

Small Group Guide: Preparing the Way for Jesus

Based on Luke 1:26-38

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by thanking God for His presence and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and reveal how He is preparing each person for His purposes.

Icebreaker Question

Share about a time when you had to wait for something important. Looking back, how did that waiting period prepare you for what came next?

Sermon Summary

This message explores how God prepared the world, the culture, and individuals—specifically Mary and Joseph—for Jesus' coming. We see that God works behind the scenes, setting things in motion long before we're aware, preparing us for what He's called us to do.

Key Takeaways

1. **God prepares the scene before He calls us to action** - Through Greek language, Roman roads, and political stability, God set the stage for the gospel to spread.
2. **God chooses ordinary people by His grace** - Mary and Joseph were chosen not because of their greatness, but because God chose to bestow His grace upon them.
3. **Jesus is Savior, King, and God** - He came to save us, has authority over us, and is fully divine.
4. **Surrender precedes blessing** - Mary's response was complete submission: "Behold, the maidservant of the Lord."
5. **God is preparing you for something** - He uses our experiences, training, and circumstances to equip us for His purposes.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. What stands out to you most about Mary's response to Gabriel's announcement? How would you have responded in her situation?
2. Why was it significant that Jesus was born of a virgin? What purposes did this serve in God's plan?
3. Gabriel told Mary, "With God, nothing will be impossible." Where do you see evidence of this truth in the Christmas story?

Personal Reflection

4. The sermon mentioned that we often put God in a box, thinking "He can't do that" or "He won't do that." In what areas of your life have you been limiting God?
5. Mary said, "Let it be to me according to your word." What dreams, plans, or areas of your life have you been hesitant to fully surrender to God? Why?
6. Looking back on your life, can you identify experiences or circumstances that God used to prepare you for something He later called you to do? Share with the group.

Going Deeper

7. The sermon emphasized that Jesus is both our Savior AND our King. Which aspect do you tend to emphasize more? How can you maintain a better balance?
8. Mary faced potential shame, judgment, and misunderstanding for her obedience to God. What might obedience to God cost you in your current situation?
9. Ephesians 2:10 says God prepared good works for us "beforehand." How does knowing God is preparing you in advance change how you view your current circumstances?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Surrender Prayer

Write down one area of your life you've been holding back from God. Spend time in prayer each day this week saying, "Behold, the servant of the Lord. Let it be according to Your word."

Option 2: Preparation Reflection

Journal about your life experiences, skills, and circumstances. Ask God to show you how He might be preparing you for something. What patterns do you notice?

Option 3: Trust Exercise

Identify one "impossible" situation in your life. Each day, pray the words, "With God, nothing will be impossible," and watch for how God might be working.

Group Ministry Time

1. **Share and Pray:** Have each person share one area where they need to trust that God is preparing them for something, even if they can't see it yet.
2. **Accountability:** Pair up with someone in the group to check in with during the week about your chosen practical application.
3. **Encourage:** Take time to speak words of encouragement to one another about how you see God working in each other's lives.

Closing Reflection

Read together: *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* (Ephesians 2:10)

Final Question: How does this verse encourage you as you think about what God might be preparing you for?

Memory Verse

"For with God nothing will be impossible." - Luke 1:37

Before Next Week

- Reflect on how God might be calling you to step into something He's been preparing you for
- Practice daily surrender prayer
- Look for opportunities to encourage someone else who is in a "preparation season"