

**JOURNEY OF LOVE DEVOTIONALS
WEEK #2 – JOURNEY OF HOPE**

November 29th – Monday

Centering Breath Prayer: Child of hope...may your Spirit rest on me.

Opening Prayer:

Spirit of God, walk with me once more today and teach me your ways. Bring me hope for my soul and enter my life as its guiding force. As our journey continues I would embrace you and learn from you how to delight in obeying the Lord. In your understanding name, I pray. Amen.

Scripture: Isaiah 11:1-5

Key Verses: Isaiah 11:1-3a: (1) “Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot – yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root. (2) And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (3a) He will delight in obeying the Lord” (NLT).

As we enter into the first full week of Advent we turn to Isaiah and the prophetic writings which promised the Messiah. “*Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot – yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.*” King David’s descendant will bring hope for his people, for all people. But it is not really in his lineage that this hope comes, but in the Spirit of the Lord which will rest upon him. It is not the fact that Jesus was a descendant of David which has impressed us through the years and kept his memory alive. It was the Spirit of the Lord permeating his every action, his every word and his very existence. Perhaps most significant of all was his delight in obeying the Father. Such a desire is difficult for me to embrace. I’m a willful individual who delights in doing her own thing and I suspect most of you are the same. Few of us delight in being told what to do by someone else, even God. Sometimes it is hard to see the hope such obedience can bring. Without the Spirit of the Lord’s abiding presence, such obedience would prove totally beyond me.

I sit here, early in the morning when I would much rather be back in the bed, writing this message. Time is running out on me and the words are slow to come, the ideas not flowing out smoothly as usual. Whether this message will have any meaning for you, only you can be the judge of that. But I am being obedient to the Lord. What hope does that bring to me? Only the hope that there will be a nugget of truth here that the Spirit of the Lord will awaken within you. There are days when I write and look back at the words and wonder at them because I see the hand of God’s Spirit within them. The truth screams out to me and hopefully to you. Usually, at those times the words poured out freely and it was a joy to watch them come. Today is not one of those times. I pray that there is something precious buried within this message about obeying God that will spark something within you.

From David's line came a Savior, who had the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him, a Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear of the Lord. Flowing out from that Spirit was a desire to obey the will of the Lord. Immersed in that Spirit, he brought healing, justice, acceptance, comfort and hope for all. He came as a little child, the one whose birth we are preparing to celebrate once more. *"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men"* (Luke 2:52 NIV). Later, when he announced his ministry to others he began with a quote from Isaiah 61:1-2 (not the one from our reading today). *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me..."* (Luke 4:18a NIV). May these words bring hope to you today. The Spirit of the Lord may be upon you and me as we desire to obey the will of the Lord. Even when we don't feel like it!

Additional Scriptures: Luke 2:52, 4:18-21

Questions for reflection and/or journaling:

1. What hope do I have from God's Spirit resting on Jesus and his ministry?
2. Am I full of desire to obey the Lord? If not, how can I instill this desire into my life?
3. What hope do I feel when I do obey the Lord with my life?

Suggestions for action:

1. Phrase for your tree: **SPIRIT OF THE LORD**
2. Do something today that you believe God wants you to do, even if you don't really want to do it.
3. Thank God for the gift of God's Spirit on Jesus and on yourself.

Closing Prayer:

Dearest Lord Jesus, thank you for walking the journey of love by obeying the will of the Father so that we might have hope. Help me to find the desire to follow in your footsteps, obeying the will of the Father in my life as well. Be with me today on the journey as I struggle with my place in the Kingdom of God. Prepare my heart to do your will. In your Spirit filled name, I pray. Amen.