

14 Day Devotional

The story of the Bible has always been about a King. This King was the Word in the beginning. This King is the one who has been calling His people out of darkness and hiding. This King is the one who will come again and make all things new, the way things were supposed to be before sin came and ripped everything apart.

Christmas is a story of rebellion — a story of the true King coming to take back His kingdom. A story that invites every one of us to recognize that Jesus is the true King. The invitation in this Christmas story is to recognize that we are not the kings of our lives but that we are to surrender to Jesus, the one true and ever-faithful King.

During this season we invite you to raise a white flag of surrender. We invite you to be in awe that God, who created the universe, chose to take on human flesh and become the suffering King who would lay down His life so that you can enter His kingdom for all eternity.

Over the next 14 days, you will walk through the seven miracles Jesus performs, and the seven “I AM” statements Jesus makes in the gospel of John. This devotional has been written by our staff and elders to help us surrender. Each day, we invite you to slow down and allow the Word of God to transform your heart. May the words from your brothers and sisters stir up a passion for Jesus and His kingdom.

May you realize this year the overwhelming love the King has for you. For the joy of having all of us, lost and broken people, brought into His kingdom, Jesus endured the cross, endured its shame, and now declares that His death and sin have no hold on you.

The King has come. Let us live in the grace of Christ the King.

Day 1

Jesus Turns Water into Wine

Read: John 2:2-11

Key Verse: “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.”

A humiliating social blunder at Cana in Galilee set the stage for Jesus’s first public miracle at the request of His mother. Running out of wine during a week-long wedding celebration was an unthinkable faux pas, which would have caused shame for the family. But Mary knew Jesus would know what to do, and she confidently directed the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. In His compassion, Jesus complied. He instructed the servants to fill jars to the brim with water and then draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet, elevating the status of the servants by letting them in on the secret that He had power over the elements. Not only did Jesus provide, but He provided lavishly, as the quality of the wine was exquisite. The master of the banquet was incredulous that the family had saved the best wine for last, and the family’s honor was maintained.

More than simply meeting a need, this miracle demonstrated that Jesus was God, fully sharing in the glory of His Father. This miracle was also a turning point for Jesus’ disciples, who had followed Him readily but now put their faith in Him.

Next Steps:

How might God use a difficult or shameful situation in your life to reveal His glory?

In what area might your obedience position you to witness God at work in a miraculous way?

Like the disciples, have you put your faith in Jesus as the Son of God?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for sending Jesus to show us your glory. We praise you for your compassion and the power you have over every trouble we face. May we trust your provision and have eyes to see where you are at work.

Day 2

Jesus Heals an Official's Son

Read: John 4:46-54

Key Verse: "Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way."

This official was probably used to being in control and handling situations on his own. But when death threatened to overtake his son, he knew there was nothing in his power that could save him, and he ran to Jesus. The logical solution was to bring Jesus to his son. Surely, the presence of Jesus was the best hope for healing. But human logic is often a hindrance to faith.

The power of Jesus has no boundaries. There is no limit to the way in which He can work. It is easy to come to God with a list of options and outcomes rather than praying with open hands and an open heart, trusting that His ways are greater. The official was given the words of Jesus, but he had to trust the workings of Jesus. He could have stayed and begged Jesus to come. Instead, he obeyed and went, believing Jesus would do as He said. His heart believed the power of Jesus before his eyes witnessed the miracle of Jesus.

True faith is believing without seeing. The official left without any evidence that his request would be granted. But he believed that Jesus could do the impossible and that His words were true.

His faith was rewarded as he received the news of Jesus' promise fulfilled before he even arrived home to see it for himself. He not only witnessed his son being spared from death, but he rejoiced in his entire family believing and being given the hope of eternal life.

Next Steps:

In what area of your life do you need to surrender control and run to Jesus?

Do you pray doubtful of how God will work or expectant to see His power displayed?

How are you currently demonstrating faith? What promises of God do you need to cling to?

Prayer:

God, you are in complete control. I come before you desperate to see your power displayed in my life. Your ways are higher than my own, so I ask that your will be done. Remind me of your promises and show me your goodness as I surrender to you. Amen.

Day 3

Jesus Heals the Man at the Pool

Read: John 5:1-11

Key Verse: "Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked."

