at our worst.

One day it will happen. The Not Yet will become our sight because "nothing will be impossible with God." Let our prayer be like Mary's, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be done to me according to your word."

---

## Day 4 - Do Not Be Afraid

Luke 1:29-30; Isaiah 6:1-8

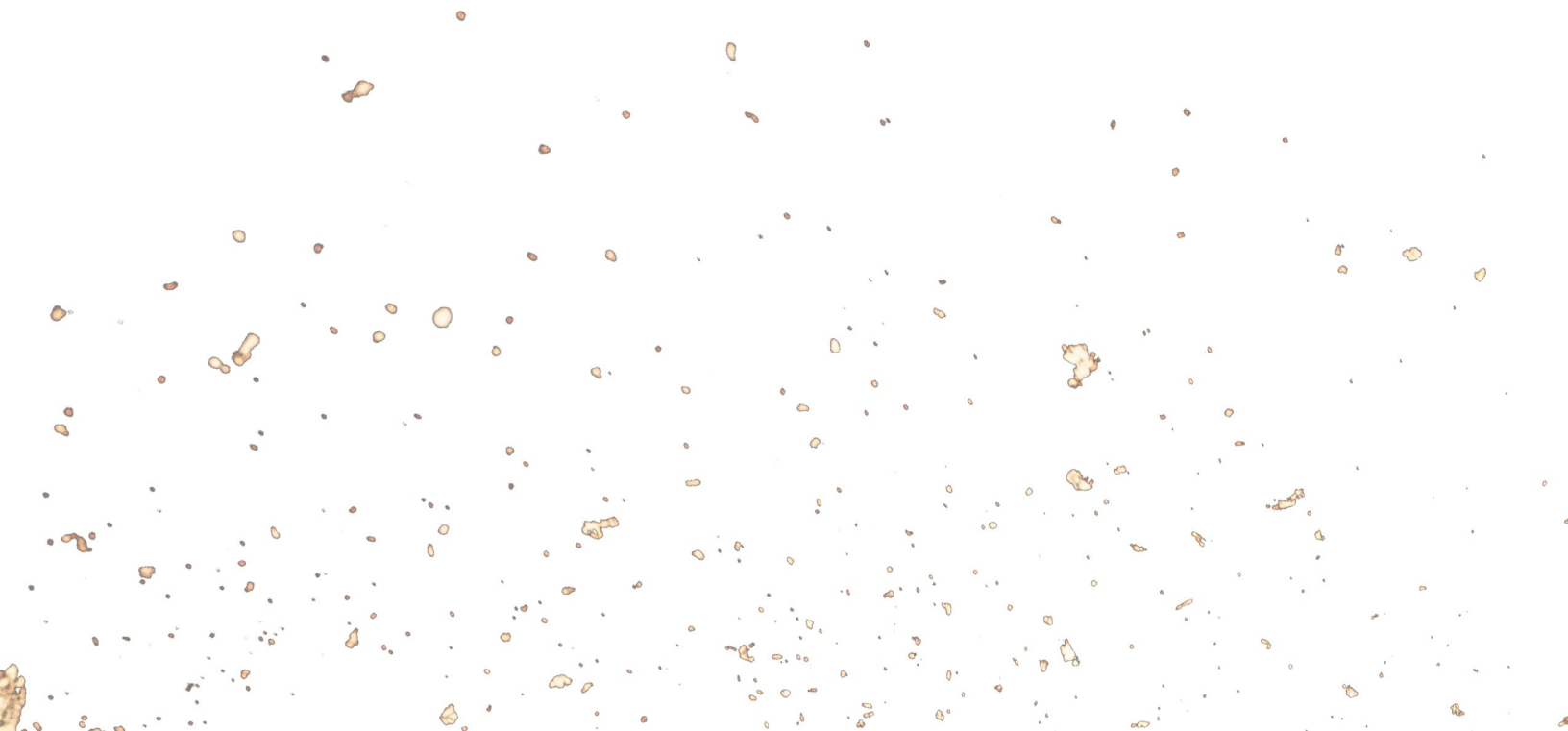
What causes you fear? What stirs up anxiety in your heart? Is it safe to say it is the unknown? Perhaps it's the pressure of making the right decision. Maybe it's what has been done to you, or what you have done.

