

All In with Jordan Easley

We Do Not Fear

Because of Christmas | Week 1 | Luke 2:8-9

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

The Christmas story is one that brings hope. It’s one that brings life change, peace, and comfort to all who follow Jesus. Because of Christmas, we don’t have to be afraid! But what I find interesting is that in today’s key passage of Scripture, right after Jesus was born, the very first reaction, the very first response, and the very first emotion we read about is FEAR. The shepherds were afraid of the angel that appeared to them. Little did they know that what they would learn from the angel would be the good news that would one day give us all victory over fear. So in this message, I want us to look at the reality of fear and the hope of Christmas and the coming of Jesus that allows us to overcome any fear that comes our way.

KEY POINTS

1. We’re naturally afraid when our circumstances change.

We get a little bit scared when the silence is broken, when our normal is altered, when there’s a change of plans, or an unexpected interruption in life. The same was true for the shepherds in Luke 2. Can you imagine the shock they must have felt? Not to mention the angel was glowing. [v. 9] says, the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

That means the shepherds were completely surrounded by light. Now, why was the angel glowing? That light was God’s glory. That light was the shekinah glory of God! But why would the light cause the shepherds to be terrified? According to Isaiah 6, the presence of God’s glory also reveals sin to man. Therefore, the shepherds were in terror for two reasons. First, they were interrupted unexpectedly in the middle of the night. And second, they were spiritually exposed and most likely sensed their sin. In other words, their normal was interrupted and they got scared.

2. Life interruptions can be unsettling, but life interruptions can be God-opportunities.

When our proverbial boat is rocked, we feel unsettled and fear is one of the devil’s favorite weapons he uses to unsettle us. The same was true for the shepherds in this story. When the angels interrupted their normal, they assumed the worst. And the fear they were experiencing in that moment had to be overwhelming, because the first thing out of the angel’s mouth was, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news.”

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

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He said, “Don’t worry. Don’t fear. This interruption isn’t BAD news. I’m here to bring you GOOD news!” This was more than a life interruption. It was a God opportunity.

3. Because of Christmas, we don’t have to be afraid.

Jesus changed the whole ballgame when it comes to fear. He said it Himself in John 14:27, “Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid.” Jesus came so that you could live in peace. He came so that you didn’t have to live in fear any longer. It’s because of the incarnation of Christ that you and I can live without fear today.

4. “Do not fear” is a command, not a suggestion.

If you read the entire Bible, you’ll find the command, “Do not fear” or “Do not be afraid” approximately 365 times. Out of all the “Do’s” and “Do not’s” in Scripture, this command appears more frequently than any of them. It’s pretty clear that God doesn’t want us to live in fear! And believe it or not, you get to choose if you’re going to live in fear or not. When the angel said, “do not fear” to the shepherds, he wasn’t giving them a suggestion. This was an imperative; it was a command. The same is true for us today. God commands us not to fear because when we live in fear, we are giving ourselves over to something else that controls us.

5. When God empties us of fear, He fills us with courage.

Because of Christmas, there can finally be peace on earth. God has built a bridge between Himself and mankind, and peace has been made possible by this baby in a manger. In this story described in Luke 2, the shepherds believed this angelic message. They were emptied of their fear and filled with courage. And as a result, they immediately ran to Jesus and pursued Him with faith.

6. We don’t have to be afraid because God is with us.

The New Testament begins with God manifesting himself as “Immanuel” (God with us), and the New Testament ends in Revelation 22 with Immanuel (God with us). In other words, He’s always been with us. We don’t have to be afraid, because God is with us. He’s in the midst of our circumstances. He’s there in times of joy and in times of sadness. In Hebrews 13:5, He says, “I will never leave you or abandon you.” We may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future! And He says, “Do not fear for I am with you.” Because of Christmas, we don’t have to be afraid.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. According to today's message, why can we live without fear?
2. When was a time you experienced a life interruption that turned into a God opportunity?
3. What is an area of your life where you're struggling with fear?

We Can Live With Great Anticipation

Because of Christmas | Week 2 | Luke 2:25-32

INTRODUCTION

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Let’s face it. We hate to wait. But waiting is a part of Christmas. Tis the season to be waiting! And as we dive further into the Christmas story in Luke 2, we see the story unfold of someone who was very familiar with waiting: a man by the name of Simeon. So as we read and study his story in this message, we can learn several things about how to wait well and learn about the qualities of Simeon’s character that we should be striving to emulate. Let’s dive in.

KEY POINTS

1. Simeon was righteous.

That word ‘righteous’ suggests that Simeon wasn’t only righteous before God. It also meant that he had a good reputation among men. He was a man of high moral character. That is the type of righteousness we should be striving for in our lives as we follow Christ.

2. Simeon was devout.

The word “devout” can also be translated to mean “holy.” It speaks of Simeon’s character before God. It means that he was seen as “holy” in the eyes of God. This type of holiness is, again, what we should be striving to emulate in our walks with Christ.

3. Simeon was expectant.

According to the Scripture, Simeon was looking forward to a couple of things. First of all, he was “looking forward to Israel’s consolation...” That was a phrase that referred to the time when God would send His Messiah to “console” or “comfort” His people. Simeon looked forward to that day. And secondly, Simeon was looking forward to meeting the Messiah! He looked forward to meeting this baby, King Jesus, personally! You may be wondering, “Why did Simeon think he would meet the Messiah?” And the answer is very simple: because God promised Simeon that he would. Therefore Simeon expected God to come through on His promises.

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4. Simeon was spirit-filled.

Simeon lived with expectant hope because he had revealed hope. The Spirit revealed to Simeon that he would experience the Messiah in his lifetime. Therefore, Simeon lived knowing that He couldn't die! He didn't fear death one bit because He knew, "nothing can take me until God's promise is fulfilled."

Simeon must have thought, "Nothing can take me until God is ready, and God isn't ready until His promises have been fulfilled." He lived by the Spirit. He walked with God, and therefore He was filled with the Spirit.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Which of the qualities of Simeon's character would you like to emulate more in your own life?
2. Do you live with expectant faith, waiting for God to come through? If not, what keeps you from expecting God to keep His promises?
3. What is something you're waiting for right now?