In contrast to the official seeking out Jesus for healing, this passage expresses Jesus seeking out the one in need of healing. After living crippled for thirty-eight years, this man probably had little hope of experiencing change. Those around him walked right past him and seemed to overlook his needs. He most likely felt invisible and unworthy of help. Humanly speaking, the only logical hope for healing was entering into the waters of the pool. But again, human logic is often a hindrance to faith. He didn't even know there was another option...until he met Jesus.

Without a single request from the man, Jesus saw him, cared for him, and miraculously healed him. In a moment, this man's life was changed. What a comfort to know that when you experience feelings of loneliness and hopelessness, Jesus is present. He sees you, He cares for you, and He offers hope. He wants to speak into your life and do a transformative work in your heart. All the man had to do was believe and obey the words of Jesus.

His power was greater than the pool. His compassion outweighed any previous rejection. There is hope for any and every situation, and His name is Jesus.

Next Steps:

What situation in your life feels hopeless?

Do you believe that God is powerful enough to change your hopeless situation?

When others seem distant or unaware, do you seek the presence of a loving God?

Prayer:

God, great is your love and compassion. You see me and you know my needs. When I feel alone, help me to experience your presence. When my situation feels hopeless, allow me to trust your miraculous power. Thank you for seeking me out and offering hope. Amen.

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Day 4

Jesus Feeds the 5000

Read: John 6:1-15

Key Verse: "Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?"

We usually focus on this great miracle and the amount left over, but today let's take a closer look at how He interacted with His disciples and see their response to the situation.

We see Jesus's intentionality with his disciples within this awesome miracle. He asks Philip where they would buy enough bread for the crowd that had gathered. The Scripture says, "He said this to test him for he himself knew what he would do." Jesus knew that he would immediately look and calculate the cost to feed this crowd and see it as impossible. This is usually our normal response to tough situations that come our way - we see it as impossible. But notice Andrew's response. He brought a boy's lunch to Him, even though it was not much, and left it in the Messiah's hand! Jesus took what Andrew brought and miraculously fed over 5000 people!

Philip saw the impossible situation and froze, but Andrew saw the situation and what was possible by bringing all he had to Jesus, and left it in His hands.

We say that transformation is a continual process, and this story shows how Jesus is challenging Philip to grow in his transformation, and at the same time, we see how Andrew had grown because he chose to bring what he had and trust God.

Next Steps:

Are you trusting God to do great things with what you have and bring to Him?

In what areas is God pushing you to grow in your journey of transformation?

Prayer:

God, thank you for always intentionally pushing us to grow in our transformation. May our hearts remain soft to your teaching, and may we bring what we have to offer and expect you to do great things with what we bring no matter how small it may seem to us. Amen.

Day 5

Jesus Walks on Water

Read: John 6:16-21

Key Verse: "But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid"

In this passage we see the disciples attempting to cross the sea in the night. A couple of miles into the trip, an unexpected storm comes, and they begin to struggle. The disciples see Jesus walking on the sea, approaching the boat, and they are frightened. Instead of living in the comforting presence of Jesus, the disciples become afraid. When Jesus arrives at the boat, He tells them, "It is I; do not be afraid." The disciples are glad to take Jesus into the boat amidst the storm. The passage tells us that right after doing so, they were immediately at their destination.

Looking at the key verse of the passage, we see Jesus provided not only peace to the disciples, but also a sense of hope. When he arrived at the boat, telling them, "It is I; do not be afraid," we read that he was welcomed into the boat, and immediately after that, the disciples arrived at their destination. Amongst the fear, darkness, and the storm, Jesus was able to take control and lead the disciples to their destination.

Next Steps:

What storms are you experiencing right now?

What would it look like for you to invite Jesus into your boat?

What areas of your life do you need to give God leadership of?

Prayer:

God, you are a faithful father. Thank you for the peace that comes with your presence. Allow me to invite you into this storm and trust in you as you guide me through it. When our storms feel too great to overcome, allow us to trust in your timing and give you control. Amen.