Why was Mary deeply troubled by the statement "Greetings  *favored* woman! The Lord is *with* you." Maybe it was because in that instant Mary recognized that she was fully seen and fully known. Maybe she thought of all the little sins she had committed even that day. Perhaps she saw her unworthiness. Maybe fear of man, was replaced in an instant by Fear of God.

Then the angel, a messenger straight from God Himself assured her, "do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God."

Friend, do you need to hear those same words in order to calm your soul?

You have found favor with God. God sent His Son to seal His favor on you. While you tarry in the Now, rest in the assurance there is a Not Yet coming when you will fully know as you have been fully known. Make 1 Corinthians 13:12 the cry of your heart "Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely."





---

## Day 5 - What is in a Name?

Luke 1:31 - 33; Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:13, 59-61; Revelation 2:17; 3:5; 17

Hebrew names carry great significance. They are tied to the past, the name Hebrew children are given tell a story. In fact, the Hebrew word for "name" is the same numerical value as the word "book". It was believed when a child was named, their story was part of their name. God Himself expresses the significance of His name when Moses asks God for clarification on what to tell the Israelites when they ask "what is his name"? God declares Himself as I AM.

Elizabeth and Mary were given a mandate for the naming of their firstborn sons. "John" means "showing favor, being gracious." And "Jesus" means "salvation". Each name was significant for the mission placed upon them. Each name came with authority from God Himself.

At birth, our parents gave us our name, for whatever reason that seemed right to them. Along the way, we have been given other names, nicknames by friends, titles by family members, positional titles in our careers. Some of us have taken on other names of our spouses, the name of "mother", the special name your grandchildren have for you. These names may have changed over time. And these are not necessarily the names God has for you. Not Yet.

The book of Revelation starts with a letter to seven churches, reminding them to persevere through the Not Yet. Each comes with a promise and three of them give us a glimpse of the importance of the name God gives us. If you are a believer, your name is written in the Book of Life. The name He gives us can never be erased, forgotten, or changed. If you are a believer, your name is written in the Book of Life for eternity. It may not feel as if that is true while we are in the Now, but it is a truth to hold onto and we can hold onto this truth because God's word has always proven true.



---

## Day 6 - God of the Impossible

Luke 1:34-38, Revelation 21:5

Do we have trouble taking God at His word? Don't we sometimes need proof that what He said He is able to do? We lack an eternal view. We tend to see the here and now. We trust in what we can rationalize with our senses - seeing is believing, after all. And yet, some of the most beautiful shreds of evidence of God happen in the impossible.

A universe created by a word.

A sea parted with dry land as an ocean floor.

A barren woman with a promised child.

A virgin girl with a miraculous conception.

Only God.

When everything seems the same as the day before, we can trust that it really isn't the same at all. We can worship the God of the Impossible. The God that is making all things new.

Because He said it was so.

---

## Day 7 - Servanthood

Luke 1:38

Submission is a difficult concept for us to grasp or understand in 21st-century America. We are a country built on an uprising against tyranny. Our country has warred internally against the atrocity of slavery. As women, we have fought long and hard for our right to education, for voting rights, and for equal opportunity in the workplace among other battles. Perhaps the word submission unearths something in us that reminds us of abuse. And all around us culture screams that we are due comfort and ease in the here and now. The true meaning of submission becomes blurred and fuzzy in our fight for what we've been told is justice.

Beloved, submission to God is never tyrannical. If we keep in mind who God is - the very definition of Loving, Kind, Gentle, Merciful, and Just we are given the freedom to fully submit to His will above our own. Unfortunately, sin has clouded our view of His pure characteristics. We have forgotten that "Loving" means unconditionally. "Gentle" has become seen as a weak characteristic. "Merciful" has come with strings attached. "Justice" has been left up to people with power and ulterior motives.

Come back to the purity of these names. Remind yourself that you can trust your Heavenly Father when you submit to Him. He knows the plans that He has for you, and He has promised to never leave or forsake you. "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28, CSB). He has never failed and He never will.



---

## Day 8 - Hannah's Song & Mary's Song

Luke 1:46-55; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Job 5:11; Psalm 107:9

Is there anything else on earth that can cause a person to sing praise more than the goodness of God? Hannah's song in 1 Samuel was sung with triumph mixed with sorrow. Here was a woman who was childless and ridiculed for being so until her prayer was answered. She promised to give her long-awaited son to be raised by the priest, miles upon miles away from her. And yet, even in her sorrow, she was vindicated. She has experienced the goodness of God and she knows His promise is true.

