



***A KING FOREVER
AND EVER***

THE SILENT MOMENT

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The Silent Moment

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God,
be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

— 1 Timothy 1:17, KJV



December-February 2024-25

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December 2024–February 2025

A King Forever and Ever

In our rapid-fire culture today, it's not uncommon to hear someone sigh and say, "The only constant in life is change." Interestingly, it's not a new sentiment. Its origins can be traced back to the writings of Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher who lived between the 6th and 5th centuries BC. "Everything flows," he wrote. "No man ever steps in the same river twice."

He was right, of course. And while history's unfolding has been marked by change-making events and people, in no previous era has there been such fast-moving and drastic scientific and technological advances as in the past 50 years. You might even say in the last 30 years, as the entire culture has been reshaped by the advent of the internet and social media. Meanwhile other developments in the sciences have brought us to the cusp of some uncharted frontiers that evoke uncertainty and concern.

With all this change going on around us, often sweeping us into its current, it seems the comforts of familiarity have become a thing of the past. In our daily lives, for example—whether it's a new cell phone, computer, washing machine, or car—our purchases often become virtually obsolete before we've even gotten used how they work. It's a pace that becomes exhausting with no relief in sight.

No relief, that is, unless we're looking up. God's Word reveals that time is winding down and events are ramping up to a conclusion. The prophetic books—such as Daniel and Revelation—give us a glimpse of it. Time will culminate in the unveiling of an eternal kingdom and its King—our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Many kings, rulers, and leaders have come and gone throughout history. The leaders we see on the world stage even now will not endure. They may make a lot of political noise and seem to loom large, but their power is as nothing in God's eyes (Psalm 62:9-12).

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God has chosen and installed His king (Psalm 2), Jesus the Christ, and He is the King of kings.

It won't be long until Jesus is revealed. He'll be seated on His throne, clothed in righteousness, and crowned with glory and honor—and this will *never* change. If we have put our trust in Him, we can look forward to a place in His kingdom, even as we serve Him today.

Be encouraged! Time here is fleeting, but life with King Jesus is forever and ever.

Peace to your heart!

Christine Dallman, Editor

December 1

A Lifetime Commitment

The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. . . . He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age” (Ruth 4:14-15).

Scripture: Ruth 4:9-17

Song: “O God, Our Help in Ages Past”

For years I had a fantasy of what life would be like when my husband was retired. Now at age 70, I’m being forced to lower my expectations due to physical limitations and health issues. I’m also learning to understand my sense of worth through the lens of God’s Word.

North American culture tends to value youth and fitness over age and wisdom, but the Bible has many examples of God choosing elderly people for significant roles in His plan. At age 100, Abraham welcomed his son Isaac. In her old age, Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist. The apostle John is believed to have been in his nineties when he wrote the book of Revelation.

No matter how young or old we are, God values us. When we feel we’re too old to be useful or if we think we’ve made too many mistakes, it’s important to remember that God provided redemption through His Son, Jesus, to renew and sustain us *all* our days. His promise to be with us is a lifetime commitment.

Father, at every stage of my life, remind me that my value, meaning, and purpose are found in my relationship with You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

The Right Match

[Samuel] asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep” (1 Samuel 16:11).

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Song: “Change My Heart, O God”

When organ transplant teams search for a heart recipient, they don't look at hair or eye color, personal achievements, or IQ. When making their decision, they look at blood type, the size of the heart in comparison to each candidate, and other factors that truly matter for a successful transplant. Ultimately, they choose someone who will be the best possible match.

David didn't appear to be the right candidate to be anointed king. He wasn't the oldest, the strongest, or the best-looking of his brothers. But he was the one who understood what it meant to care attentively and faithfully for his father's sheep. God's choice of David as a future king was a surprise to everyone. But God could see what others could not: David had the heart of one who would serve and lead well, a heart that matched God's criteria.

No matter how we try, our own strivings or accomplishments don't qualify us for service in God's kingdom. Rather, as we submit our hearts to be shaped by Him, He prepares us for the work He has for us to do.

Father, my heart is open to You today. Please make it fit for the assignments You have for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

December 3

Nevertheless

The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, “You will not get in here.” . . . Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David (2 Samuel 5:6-7).

