

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS
ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

WEEK ONE



Welcome to this Advent devotional.

This devotional was born from the questions you shared during our Can I Ask? sermon series, questions about faith, life, Scripture, suffering, and what it means to follow Jesus in a complicated world. Those questions were brave. They were honest. And they revealed something beautifully human: every one of us carries deep wonderings in our hearts, and God is not afraid of any of them.

Advent is the perfect season to keep asking. This is the time of year when we slow down, pay attention, and dare to explore the mystery of Christ coming among us. Advent is not sentimental. It is not polished. It is the honest story of God entering a world filled with fear, doubt, division, and longing and meeting people right where they are.

In these pages, you will find space to reflect, wrestle, breathe, and be open to how God is already at work in your life. Advent invites us to bring our questions, our hopes, our uncertainties, and our grief into the presence of a God who chooses to come close. The incarnation, God with us, is not just a doctrine. It is a powerful experience of love meeting us in our most honest places and offering us what we most need: answers when we are searching, faith when we are struggling, and assurance when we feel unsteady.

My hope is that this devotional will help you journey toward Christmas with intention and imagination. May these reflections draw you deeper into the mystery of Christ, who steps into our world and into our lives for such a time as this.

You are not alone on the journey.
You are loved.
And you are free to ask.

Pastor Daniel Park
November 28, 2025

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November 30, 2025 – The Courage to Ask

Luke 1:34

"Mary asked the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'"

Question

Why is it important to ask hard questions in the Advent season?

Reflection

Advent begins with a question. Before choirs of angels sing, before shepherds hurry to Bethlehem, a teenage girl looks heaven in the face and asks, How can this be? Her question is not rebellion. It's reverence. Real faith doesn't silence questions. It sanctifies them.

We live in an age of curated answers. Algorithms tell us what to think, politicians tell us who to fear, and religion sometimes tells us to stop asking. But Advent invites us back into mystery. Advent tells us that God is not offended by your wondering, your wrestling, your why. Honest questions till the soil where hope can grow.

When we ask Jesus our hardest questions, we aren't testing His patience. We're opening space for encounter. God meets us not only in certainty but also in curiosity. The prophets cried out, How long, O Lord? The psalmists lamented, Why have You forsaken me? Even Jesus, on the cross, asked that same question. The entire story of salvation is God entering the conversation.

So this Advent, you're invited to bring your questions, not to solve them but to sit with them in the company of Christ. Let the questions shape your waiting. Let them make you more compassionate

toward others who are still searching. Mary's "How?" became her Here am I. Our questions can become the same kind of yes, where we avail ourselves to the conversation that God wants to enter with us.

Prayer

Lord of mystery and mercy, thank You for meeting me in my questions. Teach me to see my doubts as doors, not walls. As I enter this Advent season, give me courage to ask honestly and to listen deeply. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

December 1, 2025 – Why Do Children Suffer?

Mark 6:3

"Jesus answered, 'You give them something to eat.'"

Question

Why do so many children continue to suffer and go hungry?

Reflection

Few questions pierce the heart like this one. We cannot scroll past images of starving children without feeling both heartbreak and helplessness. If God is good, why does hunger remain? Advent refuses to give an easy answer. Advent offers a Child. Jesus entered a world of scarcity. He was born to parents who could not afford a room. His first crib was a feeding trough. Yet from that poverty came abundance. When crowds gathered hungry, Jesus didn't conjure food from the air; He asked His disciples to start with what they had: "You give them something to eat."

That's how the Kingdom works: divine compassion flows through human hands. The miracle begins when we refuse to pass the problem along. Every shared loaf, every advocacy letter, every dollar given with love is an act of Advent hope: a sign that Emmanuel is still among us.

To ask "Why do children suffer?" is to share God's own grief, and to act is to share God's own heart. Jesus does not answer suffering with explanation but with incarnation. He becomes the bread. He becomes the nourishment the world needs. So when you feel the ache of injustice, don't silence it. Let it call you to participate in God's redemptive work. Hope starts small. Five loaves and two fish. Yet in the hands of Christ, it is more than enough.

Prayer:

Bread of Life, move me from compassion to action. Open my eyes to the hungry near and far, and use what I have to feed them. Let hope rise through shared hands and open hearts. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

December 2, 2025 – When Evil Seems To Win

John 16:33

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Question

Why does it seem that evil is overcoming us when You are all-powerful?

Reflection

Advent is honest about darkness. Headlines, wars, cruelty, and more. They all tempt us to believe evil is in charge. Yet the manger whispers otherwise. Jesus never denied the reality of evil. He entered it. On the cross He absorbed its worst blow and turned death inside out.

Evil shouts, but resurrection sings quietly in the background, and its melody endures. Power, as the world defines it, crushes enemies. Power, as God reveals it, transforms enemies into neighbors. The paradox of Advent is that omnipotence lies swaddled in vulnerability. The infant in the manger is God's answer to tyranny.

