

Talk About It

Small Group Discussion Guide

Holy Night - Week 3

December 14-17, 2023

Start Talking

How did you find Cypress and how long have you been attending?

Main Idea

We are in Week 3 of our Christmas teaching series, "Holy Night". Today, we are discussing angels and their role in the Christmas story. Angels are created beings with the primary purpose of serving God and executing His will. Of all the references to angels in the Bible, we only learn three of their names—Gabriel, Michael, and the fallen angel, Lucifer. Angels often are messengers, as in the Christmas story to Zechariah (Luke 1), Mary (Luke 1), Joseph (Matthew 1), the Shepherds (Luke 2), and again to Joseph (Matthew 2). These angels were heralds entrusted with the message of the Messiah's birth. Just like them, we have been entrusted with the message of hope and salvation found in no other name than Jesus for anyone who calls on and puts their faith in him! When Moses carried the Ten Commandments down from Mount Sinai to the people of Israel, his face radiated the glory of God. The people knew that surely the presence of God had been there. Our faces may not literally glow, but they can radiate the love of Christ and the message of salvation as we bring the Good News ("gospel") to the people in our world. Though it may take up to 30 encounters before someone will make a decision, we have the opportunity to live our faith in front of them, pray for them, invite them, and whether we are the 3rd or 30th encounter, be part of their salvation story! So, let's dive in and talk about what we have in common with the angels as God's messengers, bringing love and hope to a lost and dying world!

Personalize It

1. What did we learn about angels in this week's teaching? Did you learn anything new about them?
2. How is our Christian witness generally different with strangers versus those with whom we have a casual or close connection? Which way is more challenging for you and why?
3. What can keep us from being effective messengers—what holds us back? What can we do to overcome those things?
4. Has your light been hidden under a basket lately, or is it shining brightly (Matthew 5:14-16)? If given the opportunity, are you ready today to tell others the reason for this hope that you have (1 Peter 3:15)?
5. If you knew the cure for terminal cancer, would you tell others or keep it to yourself? If you knew the cure for terminal sin and eternal death? Why are we more reluctant regarding eternal matters?

Let's Do It! Commit to a step and live it out this week!

1. Who will you invite this Christmas? Write their names on a piece of paper and put it where you will see it often. (Hidden in a phone doesn't count.) Pray, then invite them. We heard three

testimonies in the video summarize it this way: “What’s the worst than can happen, they say no? Ask again.” “You are planting seeds.” “You may be changing someone’s eternity.” How beautiful are YOUR feet that bring good news!

2. How will you shine your light in 2024 like never before? Think of some ways to scatter seed. You might be the 30th “touch” that leads to a decision, or just the 3rd or 4th touch by the way you live in front of them. How will you grow and be more effective next year?

Let's Pray

Father, thank You for sending messengers to carry the good news of our Savior's birth on that first Christmas 2,000 years ago. Thank You for coming to us physically then, but also for coming to us whenever we have need. Lord, we know that Jesus' blood is the only cure for sin and death. Help us to become singularly focused on scattering these seeds of hope not just this Christmas but in the new year to come and for the rest of our days! We admit that fear and doubt, maybe even our status or standing, have kept us too quiet for too long. But we also know that the Cause is too great, and the price You paid is too high for us to remain quiet. The world is dying before our eyes, and only Jesus holds the hope it needs. Help us boldly proclaim Your love and mercy, and that new life and life eternal is available to all who repent and believe! Thank You for entrusting us with this message. Help us to get really good at loving people and sharing it with them! Thank You for sharing it with us! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Scriptures

Luke 2:8-15 (NLT)

⁸That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹²And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.” ¹⁵When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

Romans 10:9-15 (NLT)

⁹If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. ¹¹As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” ¹²Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. ¹³For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” ¹⁴But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

Exodus 34:29 (NLT)

When Moses came down Mount Sinai carrying the two stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant, he wasn’t aware that his face had become radiant because he had spoken to the LORD.

Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

¹⁴“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

1 Peter 3:15 (NLT)

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.

Isaiah 6:1-8 (NLT)

It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ²Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!" ⁴Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke. ⁵Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies." ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷He touched my lips with it and said, "See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven." ⁸Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me."