



BE BORN
IN US
Today

DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR
THE SEASON OF ADVENT

CHAD BIRD

AN AUDACIOUS FAITH

Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

LUKE 21:28

The followers of Jesus are not a mass of spineless cowards who shake in their boots at the slightest threat to their well-being. We hold the last page of the world's story in our hands. We know how this history ends. And it wraps up with the Hero coming in a second advent to raise the dead and smash into dust every single vestige of evil. So, as Jesus tells us, when we see creation being unraveled, people fainting in fear and even the celestial powers quivering, what do we do? Find a deep hole and hide? No, we stand tall, lift up our heads and grin from ear to ear, for our redemption is on its way.

Christianity is an audacious Advent faith. Bold and unwavering. We have within us God himself. The God who was born as one of us. And he fills our lives with blessings—now and until our Redeemer comes again with power and great glory.

Stir up our hearts, Lord Jesus, to cling solely to you. Amen.

MONDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

BLANKETED WITH BLESSINGS

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

GENESIS 1:28

When God blesses, he’s not treating people like they just sneezed. Nor is he shrugging his shoulders, as if to say, “Well, I really hope things work out for you.” A blessing is not a wish; it’s a divine word that actually does things. Accomplishes reality. All the verbs of this verse—being fruitful, multiplying, filling, etc.—will not be human trophies but divine gifts. Solely by his word of blessing do these things happen.

To hear the Father’s word in Jesus is to be blanketed with blessings. His word of blood-bought pardon conceives faith in us. His word of resurrection life sparks new life in us. Like rain upon droughted soil, his powerful words fall into our weary lives, bringing a harvest of hope and joy.

Bless us, Holy Spirit, with words of mercy from the mouth of our Savior. Amen.

TUESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

DENTURES AND DIAPERS

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

GENESIS 12:3

*W*as this a great big joke? There was Abram, seventy-five years old, and Sarai, ten years his junior. Two old folks. God tells this couple, who haven't filled a single crib, that their descendants will fill an entire nation. And as if that wasn't humorous enough, he added that through one of their offspring, the whole world would be blessed. A quarter-century later, when Sarah was ready to change the diapers of her son, she named him, most fittingly, "Laughter," or as we know him, "Isaac."

God has this tendency, at crucial moments in history, to center our hopes on an unlikely birth of an unlikely child from an unlikely mother. Isaac from Sarah. Samuel from Hannah. And Jesus from Mary. All these boys were blessings in their own way, but Jesus is divine blessing incarnate—born for us and in us to fill us with joyous laughter.

Heavenly Father, fill our lives with joy in your wonder-working ways. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

IN WHOM DOES YOUR TRUST REST?

Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength. ... Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.

JEREMIAH 17:5, 7

*J*eremiah paints a vivid picture of contrast between the man-truster and the God-truster. To trust in humanity is to be “like a shrub in the desert” of an uninhabited salt waste (17:6). A dismal existence, indeed. To trust in the Lord, however, is to be “like a tree planted by water,” which keeps green leaves and sprouts fruit even in drought (17:8). And notice: there is no third option. We trust in God or we trust in humanity; we lean on heaven or we lean on earth.

Strictly speaking, there are no unbelievers; we all believe in something or someone. Our Father calls us to trust him, for he is trustworthy, gracious, merciful, perfect—everything humanity is not. Planted in the baptismal water of Christ, enlivened by him, we are blessed and fruitful, for we are joined to him who is Life itself.

*Increase our faith, O Lord, in your unfailing love for us.
Amen.*



DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR THE SEASON OF ADVENT

*T*he birth of Jesus was the beginning of his ongoing presence in our world as both God and man. He is born in us spiritually even as he was born physically from Mary. He comes to inhabit our lives. By his word, he blesses, renews, guides and empowers us so that it's no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us. Each day in Advent, we will discover anew how his grace enriches our existence.

