



**A Five-Day Devotional**  
*Malachi 4:5–6; Luke 1:13–17*

**DAY 1 — Monday**

**Faithful in the Silence**

*Malachi 4:5–6*

*“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.” Malachi 4:5*

**Dig Deeper by Reading:** *Luke 2:25–32; Luke 2:36–38; Psalm 27:14; Lamentations 3:25–26*

On Sunday we stood at the last page of Malachi and stared into four hundred years of silence. Here is something worth sitting with today: that silence was never empty of faithful people.

Somewhere in those quiet centuries, parents kept teaching their children the old promises. Priests kept lighting the lamps. Ordinary believers kept the Sabbath and whispered, “He said He would send someone.” Most of them died without ever hearing a new word from heaven. And yet, when the silence finally broke, God still had people waiting.

Turn a few pages past John’s birth and you meet two of them. Simeon, who had been promised he would not die before he saw the Christ. Anna, who never left the temple, worshiping night and day. They had built entire lifetimes on a promise they had not yet seen kept — and God did not disappoint them. The silence had not made them bitter. It had made them ready.

That is the encouragement for your ordinary Monday. The unspectacular faithfulness of a season with no fireworks — the prayers no one hears, the obedience no one notices — is not you waiting for your life to start. It is God preparing you, the way He prepared a Simeon and an Anna, to recognize Him when He moves.

## APPLICATION

Choose one small act of faithfulness you can keep this week with no one watching and no visible payoff — time in prayer, time in the Word, a quiet obedience. Do it as an act of getting ready, not of earning anything.

## PRAYER PROMPTS

- Ask God to make you like Simeon and Anna — faithful in the silence and ready to recognize Him the moment He moves.
- Pray for someone whose faith is wearing thin in a long, quiet season — that God would meet them right there in the waiting.
- Thank God that the silence is never empty of His presence, and ask Him to use this ordinary week to prepare you for what He is doing.

## DAY 2 — Tuesday

### The Prayer You Shelved

*Luke 1:13*

*“Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son.”* Luke 1:13

**Dig Deeper by Reading:** *1 Samuel 1:10–20; Genesis 18:13–14; Psalm 40:1–3; Isaiah 55:8–9*

*“Your petition has been heard.”* Stop and feel the weight of that sentence for the old man who heard it.

Zacharias and Elizabeth had almost certainly prayed for a child for years. Decades, probably. In their world, childlessness carried a quiet shame Elizabeth felt every day. And somewhere along the way — we can hardly blame him — Zacharias had likely folded that prayer up and put it away. You reach an age where you stop asking for certain things.

So, when Gabriel says, *“your petition has been heard,”* Zacharias is standing there having stopped expecting it. The prayer he had given up on had never fallen on deaf ears. Heaven had heard it the first time — and every time since — and was answering on a timeline built around purposes Zacharias could not see. Their son would step onto the stage of history at the exact moment God intended.

Here is the encouragement: God’s silence toward a prayer is not the same as God’s refusal of it. The “yes” may already be on its way while you have long since quit expecting it. Is there a prayer you have quietly shelved because too much time has passed? Before you decide the answer is no, remember an old priest in the temple who discovered his shelved prayer had been heard all along.

## APPLICATION

Name one prayer you gave up on. Bring it back to God today — not with a demand, but with honesty: “I stopped asking for this. I am bringing it back to You and leaving the timing with You.”

## PRAYER PROMPTS

- Ask God for the courage to bring an abandoned prayer back into the light and lay it before Him again.
- Pray for someone carrying a long, aching disappointment — that they would trust the God who hears the first time and answers at the right time.
- Thank God that no honest prayer you have ever prayed has been lost or ignored, and ask Him to help you trust His timing over your own.

## DAY 3 — Wednesday

### The Turn You Didn't Expect

*Luke 1:16–17*

*“...to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Luke 1:17*

**Dig Deeper by Reading:** *Malachi 4:6; Luke 15:20–24; Colossians 3:12–14; Ezekiel 36:26*

Gabriel said John would *“turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children.”* Notice the direction God’s readying work takes. When He turns a heart back to Himself, He also turns it toward the people right in front of it.

That is easy to miss. We tend to think of getting our hearts ready for God as a private, vertical thing — just me and the Lord. But the sign that a heart has truly turned, the way Malachi describes it, is startlingly horizontal. Fathers and children. Broken relationships mended. The distance across the kitchen table closed.

It makes sense when you think about it. You cannot draw near to God while holding people at arm’s length. The same grace that softens my heart toward Him softens it toward my spouse, my kids, the person I have been quietly avoiding. A readied heart is a reconciled heart.