Hannah was humbled and then God lifted her up. In her weakness, she found strength in God, and so she knows in her heart that the wait was well worth it.

What is the prayer of our heart? How long have we waited for it to come to fruition? Once it does, are we willing to turn it back over to the Lord as His? Or have we begun to think His blessing is only for our own good, in order that we should live comfortably without tension or ailment?

Mary's song reminds us of Hannah's song in humility and praise. What a relief it must have been for Mary, a now unwed mother, to arrive at her cousin Elizabeth's house and still any doubt she had that Elizabeth, well past her prime, was truly pregnant just as the angel said she would be. What a relief she must have felt at Elizabeth's welcome. No accusations, no speculation, no shame - just a leap of joy from within.

Mary must have spent this time understanding a little of the Now and Not Yet. Assured of the good that was coming, but suffering through the doubt of others, the urge to defend her position. Other than Jesus Himself, was there anyone else in the whole Biblical narrative as humble as Mary? Her song gives us the tools we need when we feel trapped between the Now and the Not Yet. He has done it. Over and over she remembers who He is and what He has done. His promises are true, even before they are realized.

---

## Day 9 - Waiting: The Davidic Covenant

Luke 2:1-5; Deuteronomy 12:10-11; 2 Samuel 7:8-29

God scatters, but never outside of his Sovereignty. God's promises are sure. About 1,000 years have passed since God made a covenant with David, promising to raise up a descendant of David who would establish His Kingdom eternally (2 Sam 7:8-29). Four hundred years before that God told the Israelites that He would name a place to have His name dwell.

For centuries, God's people waited for this promise to come to fruition. Imagine the questioning that must have taken place in the hearts of the Israelites when the Davidic monarchy failed and Israel was sent into exile. Certainly, there was doubt as generation after generation of Israelites lived under the rule of someone other than the line of David.

The faithful waited.

And now, a seemingly random census is pulling Joseph (a descendant of David) and Mary (also a descendant of David) to Bethlehem. It was an inconvenience as Mary was pregnant and due any day. But it was necessary and proved the lineage of King Jesus' rule. And Mary and Joseph submitted, their act of obedience an example left for us.

Your will be done, your Kingdom Come.



---

## Day 10 - Making Due in Inconvenience & Discomfort

Luke 2:6-7; Philippians 4:11-13; John 19:25-27

Birthing plans are a BIG deal these days. Women like to have a plan in place, the perfect place - home or hospital or birthing center. The perfect coach - husband, doula, mother, or friend. The perfect pain management - natural or epidural. The perfect ambiance - music, lighting, scents. But as every mother knows, or has been advised, plans might unravel at any moment. You may have to just "make due" with the circumstances presented.

Mary, not much more than a child herself, far from home after a long tedious journey, made due. With no place to stay, she resigned herself to a stable. No place to lay her newborn son but than that of an animal's feeding trough. She made due. Humility at its pinnacle, a foreshadowing of Jesus' entire life and death.

The apostle Paul, as a follower of Christ, also takes on this humility. Not on his own strength or understanding, but rather as a deep understanding that Christ is the one that strengthens him. Paul wrote Philippians from a jail cell. In a different passage, Paul reminds us of his many tribulations, floggings, a shipwreck, imprisonments, stonings, and more. Throughout it all, Paul considered his sufferings as nothing compared to what was waiting for him in eternity (Romans 8:18)

Don't we need that same attitude today? We may make plans, but God is the one who directs our steps (Proverbs 16:9). We have a decision to make. We can stomp our feet and complain to anyone who will listen when things don't go our way, or we can consider what it might mean to submit to God's plan, remembering His plans are good and for our good.

Can our love of comfort be an idol? The definition of an idol is anything that steals our love and affection away from the One true God. Are we willing to admit that we long for comfort? From the minor details such as our favorite pair of comfy pants to the more extravagant vacation plans - comfort has become a priority in our lives. A minor traffic jam or a line at the grocery store can cause us to lose patience. Interruptions to our schedule leave us frazzled and irritable.