Scripture: 2 Samuel 5:1-10

Song: “Just as I Am”

Sean Lewis was born with cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. Nevertheless, he has made it his mission to continue pressing toward his goals. With the support of family and friends, he participates in marathons, advocates for others with disabilities, and has become a motivational speaker. Through everything he does, he seeks to spread the message that God can and will use anyone who is willing to serve Him, no matter their circumstances.

David’s story is also marked by “nevertheless” situations. He was the youngest brother; nevertheless, God chose him. Goliath threatened David’s life; nevertheless, David defeated him. Saul hunted David to kill him; nevertheless, David escaped and later became king in Saul’s place. The Jebusites mocked and ridiculed David; nevertheless, he captured their fortress. Over and over again, God enabled David to triumph in adversity.

Sometimes we may feel that our circumstances or deficits disqualify us from serving God. But when God chooses us for a task, He also gives us what we need to complete it. With God as our strength, our apparent weaknesses are only the beginning of our own “nevertheless” story.

Father, thank You that Your grace is sufficient for me today. As I trust and follow You, please bring glory to Your name through me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

His Enduring Word

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, **“since I am a virgin?”** The angel answered, **“The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. . . . For no word from God will ever fail”** (Luke 1:34-35, 37).

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Song: “Every Promise of Your Word”

The Rose of Hildesheim—a wild dog-rose bush that climbs the walls of Hildesheim Cathedral in Germany—is believed to be the oldest rose in the world. Known as the Thousand-Year Rose, it was destroyed when the cathedral was bombed during World War II. However, its roots survived, and after new growth pushed through the rubble, the remarkable rosebush bloomed once again.

The Word of the Lord that Gabriel brought to Mary seemed impossible. Certainly, Mary didn’t understand how she could give birth to a son—let alone the Son of the Most High! Yet God’s will was not hindered by anything Mary saw as an obstacle. The angel assured her that God’s Word would never fail, and in response Mary’s lips echoed the trust that was in her heart: “May your word to me be fulfilled” (Luke 1:38).

When God makes a promise, it will be fulfilled, even when we can’t see how. His Word is rooted deeply in the truth of His character, and no damage, desecration, or destruction on earth will ever keep His enduring Word from springing up to its fulfillment.

Father, thank You for Your never-failing Word. Like Mary, I want to be ready to submit to Your will for my life. In Jesus’ name, amen.

December 5

A Refuge from Fear

Blessed are all who take refuge in him (Psalm 2:12).

Scripture: Psalm 2

Song: “Under His Wings”

My dog is afraid of candles, which means family birthdays are mildly traumatic experiences for him. He’ll be sitting next to my chair wagging his tail, but as soon as the lighter flicks on, his ears flatten, and he retreats to a far corner until the candles are all blown out. Considering the tiny size of the flames, I can’t help laughing a little at his sudden retreat. Of course, I go to comfort him afterward.

To our God, who is enthroned in Heaven, even the combined power of earth’s nations is such an insignificant threat that He laughs at rulers’ plans and efforts to overthrow Him, and He readily grants power to His Son, the King of kings, to break the nations into pieces. But to those who serve the Lord with an awed understanding of His power, He provides a place of safety and refuge in His presence.

Whether we feel frightened by the threats of leaders who disrespect God, or by wars, or by natural disasters, or by circumstances that feel out of control, or even by daily activities that feel scary to us, God offers us an alternative to our fear. When placed beside His power, the things we shrink from become small by comparison, and in Him we find a secure place of refuge and protection.

Father, thank You for reminding me of Your greatness today. I give You each of my fears and worries, and I choose to trust You as my safe refuge. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Complete Transformation

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned (Isaiah 9:2).

Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-7

Song: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

During a trip to Switzerland with my dad, we made a stop in the mountain town of Zermatt, hoping to enjoy views of the iconic Matterhorn Peak. Sadly, the day we visited was extremely cloudy. We took a cable car up the mountain and still could barely see anything. But the day we were scheduled to leave dawned bright and clear. The sunrise changed everything, chasing away any remaining clouds and highlighting the snowy peak with beautiful pinks and golds.

Isaiah 9 describes the coming of God’s chosen One, whose arrival would change everything. The people would go from living in deep spiritual darkness to rejoicing in the light of His coming. With His appearance, the promised Son of God would bring justice, righteousness, and peace. Nothing would be as it had been.

Jesus changes everything. He brings hope, joy, and peace into our lives. In times of grief and loss, He is our wonderful counselor. As our everlasting Father, if we wander from Him, He draws us back to himself and to our spiritual family. Even the hardest and most challenging circumstances are different because of His promise to one day chase away every remaining cloud of darkness with the light of His everlasting presence (Revelation 21:1-4).