So, if you have been asking God to make you ready — to grow you, change you, prepare you — do not be surprised if the work shows up in a relationship rather than in a quiet time. The place where you are tempted to stay cold and guarded may be exactly where God wants to do His turning. Getting ready for the Lord is rarely as private as we would prefer. It usually has a name and a face attached to it.

## APPLICATION

Think of one relationship where your heart has grown cold or guarded. Take one small step toward it today — a text, a call, a word of grace — as part of letting God turn your heart.

## PRAYER PROMPTS

- Ask God to show you where a heart turned toward Him needs to also turn toward someone in your life.
- Pray for a specific relationship that has grown distant, that God would begin His work of reconciliation in it — starting with you.

- Thank God that He is the One who does the turning, and ask Him for the humility to take the first step while He does the deeper work.

## **DAY 4 — Thursday**

### **When Decreasing Feels Like Disappearing**

*John 3:30*

*“He must increase, but I must decrease.” John 3:30*

**Dig Deeper by Reading:** *Matthew 11:2–11; John 1:29–31; 2 Timothy 4:6–8; 1 Corinthians 4:5*

*“He must increase, but I must decrease.”* We quote this so easily. For John, it cost him everything.

Fast-forward from the Jordan River to a prison cell. John — the fearless voice in the wilderness — is now in Herod’s dungeon, and he sends word to Jesus: *“Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?”* This is the man who baptized Jesus, who saw the dove descend, who said, *“Behold, the Lamb of God.”* And now, in the dark, he is asking whether he got it right.

John never saw the fireworks. He was executed before the cross, before the empty tomb, before Pentecost. He decreased so completely that he disappeared from the story before the best of it arrived. And yet Jesus, hearing John’s wavering question, turned to the crowd and said there was no one greater born of women.

That is the encouragement hidden here: decreasing can feel like disappearing. Pointing everyone to Jesus can mean you do not get to stand in the spotlight you helped create. But heaven’s math is not ours. The One you make much of sees the part you played — even the part no one else remembers. You may not see the harvest of your faithfulness. John did not either. Do your part anyway. The Lord who called John the greatest is keeping account of yours.

### **APPLICATION**

Where are you tempted to need the payoff — the credit, the visible result — before you will keep serving? Choose to do the faithful thing today without waiting to see the outcome.

### **PRAYER PROMPTS**

- Ask God to free you from needing to see the results of your faithfulness before you will keep being faithful.
- Pray for someone serving quietly and unseen — a volunteer, a caregiver, a behind-the-scenes servant — that they would know their work is seen by God.
- Thank God that He keeps account of the part you play even when no one else remembers it, and ask Him to help you make much of Jesus today.

## **DAY 5 — Friday**

### **Watching for the Morning**

*Luke 1:17*

*“...so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Luke 1:17*

**Dig Deeper by Reading:** *Psalm 130:5–6; Matthew 25:1–13; Titus 2:11–13; Revelation 22:20*

John’s whole assignment was to get a people ready. That assignment did not end with him — it has been handed down to us, only now we are not preparing for a manger. We are waiting for a King to return.

The psalmist gives us the posture: *“My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning”* (Psalm 130:6). He says it twice, because the watchman knows something the anxious heart forgets: morning always comes. The watchman does not make the sun rise. He simply stays awake, keeps his post, and trusts that the darkness has an expiration date.

That is what waiting for the King looks like on an ordinary Friday. Not dramatic. Not flashy. Just staying at your post. Keeping the lamp trimmed. Doing the next faithful thing while it is still dark — because you know how the night ends.

We have waited two thousand years, and it can feel like the night is long. But the same God who kept His word to a silent Israel, who sent John right on time, has not forgotten this promise either. Jesus is coming. The morning is certain. So, keep watch. Keep the lamp burning. And where you can, help someone else get ready — because the King we are waiting for always keeps His word.

### **APPLICATION**

Ask yourself: if the King returned this week, is there anyone in my life I would wish I had helped get ready? Take one step toward that person — a conversation, an invitation, a prayer — before the week ends.

### **PRAYER PROMPTS**

- Ask God to give you the steady faith of the watchman — staying at your post in the dark because you know the morning is certain.
- Pray for one person who is not ready for Christ’s return, and ask God to use you to help them get ready.
- Thank God that the same God who kept His word then will keep it now, and ask Him to keep your lamp burning while you wait.

**Stay faithful in the silence. Let Him turn your heart. Point everyone to Jesus.  
The morning is certain — the King who kept His word then is coming still.**