How might inconvenience and discomfort threaten to steal our affection from God? We may begin to unwittingly believe that we are in control of our destiny, sovereign over each circumstance. When we don't get our way, our bitterness may harden our hearts and prevent us from seeing interactions available that would allow us to share the love of Jesus with others. We may miss out on a sanctifying lesson when our selfishness distracts us.

But Mary...

Mary, inconvenienced, and uncomfortable, but without complaint, treasured all these things in her heart. Surely she didn't fully understand all the events that were occurring around her. We can't help but wonder if these things she treasured in her heart came to mind 33 years later as she stood and watched Him dying on the cross. Perhaps even then she didn't understand how someone so significant could be humbled in this way. The Now was colliding with the Not Yet just as our Now will one day soon collide with our Not Yet.

---

## Day 11 - The Mundane

Luke 2:8; Matthew 24:36-51

Isn't it amazing how the unexpected breaks through the mundane? Take the shepherds of the Christmas story. Night after night they performed their routines - keeping watch over their flock. Yet, it is in this very ordinariness that the extraordinary unfolds. The mundane and monotony collided with a plan set in place for centuries. The tension between the mundane and the miraculous is palpable, setting the stage for a narrative that will unfold the mystery of God's redemptive plan.

As we navigate the Advent season, we, too, find ourselves in the midst of the mundane, wrestling with the tension of the now and the not yet. The world around us echoes with the hustle and bustle of daily life, and yet, the promise of Christ's coming lingers in the air. The beauty of the mundane lies in the anticipation, the expectancy of the miraculous breaking through our ordinary existence. Like the shepherds, we are called to be attentive to the whispers of God in the midst of our routine, to find beauty in the simplicity of waiting.

As we wait with hope, let us embrace the tension between the now and the not yet, knowing that in the ordinary moments of life, God is at work, never not working. May we attune our hearts to the divine presence breaking through the routines of our lives? In the waiting, may we find joy, peace, and the beauty of God's love, transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary.

---

## Day 12 - Humility

Luke 2:8-12

Why does it seem the most humble of us are also the most receptive to an extraordinary message from the Divine? For some reason, God saw fit to share such good news of great joy with these humble keepers of sheep. These shepherds, often overlooked and marginalized, teach us about the beauty of humility. They didn't seek recognition or fame, yet they were chosen to witness the most significant event in history.

As those navigating the complexities of our own ordinary lives, the story of the shepherds encourages us to embrace humility and find joy in even the simplest of our tasks. The birth of Jesus was not announced to the powerful or the prestigious but to those who were willing to embrace their humble circumstances. In the same way, God often works in the quiet corners of our lives, reminding us that our obedience and faithfulness in the seemingly mundane tasks matter greatly in His kingdom. The Advent season inspires us to, like the shepherds, approach life with humility, recognizing that God's plans often unfold in the most unexpected and humble places.



---

## Day 13 - All People

Luke 2:10 - 11; Hebrews 4:14-16

The message of the gospel is for us. The busy. The exhausted. Those who are afraid. Those who are worried there isn't enough to make ends meet. Those who strive to remain faithful amidst adversity and conflict. The message of Jesus' life, death and resurrection is for us, regardless of our background, what we have done wrong or what we have done right. The message places us on an equal playing field - those who need a Savior.

Our daily lives, the to-do lists, the demands others place on us, all remind us we are not enough. We don't have enough to give, we don't have enough margin, we are at the end of ourselves sooner than we should be. Even the very demands that threaten to keep us from sitting at the feet of Jesus serve as a reminder that we need a Savior and time spent with Him. None of us are exempt. What our souls long for is a sign that we are seen and understood and the sign is found in His special revelation to us - the Bible.

Jesus sees. He understands. Find hope that even now, amidst the disappointments and dismay, Jesus loves us fully and completely.



---

## Day 14 - Obedience

Luke 2:13-15; Genesis 6: 8-22

In the simplicity of the shepherds' obedience to the angelic message, we are reminded that our obedience, even in the unknown and uncertain, can lead to divine encounters. Just as Noah immediately obeyed when given the unimaginable task of constructing the unknown, the shepherds didn't hesitate. They immediately went to Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus. Their prompt response invites us to consider how we respond to God's call in our lives. It may not always be clear, and the path may seem uncertain, but as we yield to His leading, we can experience the profound joy of encountering Christ in unexpected ways. This Advent, let us embrace the humility and obedience of the shepherds, trusting that God's plans for our lives, though unknown to us, are filled with purpose and grace.