Father, in times of doubt, fear, and grief, help me to remember that Jesus is with me and that He knows exactly what I need. In Jesus’ name, amen.

December 7

Called to Share

Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake (Romans 1:5).

Scripture: Romans 1:1-7

Song: "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

I had a friend in college who loved introducing others to the things she loved, whether it was a favorite movie, television show, or book series. Her joy was evident whenever someone else became excited about something she had shared with them. By the time we all graduated, many of us had new favorite shows or books, thanks to her enthusiasm.

The apostle Paul had a strong sense of his own calling, and he considered it his life mission to introduce others to Jesus and to help them know their own calling as believers. In today's passage, Paul explains that believers are called to obedience that comes through faith, called to belong to Jesus, and called to be God's holy people. Additionally, as believers, we join in the mission to call others to Jesus through the gospel message.

The story of Jesus' transforming love at work in our lives is the best thing we can share with others. Even though it might feel uncomfortable or intimidating at times, bringing the gospel message to others is a call we are meant to obey (Matthew 28:18-20). Let's be ready this Christmas season to share the gospel message so others will hear God's call to come to Him.

Father, forgive me for sometimes fearing to tell others about You. Give me boldness to talk about how You have changed my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

A Greater Call

[God told Nathan to tell David,] “Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16).

Scripture: 2 Samuel 7:4-17

Song: “I Surrender All”

In 1876, young Lilius Trotter (1853–1928) met one of England’s most well-known art critics, who told her he could take her raw talent and make her into one of England’s greatest living artists. The pull to cultivate her artistic ability was strong, yet ultimately, she realized she couldn’t dedicate herself to art and still seek God’s kingdom first. A few years later, she felt called to mission work in Algeria and spent the rest of her life sharing the hope of Jesus with the people there.

David’s desire to build a house for God was a sincere one, but it wasn’t what God wanted. God only wanted David to continue doing what He originally anointed him to do—to shepherd His people as their king. In His goodness to David, God promised to establish a house for him—a posterity—that (in Christ) would ultimately rule forever. In a sense, what David had wanted to do for God—build a house for His name—God did for David.

Sometimes our good desires must be set aside for the sake of God’s greater calling. As we seek God’s kingdom first in our lives, He will lead us into His plans beyond our own pursuits and with effects that last far beyond our own lifetime.

Father, I want to pursue Your kingdom first, above and beyond my own desires. Help me to discern Your call and follow You faithfully. In Jesus’ name, amen.

December 9

Speak Up!

**I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth
I will make your faithfulness known through all generations**
(Psalm 89:1).

Scripture: Psalm 89:1-4, 27-37

Song: "I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord"

I once attended a worship event with some of North America's most popular Christian musicians. I laughed to myself when one of them said, "Don't worry if you can't sing; no one else will be able to hear except the person in front of you. Just sing anyway!"

The writer of Psalm 89 is full to overflowing with a song testifying to God's goodness. It's a reminder to us that our testimony is worth sharing even if it doesn't seem as dynamic as what God has done in someone else's life. Such comparisons put us at risk of being silenced from telling of God's goodness in our own lives. Let the truth be told: everyone has a testimony, and God can use each voice!

Every day we need to realize that there will be people in front of us who do not know God. Our response to a world that does not know Him is to raise our voices, to tell our stories. As we live our lives with thankful hearts, may many people come to know Jesus and begin sharing their own testimonies.

Father, give me courage to tell the world about what You've done for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Don't Give Up

[Zechariah and Elizabeth] were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old (Luke 1:7).

Scripture: Luke 1:5-17

Song: “Higher Ground”

Colonel Sanders (1890–1980) sold his first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise in 1952, and so began his rise to fame and fortune in the fast-food industry. If you were to read his biography, however, you would learn of his interpersonal struggles, countless failed ventures, and dreams that never came to pass. Remarkably, he didn't lose hope over the years, and when his big break finally came, he was in his sixties.

In Bible times, having children was a sign of having obtained God's favor. Elizabeth, a descendant of Aaron's priestly line, had never been able to conceive. While others may have seen her as being outside of God's favor, God's plan was to bless her in her old age with a special son. From a human perspective, it looked as though her best years were behind her. Yet, in God's providence, she became the mother of John the Baptist, the forerunner who would prepare the way for the long-awaited Messiah.

