

The church in Philadelphia faced daily risks and fear of aftershock from living in an earthquake-prone area. While we don't encounter quite the same trials, many of us can understand the feeling of walking on eggshells, wondering when the next hard thing will happen. Jesus invited that church into an unshakeable, permanent home and we have the same hope.

*New to daily devotionals? Here are a few tips for this week:*

- Following Jesus doesn't mean putting on rose-colored glasses or pretending things are fine just because you know God. Real hope comes from acknowledging and lamenting the hard things but holding on to the hope of what Jesus is doing and promises to finish.
- If you find yourself having trouble concentrating or paying attention to the passages or prompts, try spending time just being still with God. Sometimes, God feels most present when we aren't 'doing' anything. Try taking a few minutes at the beginning or end of your devotional to be still with the Lord.

### **Monday, November 19th**

Read Ephesians 2:19-22

*<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

Think through the foundation of your spiritual heritage. Are you the first Christian in your family? Do you come from a long line of Christians? What does it mean to have the spiritual heritage of the apostles, prophets and all God's people?

In ancient buildings, the cornerstone was the largest, most solid piece that the rest of a building would be built around. How have you seen evidence of Jesus as the cornerstone in your life? Are there things that might need to be reoriented to Jesus as cornerstone? What safety or security does this offer you?

It is only with Jesus as the cornerstone that the body of believers can become part of something unshakeable. What does it mean that you could become a dwelling for God's Spirit? Are there ways you have already seen this manifest? What hope does this offer you?

### **Tuesday, November 20th**

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

What things hinder you or easily entangle you? How might you move towards fixing your eyes on Jesus? What has helped you fix your eyes on Jesus—what might you need to continue, start or stop doing?

When have you found yourself growing weary and tired from running the race? How might looking towards Jesus' experience of being opposed while on earth serve you in those moments?

### **Wednesday, November 21st**

Read 1 Peter 5:10-11

*<sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

In what ways have you encountered suffering?

How have you seen God begin to restore you, making you strong, firm and steadfast? What hope does the promise of complete restoration give you?

In what ways have you tried to be strong, firm and steadfast apart from God's power (v.11) or grace (v.10)? Have you ever tried to be strong only with your own abilities? What has that been like? How might God be inviting you deeper into His power and grace?

## Thursday, November 22nd

Read Isaiah 43:18-21

<sup>19</sup> *See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.*

<sup>20</sup> *The wild animals honor me,  
the jackals and the owls,  
because I provide water in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland,  
to give drink to my people, my chosen,*

<sup>21</sup> *the people I formed for myself  
that they may proclaim my praise.*

Where in the world do you see wilderness or wasteland? In your own life? How have you seen God start to do a new thing in those places? How has God provided water (refreshment, new life, or quenching) in the midst of the wasteland? Where have you been overlooking God's provision?

Because God provides in the wasteland, all of creation honors Him and proclaims His praise. Spend time praising God for His provision.

## Friday, November 23rd

Read Deuteronomy 31:6

<sup>6</sup> *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."*

Spend time in prayer, asking for the Lord's strength and courage.

*When evil darkens our world, give us light.  
When despair numbs our souls, give us hope.  
When we stumble and fall, life us up.  
When doubts assail us, give us faith.  
When nothing seems sure, give us trust.  
When ideals fade, give us vision.  
When we lose our way, be our guide!  
That we may find serenity in Your presence, and purpose in doing Your will.*



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