

STUDY GUIDE

FEAR NOT!

How the Message of Christmas
Drives Away Our Greatest Fears



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How the Message of Christmas Drives Away Our Greatest Fears

Nov. 30	Luke 1:5-25	Fear Not, Zechariah...
Dec. 7	Luke 1:26-38	Fear Not, Mary...
Dec. 14	Matthew 1:18-25	Fear Not, Joseph...
Dec. 21	Luke 2:8-20	Fear Not, Shepherds...
Dec. 28	Luke 12:22-34	Fear Not, Christian...

INTRODUCTION

As I have followed along with our Bible reading plan this year, I have been struck by how often the Lord tells His people not to fear. These passages are not new to me, but the staggering number of them was unmistakable.

As I read, though, I began to notice a similarity amongst these passages: in addition to telling them not to fear over and over, the Lord gives the same reason over and over. And the reason is this: He is near. Consider just a few examples:

Genesis 26:24: “Fear not, *for I am with you*”

Deuteronomy 31:6: “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, *for it is the LORD your God who goes with you.*”

Joshua 1:9: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, *for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*”

Psalms 23:4: “I will fear no evil, *for you are with me*”

Psalms 46:1-2, 7: “God is our refuge and strength, *a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear... The LORD of hosts is with us*”

Isaiah 41:10: “fear not, *for I am with you*”

Haggai 2:5: “*My Spirit remains in your midst.* Fear not.”

Acts 18:9-10: “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, *for I am with you*”

All throughout Scripture, God makes it clear that what drives away our fears is His presence. The reason God can say “do not fear!” is because God is near.

And then it hit me: this refrain “do not be afraid” echoes all throughout the Christmas story.

When the angel appeared to Zechariah, he said, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard” (Luke 1:13).

When the angel appeared to Mary, he said, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God” (Luke 1:30).

When the angel appeared to Joseph, he said, “do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20).

When the angel appeared to the shepherds, he said, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10).

Christmas is the ultimate story of God drawing near, and as a result, Christmas is also the story of our fears being driven away. As the hymn goes, “Come, Thou long-expected Jesus / Born to set Thy people free / From our fears and sins release us / Let us find our rest in Thee!”

So come along with us, this Christmas, on a journey to face our greatest fears. Fears about ourselves: inadequacy, shame, ruined reputations. Fears about our lives: rejection, disappointment, broken dreams. Fears about our God: judgment, lack of provision, lack of care.

Come along and see how the message of Christmas is God's ultimate answer to our deepest fears and longings.

Do not be afraid, Christian! For God has come near in Christ Jesus, our Lord, the Savior who has been born for us.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Our prayer is that the Lord will use this study in the life of our church to stir our hearts to rejoice in Christ today, anchored in looking back and looking forward.

In the pages that follow, you will find a series of questions accompanying each week of our sermon series. There will be questions for you to answer based on your own personal study of the text, and further questions to reflect on and discuss in groups.

In order for you to get the most out of this series, we encourage you to read the text and write down your observations before listening to the sermon each Sunday. Devote time in the week leading up to Sunday morning to explore the text for yourself.

You will notice that each week asks the same basic questions:

- What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?
- What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?
- What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?
- What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?
- What is one question you have about this passage?

These questions form a good introductory tactic to studying the Bible. We often rush to application (what it means for my life) without considering what the text really says, and we often read the Bible as if it is primarily about us when it is really about God. So we want you to begin each week by learning about God and the gospel, then by considering what the text says about us, before then moving to what the text calls us to. Remember: application is not simply what we do; application of the Bible is holistic: it is about what we do, say, think, believe, and love.

There will also be opportunities for you to write, and ask, questions that arise during your study. We encourage you to write down these questions, and then share them.

Finally, there are a handful of questions designed to be reflected on and discussed with others. Perhaps your Grace Group will consider discussing them, or maybe you can talk about them with your family, or pull together a small group of trusted friends to walk through this series together with. However it happens, we must remember that Bible study is meant to be done in community.

After each section, you will then find blank pages for additional notes, particularly for note-taking during the sermons. This would allow all of your notes throughout this series, both in personal study and in sermon content, to be together in the same place. If this would be useful, it is there for your benefit.

We pray that this study guide, going along with our weekly sermon series, helps you to grow deeper in understanding and applying the words we will read in Scripture, and that the words you read and the truths you learn will fuel a delight in Jesus Christ that gives you strength to live where the Lord has called you today.

Week 1: November 30, 2025
Fear Not, Zechariah...

READ: Luke 1:5-25

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- What might have been some of the fears Zechariah had when the angel appeared and declared this message to him?
- Why do you think this story begins the “Christmas story” narrative in Scripture?
- What stands out to you about the way John the Baptist’s ministry is described?
- Where do you find it hard to believe that God still hears your prayers?
- What should these verses teach you about God’s timing? What disappointments make it hard for you to trust Him in times of waiting?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 2: December 7, 2025

Fear Not, Mary...

READ: Luke 1:26-38

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- What might have been some of the fears Mary had when the angel appeared and declared this message to her?
- What do these verses teach us about who Jesus is and why he came?
- The angel's response to Mary is vastly different than to Zechariah. Why is Mary's response a more exemplary way?
- How can I trust and obey God today even when it is confusing? Where have you felt God calling you to trust Him even beyond your understanding?
- How does remembering that nothing is impossible with God shape the way that you pray and live today?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 3: December 14, 2025
Fear Not, Joseph...

READ: Matthew 1:18-25

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- What might have been some of the fears Joseph had when the angel appeared and declared this message to him?
- How do these verses help clarify the main reason(s) Jesus came? What should we learn from this?
- Why is the promise of God coming near to us so precious?
- How does seeing God's past faithfulness help us to trust Him today, even when we don't understand what is happening?
- How does remembering God's promises and God's presence help us do what He has commanded?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 4: December 21, 2025
Fear Not, Shepherds...

READ: Luke 2:8-20

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- What might have been some of the fears the shepherds had when the angel appeared and declared this message to them?
- What stands out to you about the message of the angels? What word(s) of comfort did they bring?
- How does the good news of the birth of a Savior bring you great joy this Christmas season?
- What comfort does the news of peace with God bring to your life today? How does this help with anxiety, fear, stress, and more?
- What should we learn from the response of the shepherds?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Week 5: December 28, 2025
Fear Not, Christian...

READ: Luke 12:22-34

What is one thing this passage teaches you about God?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about the gospel?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about yourself?

What is one thing this passage teaches you about how God commands you to live?

What is one question you have about this passage?

Questions for Further Reflection and Discussion:

- What fears/concerns mentioned in this passage do you share?
- What reason(s) does Jesus give for why we should not be afraid? Which of the reason(s) or example(s) resonate with you the most?
- How should it bring us comfort to remember that God already knows what we need?
- Do you believe that God actually delights in providing for you? Why is this sometimes hard to trust?
- How does Jesus say this should shape the way we live?

Sermon Notes:

Text:

Title:

Preacher:

Notes:

Notes:



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