



FEAR NOT

Fear Not, Zechariah

#npfearnot

Week 1
1 of 4

December 3, 2017

Bottom Line: Fear NOT, only believe.

Icebreaker: What Christmas gift was most memorable for you before age 16? Fear Not, Zechariah

Key Verse: . . . *an angel appeared to Zechariah. When he saw the angel, he was confused and filled with fear. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid! Your prayer has been heard!"* Luke 1:11-13

The dynamic of waiting set up the very first Christmas. For generations there was a group of people who waited every day for the arrival of the Messiah. One of those people was Zechariah. He and his wife were getting it right, believing and trusting God. But for 700 years there was no evidence that God was ever going to do anything, and it wasn't just a national thing. Their greatest desire was to have a child, but now they were old and that hadn't happened either. They had prayed desperately, based on a promise from God that they would be part of creating a great nation. But despite all the evidence that God had forgotten, that the promise was not going to come true, that many others were abandoning the faith, Zechariah stayed steady.

One day an angel appeared to him. He was freaked out, totally afraid! Not just of the angel, but fear of being disappointed again, fear of failure, fear of the future, fear of the promise unfulfilled. In the face of that, the angel said, "Your prayer has been heard." Can you imagine the shock? Even Zechariah who was face to face with an angel couldn't immediately believe it, after all this time. But the angel affirmed that God had never forgotten them for one moment. The upcoming day of answered prayer had been appointed by God. He had heard Zechariah's prayers and the prayers of his people for generations.

Jesus was the unimaginable answer to the people's prayer. John the Baptist was the answer to Zechariah's prayer for a son. Though we may wait, faith in God is never misplaced. God always keeps His promises.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most specifically from the weekend message?

In the disappointment of waiting on a promise day after day, what makes the wait worth it for you?

What are the questions that surface when it seems like God has forgotten? When there is no evidence God is hearing?

Rick Warren says, "Character is both developed and revealed by tests, and all of life is a test . . . You will be tested by major changes, delayed promises, impossible problems, unanswered prayers, undeserved criticism, and even senseless tragedies."

Discuss: How is it helpful to consider God's work IN us when we are waiting? How does it not help you?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

John said, "Never let your fears define your faith." That's harder to do than say. How do I own and address my fears when I am waiting?

We have the same struggles and dilemma Zechariah had when we are waiting and fearful. Do we stay or go? Do we serve or hold back? Do we believe or do we bail. John urged us to keep on praying, believing, and serving. Stay active. Get involved. Have you done that? How does it help?

"God cannot steer a parked car." How do you relate to that statement?

The good news is that in waiting with unanswered prayer, you are not alone. Welcome to the common experience of those who have placed their faith in Christ and have decided to follow Him in spite of what they see. God can do anything he chooses to do.

NEXT STEPS

This week consider taking some next steps together as a group:

1. Each person share their greatest disappointment/unanswered prayer.
2. Pray for each other individually, for perseverance, faith, and God's timing.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Fear NOT, only believe.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: 2 Timothy 3:14

Tuesday: Romans 8:24-25

Wednesday: Matthew 19:26

Thursday: Galatians 6:9

Friday: Psalm 37:7

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.
(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)