God's grace manifests itself uniquely in each of our lives. The Lord's ways are not our ways, and His timing does not always line up with ours. However, that doesn't mean He is absent or overlooking us. He is always at work, moving things, lining them up, orchestrating them—working all things together for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

Father, give me the ability to persevere even when I can't see the blessing. In Jesus' name, amen.

December 11

No Doubt About It

[The angel Gabriel said to Zechariah,] “Now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time” (Luke 1:20).

Scripture: Luke 1:18-23

Song: “Only Believe”

The effects of coffee beans are thought to have been discovered by an Ethiopian goat farmer. Apparently the farmer’s goats ate the beans and became highly energetic afterward. Later, when people began grinding the beans and preparing them as a drink, there were some who doubted it could be beneficial and even said it was evil. Today, however, despite past skeptics and naysayers, coffee helps many of us get the day started, delivering on its promise to provide a boost of energy.

Through the angel Gabriel, God promised the elderly Zechariah the blessing of a son. But to Zechariah, this promise seemed suspect, even impossible. Regardless of what things looked like to Zechariah, however, God was able to deliver on His promise. As a consequence of his doubt, Zechariah was unable to speak until the promise came to fruition. Yet even in Zechariah’s silence, the Lord was still present, working out His plan, fulfilling His promise.

The Bible says that all God’s promises are “Yes” in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20). When He calls for something to come to pass, even if it’s in the distant future, we can trust fully in His good plan.

Father, when I’m tempted to doubt You, grant me renewed faith to trust that You’ll fulfill each promise, just as You have always done. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Made Strong in God's Presence

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage (Psalm 84:5).

Scripture: Psalm 84

Song: "You Are My All in All"

Recently the Lord began to bring to my mind people who are dealing with trials: threats of divorce, cancer, paralysis, and persistent anxiety to name a few. As I pondered how to respond to loved ones who are hurting, God seemed to lead me to Psalm 84.

Scripture records that at appointed times during the year, the Jewish people would make the trek to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. These travelers had trials and tragedies in their lives, just as we do. The writer of this psalm understood, though, that if God's people could just press on to God's house—to His temple—they would find peace in His presence. While some of them may have grown weak on the journey, they would soon become strong as they worshipped at the temple of their Holy God.

It's usually not helpful to tell someone who is hurting to find the strength to stand up and move on. But what I have come to understand is that the difference between a hurting person and a healing person is often found in a change of heart, a change of mind, and a change of perception regarding God's nearness. Thankfully, we do not have to make the journey to Jerusalem to experience the peace of God. We can call on Him at any time, and He will be with us, even in our pain.

Father, give me strength and hope when I'm struggling. In Jesus' name, amen.

December 13

The Way to Well-Being

[God said,] “You who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves” (Malachi 4:2).

Scripture: Malachi 4

Song: “Trust and Obey”

I recently read an article by a farmer who raises dairy cows to produce organic milk. Weather permitting, he allows them to graze in the open pasture, where they are free to roam as they wish. He found that when cows are given the ability to graze without being confined, they are happier and healthier overall, and healthy cows produce better milk.

While the Israelites were God’s chosen people and God desired to grant them peace and freedom, they continued to stray from God’s ways, stumbling along in their sin. God knew that a happier, more productive quality of life would only be possible when Israel would trust in Him completely for fulfillment. Malachi’s plea was for the people of Israel to acknowledge and obey God and return to His paths of righteousness.

How we view God impacts how we respond to Him. Do we trust God’s Word when it says that no weapon formed against us will prosper (Isaiah 54:17)? Do we believe that He has given us everything we need to thrive spiritually (Ephesians 6:10-17)? God has good plans for us, and they all start with trusting His goodness and obeying His Word.

Father, I yield my heart today to walk in Your life-giving ways. Thank You that as You lead me in paths of righteousness, I will thrive! In Jesus’ name, amen.

Our Good God

[Elizabeth’s] neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy (Luke 1:58).

Scripture: Luke 1:57-66

Song: “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!”

My wife and I desire to make God the center of our marriage. Recently the Lord seems to be bringing us into new territory as we’ve been coming alongside married couples who are struggling. One of these people commented about how different my wife and I are from many others our age—that we somehow have the capacity not to just manage our marriage but also to make time to serve God. This observation opened the doorway to sharing our testimony and rejoicing over all that God has done in our lives.

