

Daily Reflection on Scripture
Week of December 29
Stories and Carols



Sunday December 29

Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:8 Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. God will be with you; God will neither fail you nor abandon you."

Morning Prayer: God, as the year comes to a close I look back and it is easy to think about all the things that didn't go as I planned or hoped. But that is not the first place I want my mind to go in the future. Of course in the New Year, I will still be disappointed and discouraged, but instead of ruminating on what didn't go my way, I want to remember that You always go ahead of me. You meet me in the struggles. You have yet to fail or abandon me. And for that, I am forever grateful. Help me to remember these words, "God will never fail me nor abandon me". May those words give me confidence that no matter what happens in the New Year, You are with me, just as Jesus promised. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Close your eyes, take in a deep breath, release it slowly as you name three things for which you are grateful.

Noon Text: Take a deep breath, release it slowly while thinking of at least one thing that has brought joy this morning. God's encouragement comes in those moments of joy.

Evening Text: God, today has come as a gift to be alive and now the day is done offering me the gift to rest. I rest in the assurance that You are with me both day and night.

Monday December 30

Scripture: II Corinthians 5:17 So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

Morning Prayer: God, as I approach the new year I am grateful for all that I have experienced in the past twelve months. I also pray for the wisdom to recognize and accept the new things that will come into my life. New friends, new relationships, new circumstances, even new challenges are all part of the grand movement of life. I pray that I can release what no longer serves me well, and lean toward the new life that awaits. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Close your eyes, take in a deep breath, release it slowly as you name three people for whom you are grateful.

Noon Text: As you look toward the celebration of the New Year take a moment to reflect on 2019. Give thanks for a year of life and God's love. Breathe in the new.

Evening Text: God, tonight the world celebrates the coming of the New Year. In this celebration, I pray for the peace of Christ to become more real in me and all people.

Tuesday December 31

Scripture: Revelation 21:5 The One who was sitting on the throne said, "Look! I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted."

Morning Prayer: Good morning God. We are on the cusp of a new year. As I bid goodbye to 2019 I thank You for the many blessings I experienced this past year. Through good times and challenging times, You were with me every step of the way. I am so very grateful for Your loving presence. New Year's resolutions never seem to last beyond a week, maybe a month. My deepest desire for the coming year is to grow ever deeper in my faith. Everything is new in You. Let me reflect that truth in all that I am and all that I do. In faith help me to be the light and the love of Jesus to everyone, friends and strangers alike. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Close your eyes, take in a deep breath, release it slowly as you name three things about yourself for which you are grateful.

Noon Text: In this day often filled with busy, noisy parties, I pause and reflect on the closing year with gratitude and look toward the New Year with great anticipation.

Evening Text: God, I come to the end of 2019, with gratitude in my heart. Now I am grateful for the opportunities ahead. Let me be open to serving You and Yours in new ways.

Wednesday January 1

Scripture: Joshua 1:9b Don't be afraid, because the Lord your God will be with you everywhere you go.

Morning Prayer: God, sometimes in the midst of the celebration and hype of the New Year, I feel both excited for all that will come and a little bit afraid of the unknown that awaits me in this new year. I pray that I can face each day with joy and anticipation in my heart, always remembering that I am never alone. You are always with me, whatever I may experience. I hold this promise in my heart today and in the days to come. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Close your eyes, take in a deep breath, release it slowly as you name three things you are looking forward to in 2020.

Noon text: Name what might be your greatest fear in the year ahead. Take a breath and remember that you need not fear anything. God is with you. You will never be alone.

Evening Text: As you prepare for rest tonight speak a few words of gratitude for the new year of life ahead. Rest without fear, to wake up refreshed for the new day.

Thursday January 2

Scripture: Philippians 4:11 I am not complaining about having too little. I have learned to be satisfied with whatever I have.

Morning Prayer: God, teach me not to take for granted the people or the material things in my life. Let me always look at them as blessings and remind me that the vast majority of the people in the world live their lives with much, much less. Take my eyes off of wanting more material things and focus them on the important relationships in my life. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Close your eyes, take in a deep breath, release it slowly as you name three things you can do today to take care of yourself.

Noon Text: God, help me to not take for granted the people and things in my life. Help me to remember that what I have is more than sufficient.

Evening Text: God, as the day draws to a close, let me reflect on all of the blessings in my life and the relationships that nurture my soul.

Friday January 3

Scripture: Lamentations 3:22-23 God's loyal love couldn't have run out, God's merciful love couldn't have dried up. They're created new every morning. How great your faithfulness!

Morning Prayer: God, this morning I awaken to Your loyal and merciful love, knowing that I can receive it anew each day. I am grateful for the night of rest and for this week of new beginnings. I am grateful for the friends I have and the new friends that I will discover this year. There have been so many challenges and struggles in the past year. But with Your faithfulness, I have seen it through and am ready to begin this New Year. Your love is for all. I want to be a beacon of Your love, especially to those on the margins, who struggle in life, who are considered less by so many. Help me stay focused on seeing the good rather than being dragged down by the negative. Help me find ways to share Your light and Your love in my corner of this world. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Close your eyes, take in a deep breath, release it slowly as you name three ways you can serve today.

Noon Text: It is easy to become consumed in the busyness of the day and lose sight of the blessings of your life. Pause for a moment of gratitude to change your attitude.

Evening Text: The first week of the New Year is drawing to a close. God as I rest I am grateful for the knowledge that I will wake refreshed and surrounded in Your love.

Saturday January 4

Scripture: Isaiah 43:2-3a When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up—the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord your God,

Morning Prayer: God, just five days into the New Year and I am already struggling to live into my New Year goals. Help me to not be consumed by what I am not doing but instead to be joyful for what I am doing. Give me the courage to change the things I can and grace to accept the fact that I can't change everything in just a few days. When I face challenges help me to focus on the good and not the negative. Help me to never forget that come hell or high water You are with me. You are my Lord and God. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Close your eyes, take in a deep breath, release it slowly as you name three things about your family for which you are grateful.

Noon Text: Take in a deep breath saying, "I am thankful that God is with me in this moment." Release saying "In this moment God helps me prepare for the next moments."

Evening Text: God, moment by moment You have met me today with grace. It's in that same grace that I now prepare to rest. I can rest assured of Your unending love.