Obedience is not easy. If it were, there would be no need for a Savior, there would be no need for Christmas. And yet, we are still called to obey, to turn from the sin that so easily ensnares us (Hebrews 12:1), and to live devoted lives as we wait for the return of our Lord. Even in obedience, we discover tension. We have been given the Holy Spirit who helps us in our weakness, and yet, we pridefully want to fulfill our own desires just as Eve did in the Garden of Eden.

Friend, might I encourage you? Take the time to wrestle with obedience. Ask your Heavenly Father for help where you may need it. Allow yourself the space and time for conviction to do its work in you. Take pride in little steps that seem like insurmountable steps of obedience. And if you fail, rather, when you fail, be comforted by the truth that His love is not conditioned on your success or failure.

---

## Day 15 - Treasuring and Meditating

Luke 2:16-20

In the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, amidst the twinkling lights and festive cheer, it's easy to overlook the profound simplicity of the Christmas story. On that sacred night, shepherds, drawn by the angelic proclamation, hurried to witness the newborn Savior lying in a manger. As they encountered the miracle of God incarnate, the baby Emmanuel, they were filled with awe, wonder, and excitement. Their excitement spilled over to all who heard their message. But Mary... Mary, the girl who just nine months ago entered a whole different world, forced to trust in the message of an angel and face each day unsure of what it would hold. The message of the shepherds must have felt like a special confirmation and affirmation to her.

In our own lives, the tension between the "now" and the "not yet" is palpable. Mary experienced the now as she lived each day, wondering who the baby growing in her womb would be. And yet, the fullness of God's redemptive plan was still unfolding—the not yet. Similarly, we live in a world where Christ's coming has inaugurated the kingdom of God, but its consummation awaits a future day. This tension is an integral part of our faith journey. The complexities of life demand that we, like Mary, treasure the moments of divine encounter and meditate on the promises yet to be fulfilled.

This Advent season, intentionally carve out moments to reflect on the tension of the now and the not yet. Just as Mary treasured and pondered the events surrounding the birth of Jesus in her heart, we too are invited to treasure the present joys and meditate on the hope of future glory. As we wait with anticipation for the return of our Savior, may our hearts be attuned to the whispers of the Holy Spirit, guiding us in the midst of the tension, and may we find comfort and joy in the assurance that, in Christ, the promises of God are both a present reality and a future hope.

