BACKORDERED (THE GIFT OF WAITING)
Habakkuk 2:1-4

Not every gift is shiny, exciting, or easy to unwrap. Some come wrapped in waiting, struggle, or surprise. We don't like to wait, especially at Christmas. But the prophets teach us that waiting isn't empty. It's a space where God works in us, preparing something deeper than we imagined. God's gift may feel delayed, but it's never late. So waiting isn't wasted time. It's where God prepares us for what's coming.

 Monday: Read Habakkuk 1:2-4.
"How long, Lord, must I call for help…"
How honest are you with God about your impatience, confusion, or disappointment?
What "unresolved places" in your life need a conversation with God right now?

 Tuesday: Read Habakkuk 2:1.
"I will stand at my watch…"
Where in your life do you feel like you are "standing at your watch," waiting on God?

 Wednesday: Read Habakkuk 2:2-4.
"Though it linger, wait for it."
What emotions do you feel when you hear the phrase "though it linger, wait for it"?
How can waiting shape our faith and/or our character?

 Thursday: Read Habakkuk 3:17-19.
"Though the fig tree does not bud…yet I will rejoice in the LORD."
What does it look like to practice hope even when things seem overwhelming?
Where do you need to choose trust while still waiting on God?

 Friday: Read Psalm 27:13-14.
"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart, and wait for the Lord."
When has waiting required courage in your life?
What helps your heart stay "strong" in seasons of uncertainty or delay?

 Saturday: Read Luke 2:25-35.
"He was waiting…" Simeon waits his whole life, and God keeps God's promise.
What can Simeon's story teach us about long-term, faithful waiting?
Where is God inviting you to trust that the Holy Spirit is working behind the scenes?

In a season of instant gratification, we remember that some of God's best gifts arrive slowly, on holy delay. God's timing teaches us to hope, even when it feels like nothing is happening.
Waiting is where faith grows and hope is born.

JUST ENOUGH (THE GIFT OF LIMITS)
Exodus 16:1-12

The world says, “Get more.” God says, “Trust me for today.” The world says, “Take more.” God says, “Be thankful.” In the wilderness, God gave manna, just enough for each day, and the people learned to trust. We think more is better. But God’s presents often come in measured grace, teaching us to trust. This week, we unwrap the unexpected gift of limits, contentment, and daily grace.

 Monday: Read Exodus 16:1-3.
Israel’s hunger makes them long for Egypt, even though they were enslaved there.
Where do you find yourself longing for something familiar, even if it isn’t good for you, because you’re uncomfortable or afraid?

 Tuesday: Read Exodus 16:4-12.
God reveals the plan: bread from heaven every morning; quail meat every evening; just enough for each day.
In what areas do you struggle to believe God will provide “enough”?
In what ways can a daily rhythm and “just enough” be gifts from God?

 Wednesday: Read Exodus 16:13-21.
The Israelites were to collect just what they needed. Those who hoarded more found it rotting and infested by flies.
What dangers come when we hoard (time, energy, money, or control)?
How have you seen blessings spoil when you’ve tried to hold onto them too tightly?

 Thursday: Read Exodus 16:22-35.
God’s detailed instructions and limits are meant to teach the Israelites to trust.
How can God-given limits or guardrails create space for peace in your life?
Where do you sense God calling you to rest and trust instead of striving for more?

 Friday: Read Matthew 6:25-34.
Jesus encourages his followers to seek God and let go of running after more.
What worries about tomorrow steal your peace today?
How does Jesus invite you to loosen the grip of always pursuing more?

 Saturday: Read Philippians 4:10-13.
Paul says the path to contentment is not dependent on what you do or don’t have.
How can God use limitations in your life to shape a stronger faith?
What do you think the secret is to being content in all circumstances?

Those who trust in God’s daily provision don’t need more to find peace and happiness.
In a world that craves “more,” peace may be found in “enough.”

