

## Fear Not (Advent Series 2024)

### **Fear Not: Zechariah (Advent - Week 1)**

Luke 1:5-25

1. What does "Fear Not" mean to you in moments of disruption or uncertainty? How can this message guide you in trusting God's plan?
2. Zechariah was called to something new late in life. Have you ever felt a calling or purpose arise when you least expected it? How did you respond?
3. The angel said, "Your prayers have been heard." What long-held hopes or dreams have you set aside? Could God be inviting you to revisit them?
4. What might God be trying to "birth" in you during this Advent season? How can you stay open to God's message?
5. Hope was described as an action. How can you actively practice hope in your daily life, even when the future seems uncertain?
6. Zechariah was silenced to give him space to reflect. When have moments of silence or stillness deepened your understanding of God's will?
7. The podcast discussed "holy interruptions." Have you ever experienced an unexpected moment that turned out to be a blessing? How did it change your path?

### **Fear Not: Mary (Advent - Week 2)**

Luke 1

1. What stands out to you most about Mary's reaction to the angel's message? How might you have responded in her place?
2. Mary is described as humble and unassuming, yet chosen for a profound role. How does this challenge our ideas of who God chooses for significant purposes?
3. The angel tells Mary that she is "favored" because "the Lord is with you." How does this concept of divine favor resonate with your understanding of God's presence in your own life?
4. What "impossible" situation in your life needs the reassurance that "nothing is impossible for God"?
5. The podcast notes that Mary's response is a model of consent and trust. What does her "let it be with me just as you have said" teach us about responding to God's call?
6. Reflect on the idea of the Holy Spirit "overshadowing" Mary. How does this imagery challenge or inspire your understanding of God's power in your life?
7. Mary and Elizabeth share a unique connection, both carrying miraculous pregnancies. How does community support play a role in carrying out God's plans in our lives?
8. Mary's child, Jesus, is described as a future political and spiritual leader. What does it mean for you that faith involves confronting systems of power and justice?

9. Mary finds peace and courage in knowing God's presence and seeing Elizabeth's example. How can you seek out signs of God's work in your life and find peace in your current challenges?
10. What role does external affirmation (like Elizabeth's pregnancy) play in helping you discern God's call? How do you balance this with internal conviction?
11. The podcast discusses the importance of "getting to yes" in answering God's call. What fears or doubts might be holding you back from saying "yes" to something God is inviting you to do?
12. Reflect on a time when you felt God was calling you to something new or unexpected. How did you discern whether to move forward? What might you learn from Mary's process?
13. The podcast highlights the communal aspect of Mary's and Elizabeth's journeys. How can we, as a community, better support each other in stepping into God's plans?
14. How does recognizing that God is already at work in and around us shape how we approach our own callings and challenges?
15. Mary's story includes themes of fear, faith, and action. Which of these themes feels most relevant to your life right now, and why?

### **Fear Not: Joseph (Advent - week 3)**

Matthew 1: 18-25

1. How can we, like Joseph, choose faith over fear when faced with difficult decisions? Reflect on moments in your own life when you've had to make a tough decision based on faith.
2. What are some examples of how love has influenced your choices in challenging situations? Consider times when acting out of love—whether for others or yourself—made a difference.
3. Joseph's story is one of listening to God's guidance. How can we better tune into God's voice in our own lives? How do you discern God's direction and how you can be more open to God's guidance.
4. How do you think Joseph's trust in God's plan shaped his role as a father to Jesus? Reflect on how trust in God's plan could influence our own roles as parents, mentors, or leaders.
5. In moments of uncertainty, how can we cultivate the same courage and compassion that Joseph showed? Discuss practical steps to strengthen your resolve and compassion in difficult times.
6. Joseph made a bold decision in the face of doubt. What bold decisions might God be calling you to make in your life right now? Consider any current challenges where a bold, faith-driven decision could bring change.
7. How do you see Joseph's example of quiet obedience impacting your own approach to following God's will? Reflect on how obedience, even when it's not loud or dramatic, can have a lasting impact.

## **Fear Not: The Shepherds (Advent - week 4)**

Luke 2:8-17

1. How do you relate to the shepherds in their humility and simplicity? What might God be inviting you to in your own life?
2. What does it mean to you that God chose the lowly, ordinary shepherds to be the first to hear the good news of Jesus' birth? How does this shape your understanding of who God calls to share God's message?
3. In what ways can we share the good news of Christ's love with others in a way that feels authentic and joyful, rather than forced or fearful?
4. What "disruptions" have you experienced in your life that led to spiritual growth or a change in direction? How did these moments transform you?
5. The shepherds didn't wait for the perfect moment to act. How can we overcome hesitation and step into opportunities to share hope and joy today?
6. How can we make space in our busy lives for encounters with God that might lead us to be more open to God's calling?
7. In what ways can we live out the shepherds' example by spreading the joy of the Gospel in our communities?