---

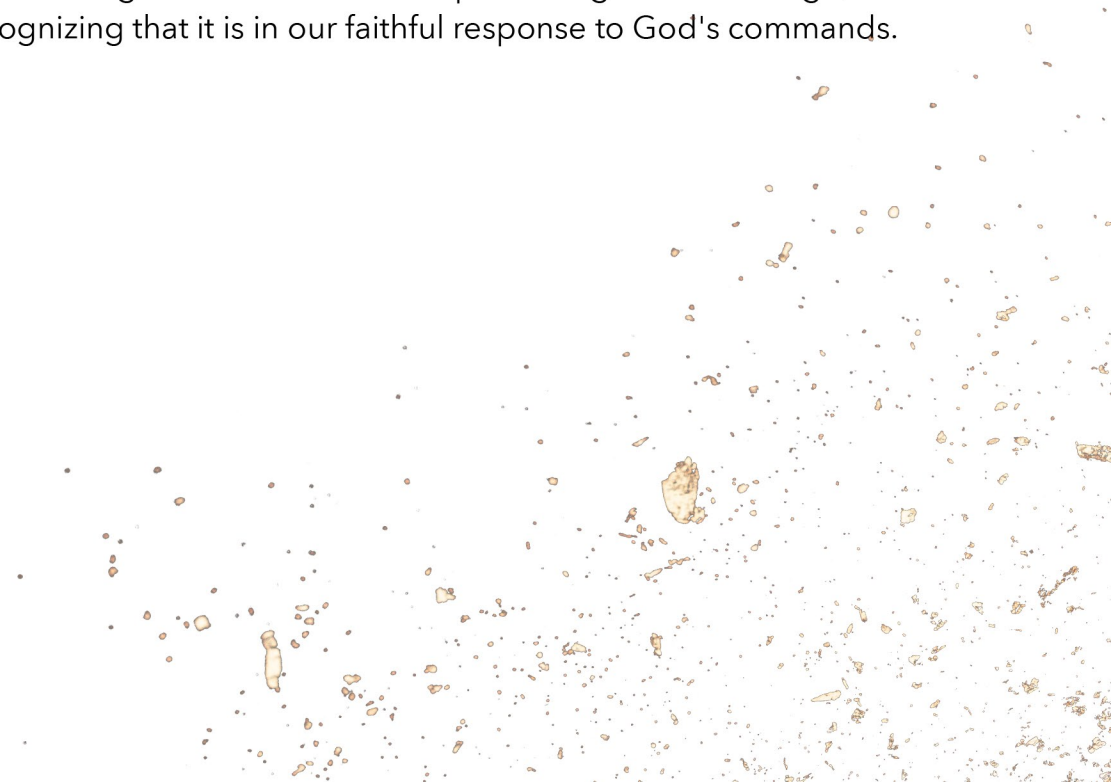
## Day 16 - Obedience

Luke 2:21-24; Leviticus 12

Jewish law required parents to present their male children for circumcision and to offer a sacrifice of a male lamb and a dove or pigeon for the cleansing of the mother who had given birth. Leviticus tells us that if the one sacrificing does not have the means, two pigeons may be sacrificed in the place of a lamb.

Luke draws attention to the sacrifice presented by Mary and Joseph - a pair of pigeons or turtledoves. Mary and Joseph were not a well-to-do family from a well-to-do town. They were humble, and in the most humble of ways, they brought the Savior, the King of Kings, into the world. In humility, they walked in obedience, following the law because they loved God. They presented their sacrifice and remembered the angel's command to name their child Jesus. They did all this in faith.

The story of Mary and Joseph's obedience reminds us there is a better way. In a culture that often values grand gestures and outward displays, the obedience of Mary and Joseph in the small details of their Jewish law speaks volumes. In the midst of the Now and Not Yet, where the grace of God is both a present reality and a future promise, obedience remains a vital aspect of our journey of faith. The story of Mary and Joseph challenges us to resist the temptation to downplay the significance of obedience in the light of abundant grace. Instead, it calls us to embrace obedience as an expression of our love for God, just as Mary and Joseph did. In the humble presentation of their sacrifice and in the faithful naming of their child Jesus, they exemplify obedience rooted in love and trust. We, too, participate in the unfolding story of redemption as we navigate the tension of the present age. With courage, we walk in obedience, recognizing that it is in our faithful response to God's commands.



---

## Day 17 - Waiting Like Anna

Luke 2:36-38

The prophetess Anna is an unlikely character in the Christmas story. Very rarely do we see a woman, a widow at that, highlighted in the pages of history. And yet, Anna is like a foreshadowing of exactly those whom Jesus came to save. Those desperate for a Savior. Those willing to wait faithfully until what is promised becomes sight. Anna, married just seven years before she was widowed, spent the remainder of her years praying and fasting, anticipating the Messiah. Her life became an embodiment of waiting in the now and the not yet. As we journey through the Advent season, Anna's story serves as a reminder of the beauty found in steadfast expectation. Her encounter with the infant Jesus in the temple is the culmination of a lifetime of waiting.

Anna's patient vigil was not a passive waiting but an active devotion. She fasted and prayed, cultivating a deep intimacy with God. In a world marked by instant gratification, her life challenges us to reevaluate our understanding of waiting. The now and not yet tension is palpable in our lives, yet Anna's example encourages us to see waiting not as an imposition but as an opportunity. In our waiting, we too can draw near to God, growing in our understanding of His character and learning to trust in His timing.

Like Anna, let us navigate the tension of the now and not yet with a spirit of expectancy. Our waiting is not passive; it is a purposeful journey of faith. As we draw near to our Savior in adoration, through our daily devotion to Him, may our hearts be stirred to wait patiently, to seek Him diligently, and to embrace the beauty of the now and not yet, knowing that in Christ, our ultimate fulfillment is assured.



---

## Day 18 - Upside Down

Matthew 5:3-12

The Kingdom of Heaven is unexpected. What the world proclaims as down, Jesus declares to be up, and what the world declares is up, Jesus reminds us of a better way. To make sense of this way of life requires a faith in the unseen, a belief in what we have recorded for us in God's Word, and a desire to follow Jesus even in the tension between the now and the not yet in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus promises to bless what others disdain. His blessings paint a portrait of a different kind of kingdom, one that challenges the expectations of the world. The Beatitudes remind us of our present reality, those leaning on the promises that God will fulfill what He has promised when His Kingdom is finally consummated.

