

NOTES

SERIES: Advent 2016 (Gospel Project)

SERMON 1: "Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph"

TEXT: Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-24

DATE: December 10/11, 2016

For us, the announcement of the birth of Jesus fills us with wonder and warm fuzzies, but for Mary and Joseph it was a frightening and overwhelming. They were told they were about to become the parents of God.

"We often look back and laugh at our childhood fears, but most of us continue to battle a variety of very adult fears each day: losing our job, getting sick, running out of money, going bankrupt, getting a divorce, being betrayed by those we love. The more fear we allow into our lives, the more we struggle to grow spiritually. It's like trying to plant an apple orchard in downtown L.A. The smog and air pollution is going to rob the saplings of the precious oxygen they need and contaminate their water supply. **Fear poisons us a little each day if we don't face it head-on and nullify its power.**" (Craig Groeschel in Soul Detox):

How Do You Nullify Fear's Power?

1. F_____into your fear..

The angel's assurances don't include _____ the risk.

"Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife." ...When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife. (Matthew 1:20,24)

When we don't face into our fears, it narrows the _____ of our lives.

When all we're concerned with is _____, we will never enter the adventure of the story God is weaving.

"I think something inside [our children] dies. They either go away to perish in safety, or they go away looking for adventure in the wrong places. Jesus, on the other hand, affirms their sense of adventure and their yearning for larger glory." (Gary Haugen)

2. Remember that God _____.
Matthew 1:21; Romans 8:31-39

The Christmas story is part of a much bigger story of _____.

3. Remember that God _____.
Matthew 1:22-23

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

“Then David said to Solomon his son, ‘Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you.’” (1 Chronicles 28:20)

“I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.” (Psalm 16:8)

“The moldy rot began to attack the artist! The great painter had positioned himself in such a way that the central point of invasion was right over his heart. As the tentacles retreated from the cornered edges, they sank into the artist himself, blow by blow. The creator received the corruption at the core of his masterpiece.” (Joshua Ryan Butler in [A Pursuing God: A Reckless, Irrational, Obsessed Love That's Dying to Bring Us Home](#))

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read the Craig Groeschel quote from the outline. In what ways do you see the poisonous effects of fear in your life?
3. Read Matthew 1:18-24. What were the likely costs for Joseph for marrying Mary?
4. We don't know a lot about the rest of Joseph's life, but from what we do know and from what you remember, how was the circle of his life expanded by facing into his fear?
5. When we face into our fears there are risks and it may cost us dearly. How does remembering that God is for you and with you help you face into your fears? (Review the angel's words to Joseph, Romans 8:31-39, and the passages listed under point 3 in the outline.)
6. Facing into fear, for God's sake and for his mission, is an adventure and a quest for the larger glory (see the Haugen quote from the outline). Take one of your fears (it doesn't have to be a big one), and imagine the adventure and the larger glory of being obedient to God. Share this with your group if you are ready.
7. Looking back over this week's sermon and study, what one thing is most important for you to remember and apply.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of parents did God pick for Jesus?
2. Why did Jesus have to be born?
3. The angels tell Mary and Joseph not to be afraid. What do they say to help them be courageous?

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

Why was Jesus born?
Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.