Day 6

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

Read: John 9:1-12

Key Verse: “Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

In this story, we see disciples asking Jesus, “What was the source of this man’s suffering?” Often, we try to find worldly explanations for the suffering that is happening in our lives or the lives of those around us. Jesus replies with an incredible statement that should serve as a reminder in the midst of our sufferings. Our focus should be on God and how His eternal work can be displayed in us rather than on the temporary circumstances of this world. Many people, like the man in John 9, are too overwhelmed with their own suffering to give their life to Christ. Jesus gives us the perfect example of being present with those who are hurting while still pointing people toward the Father. This man, who was recognized as a beggar, could now see and testify to the love and compassion of Jesus.

Next Steps:

Ask somebody in your life to identify areas of your life in which you might be blind and not seeing clearly.

What areas of your life do you need to allow Jesus' light to shine so that the work of God might be displayed, giving you peace?

Who can you go to and testify about what God is doing in your life?

Prayer:

God thank you for your overwhelming love and compassion. Thank you for the healing that can be found in you. Allow me to fully experience your grace, love, compassion, and healing power. In all of this, I give you the honor and praise to boldly testify of your goodness. To you be the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Day 7

Jesus Resurrects Lazarus

Read: John 11:1-44

Key Verse: “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

Jesus got the news that no one wants to hear: “Your friend is sick and may die.” What we see in this story of Jesus is that the bad news of death did not turn His world upside down. What is Jesus trying to teach His disciples and us in this passage? Could it be that our perspective of who Jesus Christ is helps us see everything in the right light? Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, we can know that death has no power. The pain of death is real. Jesus wept. His heart hurt. The power of Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Because Jesus is the King of all creation, death is subject to Him. Because Jesus paid for our sins with His death and left them in the grave with His resurrection, you and I can have an eternal perspective of even the worst of things that happen in our lives.

Next Steps:

Do you believe that you will never die if you believe in Jesus as the resurrection?

What is something in your life that you struggle to see with an eternal perspective?

How can you shift that perspective in light of who King Jesus is?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Thank you for sending Jesus the Christ to be the resurrection and the life for us. May we fix our eyes on Jesus so that in every situation we can see how Jesus is working. May the overwhelming reality that Jesus has conquered death give us courage to fully live here and now. Amen.

Day 8

I AM The Bread of Life

Read: John 6:22-59

Key Verse: "Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

The day before Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" He had fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish. Everyone ate until they were full, and at the end of the meal, the disciples filled twelve baskets with the pieces of leftover fish and bread!

After walking on water that evening, the crowd woke up looking for the one who had filled their belly with bread. Once they found Him again, He declared Himself to be the Bread of Life. Much greater than our physical need for food, Jesus wants to fulfill our spiritual hunger. In Him, we find ultimate satisfaction. Jesus knows all that we need is to live lives fully pleasing to Him. Throughout Scripture, God provides for His people both physically and spiritually to sustain, nourish, and grow them into the people He desires them to be. Bread often demonstrates God's compassion for His people. God knows what you need, and God continues to provide today.

Next Steps:

What have you been hungering for the most this past week?

Think about where you find satisfaction & comfort throughout your week. How long do those things last before you hunger for them again?

In what ways can you find ultimate fulfillment in Jesus as the Bread of Life today, this week, and the month ahead?

Prayer:

Lord, allow me today to experience complete satisfaction in you and nothing else. You are a good Father who gives your children everything we need. May we never stop pursuing fulfillment in you alone. Amen.

Day 9

I AM The Light of the World

Read: John 8:12-30

Key Verse: "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Jesus initiates a statement of personal identity, relationship, and authority designed to offer hope to the one who believes and rebuke to the one who refuses to believe. Jesus saying the words "I AM" was a bold announcement. In saying I AM he was claiming to be "I AM" the "I AM", Yahweh, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses (Exodus 3:14; Matthew 5:17-20). He was claiming to be the God in the flesh, connecting Himself with being the Creator of all things.

The statement "Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" would have been doubly offensive to the Pharisees as they did not believe Jesus was the Messiah, God in the flesh. Therefore, they would see no need to follow Jesus. He was a mere man, not a King of kings and Lord of lords. He then said, "If you do not believe who I am and follow me, then you are blind and stumbling without meaning, direction, or true life.

The Pharisees had engineered their own path to God and righteousness. Jesus was shedding light on their foolishness and offering them life eternal. Their pride kept them blind, antagonistic, and rebellious toward the true God and convinced that their traditions and visual rituals were the path to righteousness. The disciples of Jesus, on the other hand, believed and followed Jesus and were given life, sight, and a mission.