HOLY TEARS (THE GIFT OF SORROW)
Isaiah 35:1-10

We often expect joy to feel like celebration – bright, loud, fun, effortless. But in Isaiah 35, joy grows in unlikely places: deserts burst into bloom, the parched become pools, and the lame leap for joy. This is the joy God offers; joy that doesn't pretend everything is perfect, but grows from the pain we've walked through. This week, discover the strange gift of sorrow that opens our hearts to healing joy.

 Monday: Read Isaiah 35:1-4.
Joy begins in the desert; a dry place doesn't negate the possibility of beauty.
Where in your life does it feel like a desert – dry, empty, uncertain?
How might God bring beauty or life even to the emptiest places of your life?

 Tuesday: Read Isaiah 35:5-7.
Healing begins in the hurt, where God can make water spring up from dry ground.
What part of you needs healing right now?
Where have you experienced God's presence or healing most clearly in difficult times?

 Wednesday: Read Isaiah 35:8-10.
The "holy way" begins in the desert and leads to gladness and joy.
What does it mean to you that God makes a way through the sorrow and struggles?
How does walking in the "Way of Holiness" bring joy?

 Thursday: Read John 11:32-36.
In the story of Mary and Lazarus, we witness Jesus sharing our sorrow.
Where might Jesus be "weeping with you" right now?
How does shared sorrow become a doorway to deeper joy?

 Friday: Read Psalm 30:4-5,11-12.
God turns mourning into dancing.
How have you experienced God bringing unexpected joy out of a season of heaviness?
How can "dancing" in God's presence strengthen us to pass through our grief?

 Saturday: Read Revelation 21:1-5.
God will one day wipe away every tear.
What tears or sorrows do you long for God to wipe away for good?
How can knowing the promise of a future without pain bring strength for today?

Sorrow is often the soil where God plants joy. Loss softens us. Longing keeps us awake to beauty. Tears clear the way for something deeper than happiness: a joy rooted in God's presence and promise.
True joy doesn't erase sorrow—it redeems it.
The pain you carry may be where God is planting your joy.

UNEXPECTED (THE GIFT OF DISRUPTION)
Micah 5:2-5

We like control, so it's easy to get frustrated when things don't go according to our plans or expectations. Yet sometimes, the gift of God is in the surprise. Bethlehem wasn't on anyone's radar. It was an insignificant place, too ordinary to expect anything great. Mary and Joseph had plans that didn't include a Divine pregnancy. But God chose this little town and these two unlikely people to bring forth the Savior of the world.

 Monday: Read Micah 5:2.
God shows up in small, often forgotten places.
What do we easily dismiss as "too small" for God to use? What "Bethlehem places" in your life and story might God be choosing for something bigger than you expect?

 Tuesday: Read Micah 5:3.
Micah warns of a time of great disruption before God's promise is fulfilled.
What part of your life feels like the "in-between", disrupted and unclear?
What promises of God give you hope in times of disruption and unexpected challenges?

 Wednesday: Read Micah 5:4-7.
Micah introduces the promise of a leader who will shepherd peace in the midst of invasion and disruption.
How can knowing that God meets us in chaos not with force, but with shepherding care, help you navigate life's tensions?

 Thursday: Read Luke 1:26-38.
Mary responds to news she did not expect with a simple statement of trust in God.
How do you typically react when life goes off-script?
What does it look like to trust God's leading in moments of disruption?

 Friday: Read Matthew 1:18-25.
Joseph faces a relational crisis and chooses obedience to God and grace.
How do you typically respond when someone else's choices disrupt your life?
How can your choices and responses in crisis reflect God's grace?

 Saturday: Read Luke 2:1-7.
The Christmas story is filled with disruptions, including the census and no guest room for Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem.
What disruptions in your life feel inconvenient, stressful, or ill-timed? Where have you experienced God showing up in a moment that felt like a disruption or a setback?

God's greatest gifts may come when life goes off-script.
Divine disruption can lead to blessings and grace we never imagined.