God’s mercy, not our striving, is at the center of everything He gives us. For Zechariah and Elizabeth, what once seemed impossible was now a reality. In His mercy, God blessed this faithful couple with their son, John. For the remainder of their days, they would always have a story to tell others about what the Lord had done in their lives.

Walking with God has shown me that I am only the vessel into which He pours His mercy. As a Christian, I can boldly share my testimony to invite and encourage others to seek God in their own lives and to discover what He can do for, in, and through them.

Father, remind me of the mercy and goodness You have poured out in my life, and give me the opportunity to speak of it today. In Jesus’ name, amen.

December 15

Bless Our Youth

Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: “. . . You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him” (Luke 1:67, 76).

Scripture: Luke 1:67-80

Song: “To God Be the Glory”

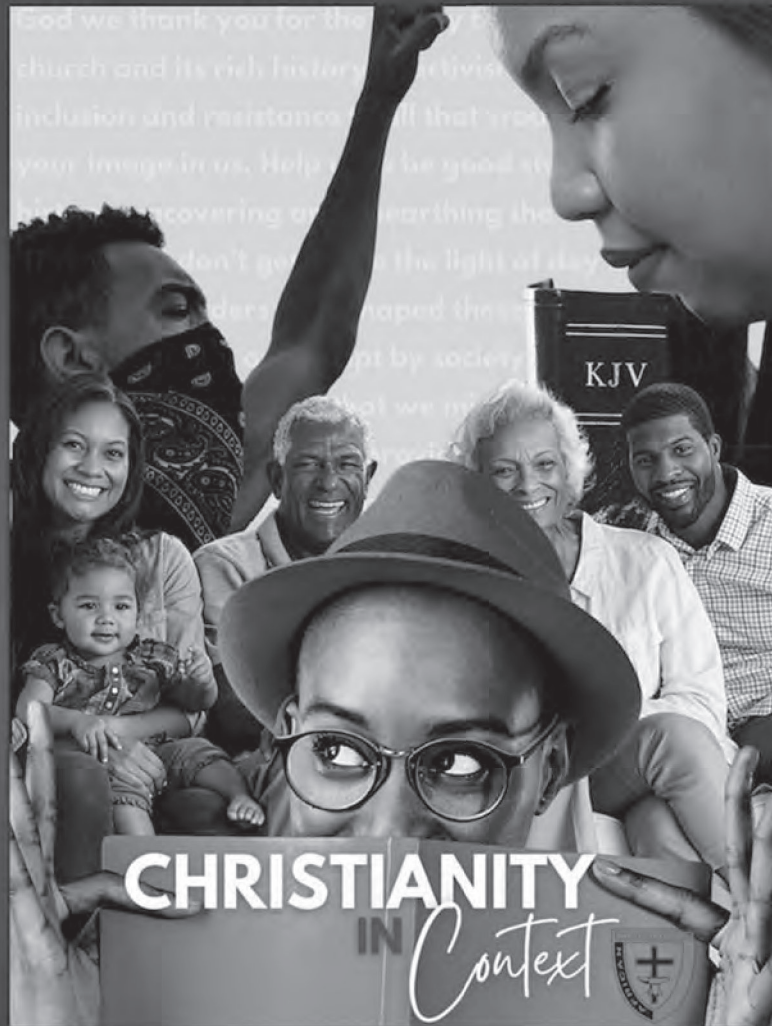
Last month my oldest daughter graduated from preschool. As a gift, teachers gave the students picture Bibles. Every night, my daughter and I flip through the pages of her Bible together until she finds an unfamiliar story and will ask me to read it to her. God has been working in her life, giving her the desire to know Him more deeply. This drives me to a posture of prayer as I thank the Lord and ask Him to use this little girl for something meaningful in His kingdom in the years to come.

Immediately after John’s birth, Zechariah spoke prophetically over him. These Holy Spirit-inspired words were a glimpse into this special baby’s future. Later, John would become known as John the Baptist and would usher in the ministry of Jesus the Messiah to a people awaiting His arrival.

As I think of the up-and-coming generations, I can’t help but pray for God’s wisdom, righteousness, strength, and love to fill their lives as they embark on the journey God has set out for them. It’s important that we spend time with our children and youth, speaking life-giving words of God’s truth and love to them, encouraging them to grow strong in the Lord.

Father, give me a heart to pray for young people that they might know You and make You known. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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