

Devotional for December 28

"Looking Back With Gratitude, Looking Forward With Trust"

Scripture: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." — Psalm 126:3

Introduction

As the calendar edges toward a new year, December 28 sits quietly between the celebration of Christ's birth and the anticipation of what lies ahead. It is a day many overlook, yet it offers a sacred pause — a moment to reflect on where God has brought us and to renew our trust in Him for the journey ahead.

Though we are not gathering in person, we gather in spirit today around the Word of God, remembering that the same Lord who watched over us in every high and low of this past year also stands faithful in the days to come.

1. Looking Back With Gratitude

"The Lord has done great things for us."

Psalm 126 is a song of remembering. The psalmist looks back on a season when God restored His people — a time of joy so overwhelming that "our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with songs of joy." The psalm is a testimony that memory matters. When we remember God's faithfulness, our hearts become anchored in hope.

Take a moment to think back over the past year. Not every moment was easy. Some of us walked through sickness, loss, disappointment, or uncertainty. Others experienced unexpected blessings, answered prayers, and moments of restoration.

And yet — in every single story — God was present.

- In your weakness, He strengthened you.
- In your questions, He guided you.
- In your weariness, He lifted you.
- In your joy, He rejoiced with you.

Gratitude is not pretending the hard things didn't happen; it is recognizing that even in the hard things, God did not abandon us. He carried us. He sustained us. He provided what we needed, often before we even asked. And because God has brought us this far, we can confidently say:

"The Lord has done great things for us."

2. Gratitude Produces Joy

"...and we are filled with joy."

Joy doesn't always come from circumstances; it comes from perspective. The psalmist isn't joyful because life is perfect — he's joyful because he can see the fingerprints of God in his story. Gratitude is the doorway to joy. When we take time to recognize God's hand in our past, joy begins to rise in our present.

Joy comes when we remember that:

- God is faithful.
- God is for us.

- God is with us.
- God is working all things together for our good and His glory.

This kind of joy is not loud or forced — it is steady and resilient. It grows quietly in the heart of the believer who knows, “If God carried me then, He will carry me now.”

3. Looking Forward With Trust

Reflection naturally leads us forward. After remembering what God has already done, we look to the future with the confidence that He will continue the good work He has begun.

We do not know what the coming year holds. There may be surprises, challenges, blessings, and breakthroughs. But the character of God does not change with the calendar.

The same God who restored Israel...
 ...who carried His people through wilderness and exile...
 ...who sent His Son into the world at the perfect time...
 ...who walked with you through this past year...
 is already standing in your tomorrow.

We step into the new year not with fear, but with expectation — trusting that:

- God has a purpose for every season.
- God will provide for every need.
- God will strengthen us for every trial.
- God will open the doors He wants us to walk through.

Trust means we release control. We surrender our plans and pick up His peace. We walk by faith, not by sight, believing that His path is better than our own.

4. An Invitation for Today

Wherever you find yourself today, you are invited to do two things:

Remember.

Look back and see His faithfulness.

Name the ways He protected, provided, guided, healed, comforted, or surprised you.

Let gratitude rise in your heart.

Trust.

Place tomorrow in His hands.

Trust Him with what you don't understand.

Trust Him with what you can't control.

Trust Him with what you are hoping for.

God is not done with you.

God is not done with our church.

God is not done writing His story through us.

And because He is faithful, we can look forward with confidence.

Closing Prayer

Lord, as we pause before the end of this year, we thank You for Your unwavering faithfulness. You have carried us, sustained us, and worked in ways we could not always see. Fill our hearts with gratitude as we remember Your goodness. And as we look toward a new year, teach us to trust You fully. Go before us. Lead us. Strengthen us. May Your joy be our strength and Your presence our confidence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

1. How has God shown His faithfulness to me this past year?

List specific moments — big or small — where you saw God at work.

2. What challenges did I walk through this year, and how did God sustain me?

Reflect honestly. Notice God's presence even in difficult seasons.

3. What have I learned about God's character this year?

Has He shown Himself to be a provider? A comforter? A healer? A friend?

4. What am I grateful for right now?

Write at least five things. Let gratitude reshape your outlook.

5. What do I need to surrender as I enter the new year?

Fear? Control? Unanswered questions? Personal expectations?

6. What am I trusting God for in the year ahead?

Write your hopes, your needs, your prayers—then place them before Him.