Friend, if you feel as if your life doesn't fit in with those around you who don't claim Christ as their Savior, you are in the right spot. You are not meant to "fit in"; you are meant to look forward to something so much better. You are not meant to compromise in order to grab hold of some instant gratification that will only leave you feeling empty as it passes. You are meant to cling to what is eternal, humbly and patiently waiting. It is not your will be done, your own personal kingdom come, but His will be done until His Kingdom comes.



---

## Day 19 - The Not Yet

Revelation 21:1-8; Genesis 3:8-11

Men and women were created to enjoy the presence of God, and nothing will fill our souls until we find that nearness to Him. Oh, but we try.

We spend our time searching for comfort and peace through vacation, spa days, and “me time”. We spend our treasures decorating our homes and creating a space that is warm and welcoming and eases our anxiousness. We work to impress. We work to have the same luxuries others seem to enjoy, no matter the cost. But when it is all said and done, these things, no matter how well-intended, will never fully satisfy.

That day is Not Yet.

Our hope is that God is seated on the Throne and He is making all things new. All things.

The Not Yet promises wholeness, and we look forward to that day with great anticipation, willing to neglect all else that might hold our attention in the Now.

---

## Day 20 - The Now

Revelation 4; Luke 10:38-42

*Right now* in Heaven, there is One seated on a Throne. Worship and adoration are occurring. Creatures we can not even begin to imagine are worshipping their Creator, who is seated on the Throne. Those with authority given by Jesus during His earthly mission are circled around Him on the thrones given to them. And yet their thrones pale in comparison to the Throne of God. The elders have crowns, and yet they are falling down, worshipping and praising the One on the Throne, recognizing that they are mere creations. All their achievements and all their accolades mean nothing and are best placed at the feet of the Almighty God.

When we read the story of Mary and Martha found in Luke with the view of the Throne room account, we can't help but begin to grasp the most important thing. What are we striving for? Who deserves the glory but the One who created all things by His will, because by His will we exist.

This is the tension we struggle with in the Now, in what we can touch and see. The endless to-do lists, the demands of our work, the demands of the culture around us. We were created to worship, but sin has corrupted our focus of worship onto all the other demands. Our souls long to worship the One they were created for.

This tension demands a decision from us. We can succumb to the worship of the created, or we can dig our heels in and lay our crowns at the foot of the Throne, choosing, as Mary did, the one thing that is necessary, having faith that it will not be taken from us.

---

## Day 21 - The Not Yet

Revelation 22:1-17

"These words are faithful and true." What God has said will come to pass. We can rely on Him. We may not know the day or the hour, but in great anticipation, we wait for our faith to be sight.

What does that mean for our day-to-day? What does it mean to wait with great anticipation? What do the joys of the time we spend on earth - the celebrations big and small, the moments we find delight and we look forward actually point to? They signify that as much as we enjoy these moments, there is something better that is coming, and it would be wise for us to enjoy this world in light of the next. Nothing can or will compare to the ability of worshipping with the Bride of Christ, from every tongue and every nation around the Throne of God.

What does it mean for those moments of sorrow and grief, or the daily frustrations and annoyances? How should we view our fears and anxieties? How should we react when the stresses of life seem overwhelming? It means as much as these moments and seasons cause us pain, there is something better coming, and it would be wise for us to view these moments as temporal.

This is the Not Yet. There is more to the story than what we can see and feel and we are invited to Come. So if you are thirsty, if you are filled with desires that seem insurmountable, Come.

---

## Day 22 - Merry Christmas!

Luke 1: 26 - 55; 2:1-39

Immanuel, God with us. He has promised to never leave or forsake us and His promises are true.

The tension of the Now and Not Yet serves as a reminder that we are not finished; His plan is not finished. Yes, He will return. He is not tarrying.

Remain rooted. Hold fast to what is true and what is promised. I know the days seem long, your work goes unnoticed and uncelebrated. But there is One who sees, and His opinion is the most important of all. Take time daily to remember who He is, and who you are in Him. Take time daily to praise Him for all He has done for you and to worship Him for all He is going to do.