When you feel despair, look for small resistances of good: a friendship healed, a refugee welcomed, a truth spoken with love. Take heart. The Child who once lay in straw now reigns in glory. His power is patient, not passive. And one day, the light that began in Bethlehem will cover the earth.

Prayer

Victorious God, when darkness feels louder than light, remind me of Your quiet triumph through Christ on the cross. Strengthen me to live as proof that love still wins. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

December 3, 2025 – How Long, Lord?

Psalm 13:1

"How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?"

Question

How long, Lord, do we have to witness and experience suffering?

Reflection

Waiting is Advent's native language. Israel waited centuries for the Messiah, and creation groans still. We prefer instant solutions, yet God often works in seasons rather than seconds.

"How long?" is not faithlessness. It is the prayer of the faithful who have run out of explanations but not out of trust. Notice, the psalmist still cries out to God with the question. In our waiting, God is not idle. Seeds sprout unseen; redemption ripens slowly.

The manger was not a shortcut. It was a patient plan unfolding through prophets, exiles, and generations. If God could take millennia to prepare Bethlehem, perhaps we can trust God's pacing in our own lives. Advent waiting is not passive. It's the active waiting of watchmen scanning the horizon for the arrival of hope. We lament, we act, we hope, and we do this all at once.

Each time you cry "How long?" you echo the saints. And each time, God answers not with a timeline but with presence: "I am with you until the end of the age."

Prayer

Patient God, teach me to wait without despair. Help me to trust Your slow, steady work of redemption in the world and in me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

December 4, 2025 – The Meaning of Sin and Evil

Matthew 22:37–40

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Question

What did sin, wickedness, and evil mean in the first century—and what do they mean today?

Reflection

For many, “sin” sounds like a moral checklist. But in Scripture, sin is relational rupture, the breaking of love between God, neighbor, and self. In Jesus’ day, sin wasn’t merely personal failure; it was systemic injustice, religious pride, and indifference to suffering.

Today it’s much the same. Evil is love turned inward. When greed devalues people, when fear fuels prejudice, when apathy dulls compassion, evil gains ground.

Advent calls us back to covenant love. The coming of Christ reframes sin not as something to hide from God but as something God came to heal. Jesus doesn’t merely forgive sin, He restores relationship. Confession is not condemnation. It’s making space for light to enter. The Holy Spirit still breathes holiness so that love can be set right again.

Prayer

God of light, shine on the places where my love has grown cold. Heal the breaks between me and You, me and others, me and myself. Let Your coming renew love’s connection in every direction. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

December 5, 2025 – Children in a Broken World

Mark 10:14

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them..."

Question

Why should we bring children into such a broken and unsafe world?

Reflection

Fear tells us it is reckless to create life amid chaos. Faith whispers that every birth is rebellion against despair. God chose to enter this same broken world as a vulnerable child. The Incarnation is divine protest against hopelessness. To bring forth children or to nurture the young already here is to align with God's stubborn hope.

Children remind us that wonder still works. Their laughter disarms cynicism, their questions keep us humble. Yes, the world is dangerous, but so was Bethlehem under Herod. Yet light arrived anyway. Raising children in faith doesn't mean shielding them from darkness but teaching them to shine in the midst of it. Feed their curiosity, nurture empathy, model courage. Through them, God continues the creative act of renewal. Each newborn cry echoes the angels' song: "Peace on earth." Every act of nurture is Advent defiance. Raising children is hope wearing diapers and learning to walk, to become ambassadors for goodness, and representations of God's holiness in this world.

Prayer

Creator God, thank You for the gift of life. Guard the little ones of this world and strengthen all who care for them. Let my hope mirror Yours, daring to believe that new life can still bloom in brokenness. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

December 6, 2025 – When God Takes Too Long

Habakkuk 2:3

*"For the revelation awaits an appointed time...
Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come."*

Question

How do I keep faith when God's timeline is longer than mine?

Reflection

Waiting rooms test our trust. We see clocks, God sees seasons. Advent is a master class in holy delay. The prophets promised while generations passed. Yet when the time was right, a baby cried, and eternity entered history. God's timing is rarely ours, but it is always redemptive.

Faith in slow motion requires surrender. It means believing that unseen roots are forming beneath frozen soil. It means remembering that silence can be gestation, not absence.

Sometimes God delays because we are not yet ready for the answer. Sometimes the world isn't. And sometimes the delay itself is the answer. It stretches our hearts to hold more grace.

When we light Advent candles, we observe that the flame is steady and it persists while the wax melts slowly. God's pace can be like that: gentle, relentless, and certain.

Prayer

Eternal One, teach me to trust Your timing. When impatience rises, remind me that Your delays are never denials. Help me to wait with hope and act with faithfulness. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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the wonder of Christ
the beauty of the Church
and the wholeness of our Communities

