

Fear Not! | Advent 2024 (2 of 3)
Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the recent sermons page at our website and at the Grantham Church Podcast the following day, along with the sermon slides and small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

Sunday, December 15th, 2024



Series Focus: “Do not be afraid!” is one of the most oft-repeated phrases in the Bible. And these are the first words from the angels to Zechariah, Mary, and the shepherds in the opening of Luke’s Gospel. We need to hear these comforting words from those heavenly messengers, for their words and their meaning are echoing down through the ages to reach us where we are today. Join us for our Advent series—*Fear Not!*—as we reflect on these three encounters and are encouraged by how the Lord recognizes our fears on earth and responds to them in his great wisdom and loving kindness.

Sermon Title: Fear Not! God’s Favor is Unmerited

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 3:34; Luke 1:26-38; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Cor. 1:18-31

Sermon Focus: Mary was not fully married when the angel came to her and said, “Do not be afraid, you have found favor with God.” He then told her she would conceive and give birth to the Son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. What does this news to a young peasant girl from a backwater village say about God’s favor and his ways of blessing the humble? In the third Sunday of Advent, Pastor David shares about God’s grace and how the Lord chooses the most improbable people to fulfill his purposes.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Begin by reading Luke 1:26-38. Take a few minutes to read the passage to yourself and then have someone read it aloud. What do you notice about this story that challenges you, surprises you, and gives you hope?
2. Pastor David began the sermon by briefly addressing common objections to the virgin birth, and he also shared some important theological implications. We testify to this each time we corporately confess the Apostles' Creed before communion at Grantham Church. Do you find this difficult to believe? If so, why? If not, why? Share with your group how you personally process the miraculous?
3. Read Proverbs 3:34. Mary was humble, so she experienced the grace and favor of God. Pastor David said, "It appears that *humility* has a great deal to do with discovering how God really feels about each of us. Humility unlocks the door to the reality of knowing God's grace and favor upon each of us." How have you seen or experienced this to be true in your own life?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. R.T. France said, "The paradox of a formidable heavenly messenger visiting (and greeting with respect) a simple village teenager illustrates dramatically God's habit of choosing the most improbable people through whom to fulfill his purpose. He delights to honor those whom the world would hardly notice." How have you witnessed this truth? What is God saying to you through this aspect of his character and how he does things?
5. Do you believe that God can do what seems "impossible" to human wisdom and understanding? What seems impossible in *your* life right now?
6. Since experiencing God's favor in our lives depends upon humility and submission to his will, how is he calling you to lean more into humility? What does more humility in your life and submission to God look like for you?
7. How is the Spirit inviting you to receive God's unmerited favor and extend that same grace to others who may or may not deserve it? Be specific. What does this look like in your life? And to *whom* do you need to show more grace?
8. How can you pray for others in your group, your family, and our church? Take some time to close in prayer for each other and for those in your care.