Next Steps:

Ask somebody in your life to identify areas of your life in which you might be blind and not seeing clearly.

What areas of your life do you need to allow Jesus' light to shine so that the work of God might be displayed, giving you peace?

Who can you go to and testify about what God is doing in your life?

Prayer:

God thank you for your overwhelming love and compassion. Thank you for the healing that can be found in you. Allow me to fully experience your grace, love, compassion, and healing power. In all of this, I give you the honor and praise to boldly testify of your goodness. To you be the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Day 10

I AM The Door

Read: John 10:7-18

Key Verse: “So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

The word picture that Jesus paints in His third “I AM” statement is one that would easily connect with His first-century Jewish audience. They understood the role that shepherds played to keep their flocks safe from predators. At night, they rounded up their sheep and would keep them in a sheepfold. The shepherds were the gateway to the sheep, and the sheep knew their shepherd’s voice.

It is in that context that Jesus says He is the door for the sheep. As Jesus declares that He is the door, it means that He is the only way to salvation. “Whoever enters through me will be saved.” There is no salvation outside of Jesus — He is the only way to God for salvation. Jesus alone is the door, and only source of true life and freedom.

Jesus, as the door, is also the provider; we can find pasture in Him. Jesus provides everything we need. He came so that we “may have life, and have it abundantly!”

Next Steps:

How can you seek to know God's voice in the coming weeks?

Jesus claims He is the gate. Does your life currently reflect that He is the only way to heaven? The only way to have a full and abundant life?

What other "doors" are you pursuing to find joy, satisfaction, fulfillment?

Prayer:

Lord, today I give thanks that you are "the door", that salvation is found in you, and you alone. Thank you for providing a way to the Father. Thank you for your daily provision in giving all we need to live a life that is fully pleasing to you. Give me confidence and boldness to speak of all you have done for me to others today. Amen.

Day 11

I AM The Good Shepherd

Read: John 10:1-11

Key Verse: "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."

Since the beginning of time, God has been providing us with opportunities to know who He is and what it means to live in a relationship with Him. The Bible uses simple explanations of significant truths for us to learn, understand, and put into practice. In this case, Jesus is illustrating that we have the opportunity to follow God through relationship with Himself or to follow the world. Jesus uses the profession of a shepherd leading the sheep. (Read Psalm 23 for a description of what a shepherd did.) While perhaps it's an unflattering comparison to be referred to as a sheep, Jesus' statement helps us to better understand human nature and our need for a Savior. It also reminds us that we are always following something or someone in our quest for personal, professional, and spiritual growth.

Jesus foreshadows His own death on the cross, which was the ultimate sacrifice that God would make on our behalf so that we could live in relationship with Him. Through His sacrifice, we have access to the abundant life outlined in Jesus' words here.

Next Steps:

Who are you following? What are the people or things that have the greatest impact on your life? Are they leading you to an abundant life as mentioned in John 10:10?

What are the things that come with following the Good Shepherd in this passage?

What are the shifts in your life that you should consider making to better align you with what God has for you?

What are the times that you take throughout your day to listen for the voice of God in prayer and reading the Bible? Who can you invite accountability from to start implementing these in your daily rhythms?

Prayer:

God, make me aware of who and what I am giving priority to in my life. Teach me to live a life that is following you as the Good Shepherd who gives abundant life. Forgive me for areas that I have given an unhealthy emphasis to other voices that are ultimately a distraction from what you would have for me! Teach me to hear, know, and follow your voice. Amen.

Day 12

I AM The Resurrection and the Life

Read: John 11:1-44

Key Verse: Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

In John 11, Jesus' good friend Lazarus is sick; Jesus learns of his sickness and delays two more days before going to see His friend. The disciples convince Jesus to go see Lazarus, but by this time, Jesus knew that he was dead. When Jesus finally gets to Bethany, Mary and Martha are distraught. Martha tries to piece together what she knows about Jesus' teaching but struggles to fully understand why Jesus didn't come before her brother died. Jesus comforts Martha in her grief and gives her hope.

Raising the dead, and this passage specifically (John 11:38-44), raising Lazarus is something only God is capable of. Jesus raised the dead because He is the resurrection and life. Jesus not only gives resurrection and life, He is our ultimate hope.

Next Steps:

Take a moment to evaluate where you place your hope. Is it in the resurrection of Jesus?

