



*The Christmas season is full of joy, but it is also full of stress. And that's how it was when Christ was born—a time of joy and anxiety. Perhaps that's why four times in the birth narratives the angels say "Do not be afraid." This series will explore why Christmas should make us bold, because there's something about Jesus coming that makes fear leave.*

### Week 1: Fearless Faith

1. Rick pointed out that *"from the beginning Christmas has existed in the midst of fear, not in the absence of fear."* How does fear play a role in our relationship with God & in the journey of faith? What comfort and encouragement do you find in knowing that the words *"Don't be afraid"* appear four times in the Christmas story?
2. **Read Luke 1:5-25.** What stands out to you the most in this story? How would you feel if you were Zechariah or Elizabeth? Follow up: When is the last time God did something unusual and unexpected in your life? Were you able to connect that event to God's faithfulness?
3. **CHRISTMAS... *should make us courageous!*** Respond to this question Rick asked: *If the Christmas story is true, what do we have to be afraid of?* How does Christmas call us to be fearless in our faith? Follow up: In what areas of your life do you need to let go of fear?
4. **COURAGEOUS FAITH... *believes what God did He can still do.*** *It doesn't take much courage to affirm what God has done in the past, but it takes great courage to affirm that He is just as active in the present.* Why are we afraid to believe God too much? When have you experienced God doing something you didn't expect? How did that change you?
5. **COURAGEOUS FAITH... *believes that God knows when to say "yes".*** *Fearless faith must wrestle with the silence of God.* How does the silence of God play a role in our faith, and what does the sermon say about trusting God during those times? Share a time when you experienced God's silence and describe how it affected your faith.
6. **COURAGEOUS FAITH... *believes that the struggle to keep believing is worth it.*** What can we learn from Zechariah and Elizabeth's example to *"keep showing up"* even in the midst of doubts and shattered hopes? Share one way you will keep showing up.
7. Rick closed by reminding us how *Elizabeth's pregnancy would be a sign to help Mary conquer her own fears.* **Read Luke 1:41-42.** Who in your life could use some courage in their faith, and how can you support them to become more fearless this Christmas?

