



December 7 – God Meets Us in Our Fear

Do not be afraid...we hear these words repeatedly throughout the Christmas story and remember – it is the most common phrase in the Bible. From generation to generation, God shows up in the midst of life and our fears, our uncertainty and confusion. Across the generations, people have said “yes” to God despite their apprehension. Join us this weekend as we let Mary carry us into the story of walking through our fear into God’s calling for our lives.

Scripture:

Isaiah 11:1-10 NLT

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. ³ He will delight in obeying the Lord. He will not judge by appearance nor make a decision based on hearsay. ⁴ He will give justice to the poor and make fair decisions for the exploited. The earth will shake at the force of his word, and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked. ⁵ He will wear righteousness like a belt and truth like an undergarment. ⁶ In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion, and a little child will lead them all. ⁷ The cow will graze near the bear. The cub and the calf will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like a cow. ⁸ The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm. ⁹ Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the Lord. ¹⁰ In that day the heir to David’s throne will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to him, and the land where he lives will be a glorious place.

Luke 1:26-38 NLT

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. ²⁸ Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!” ²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ³⁰ “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!” ³⁴ Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.” ³⁵ The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For the word of God will never fail.” ³⁸ Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.

Questions:

- Mary’s response to the angel was one of agitation and she was deeply troubled – afraid. What exactly do you think Mary is afraid of?
- Think about fear – some types are generative or propel us into good things. Other fear is destructive. What kind of fear have you felt? What have you done/do you do when you feel fear?
- What are you afraid of today? What is that fear holding you back from? How might you share the burden of your fear and/or step around it? Share your thoughts with a friend this week.

Reading for the Week:

Monday: Isaiah 41:10

Tuesday: Psalm 23:4

Wednesday: Psalm 46:1-3

Thursday: 2 Timothy 1:7

Friday: Deuteronomy 31:6