How does the statement "I am the resurrection and the life" encourage you today?

What area of life do you need to die to yourself?

Prayer:

Lord, allow me the ability to grasp the extent of how deep, how wide, and how long your love for me. May I rejoice today in the resurrected life you have given to me both now and in the future. Let my life speak of what Jesus accomplished, and never forget the victory is ours, death is defeated, and Jesus has won.

Day 13

I AM The Way, the Truth, and the Life

Read: John 14:1-14

Key Verse: Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

The words "I AM" were very powerful in the Hebrew Language as it is the name of God. So when Jesus uses these "I AM" statements, He is also expressing the oneness He has with God. This is the point Jesus is making when He says, "I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Jesus just told them that He is going to be betrayed, denied by Peter, and that He is leaving them. But then, He tells them to stop being troubled and set their hearts and minds at ease. He shares all of this and tells them to quit doubting and instead be persistent in their faith, essentially saying, "keep trusting in God and in me." He helps them by telling them he is preparing a place for them! Please don't miss this: when their faith was wavering, Jesus told them that His faithfulness was still intact and He was going to keep His word!

Thomas usually is seen as the doubter, but really Thomas was a disciple who was an honest pessimist who was uninhibited in his questions. He asks Jesus, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answers: "I AM the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

This statement was personal. This promise was rooted in the Father's heart, and His heart is the same as the Father's. This is why He could make this bold promise. This statement was also authoritative in nature. Since He was so closely intimate with the Father, He could make the claim that the only way to the Father is through Him and the work He was going to accomplish for His Father. Jesus was telling them there is no need to fear, to know Him is to know the Father, and they are both faithful to their word.

Next Steps:

Where do you run, or what do you turn to when you get discouraged or when fear sets in because of your circumstances?

The oneness that Jesus had with the Father is one we are striving for. How intimate is your relationship with God?

Prayer:

Lord, we desire this oneness that Jesus had with you. We know that this relationship brings peace and comfort knowing you are the way, the truth and the life for us. May we grow deeper in our intimacy with you, so when hard things come we are securely set on you and your faithfulness to us. Amen.

Day 14

I AM The True Vine

Read: John 15:1-17

Key Verse: "I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

What do Northern Michigan, the Finger Lakes of New York, and the Napa Valley of California all have in common? They all have an abundance of vineyards.

Today in the land of Israel, through highly effective irrigation systems, there are vast vineyards where they never could have grown before. Because of the presence of vineyards in biblical times, God often used this form of agriculture as a metaphor for His relationship with His people (Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:8-14; Matthew 21:33-43).

So, it should be no surprise that Jesus would use a vine and branches to speak of His relationship with the disciples. In the upper room, Jesus gave very important insights into our relationship with Him and with every believer (John 14-16). Take a moment and read the passage as Jesus speaks of Himself as the True Vine and the believer as a branch in John 15:1-16. Notice how many times Jesus uses the word "abide." That speaks of the organic connection between the main vertical part of the vine that grows out of the ground and the branches that grow horizontally to produce the grapes.

Jesus is the Vine who reproduces His life and likeness on the branch of our lives. The Father prunes us so that there is less of self and sin and more of Christ (John 15:1-4). The Holy Spirit now indwells us, providing the spiritual life in the branches (John 14:25-25; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Galatians 5:22-23).

We abide in our spiritual connection with Jesus as the Vine through the words of Scripture and prayer (John.15:7). It is only as we live connected to Jesus by faithfully depending upon and obeying Him that fruit is produced in our lives. Apart from Him, we can do nothing, but in Him, there is life and fruit (John 15:4-5). The fruit of love, joy and peace, obedience and ministry will grow in Your life as You abide in the True Vine. In this, God will be glorified (John 15:8-17).

Next Steps:

Are you trying to live the Christian life by trying harder in your own strength? Learn the lesson from Christ, the True Vine, that being fruitful comes from an abiding relationship in Him.

Are you making time for an intake of the Bible and an outflow of prayer in your life? Communication with God is what helps us abide in the True Vine.

Prayer:

God, thank you for always intentionally pushing us to grow in our transformation. May our hearts remain soft to your teaching, and may we bring what we have to offer and expect you to do great things with what we bring no matter how small it may seem to us. Amen.





