

Northland Church

Digging Deeper: The Road to Bethlehem Is Called Courage

northlandchurch.net | Digging Deeper Series

THE MAIN THEME

The journey to Bethlehem is not a comfortable or convenient path—it is a **courageous one**. Mary and Joseph’s calling required facing fear, uncertainty, cultural shame, personal loss, and the unknown. Courage is not the absence of fear; it is when **the object of your faith becomes greater than the object or outcome of your fear**. Journeying to Bethlehem means trusting God when obedience may cost you something.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Luke 1:30–31 — “But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son...’”

WHAT NOT TO MISS

1. The Invitation to Journey to Bethlehem

Mary receives a divine invitation filled with grace, calling, and mission:

- Invitation to grace
- Invitation to parent
- Invitation to the miraculous
- Invitation to bring in the Messiah
- Invitation to God’s Kingdom
- Invitation to join God’s mission

2. God’s Invitation Prompts Deep Deliberation

Mary was “greatly troubled” and **wondered**—God’s invitations often disrupt our comfort and require reflection.

3. God’s Invitation Rarely Makes Sense to Human Intellect

Faith will always collide with logic.

4. The Fears Faced on the Journey

Mary risked:

- Ruined reputation
- Disdain, disrespect, distrust
- Rejection, estrangement
- Uncertainty, difficulty, possible divorce
- Even **stoning** under the law

5. Courage Is Needed Because Fear Is Real

Bethlehem can be full of fear because following God threatens our basic human needs—security, approval, safety, and control.

6. Courage Comes From Who God Is, Not Who We Are

Mary is told:

- “The Lord is with you.”
- “You are highly favored.”
- “The Holy Spirit will come upon you.”
- “No word from God will ever fail.”

7. Jesus Is the Greater Bethlehem

Jesus faced every fear and loss we fear: ridicule, rejection, grief, homelessness, death on a cross—yet overcame it all.

This is why **we can trust Him**.

LIFE APPLICATION

Courage doesn't come from personality—it comes from proximity to God. Like Mary, we find courage when we believe God's Word more than our fears. This week, examine the fears standing between you and obedience. Courage grows when you shift your focus from the outcome you fear to the Savior you trust.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

MONDAY — The Invitation

READ: Luke 1:26–28

REFLECT: God's invitations are gifts of grace—He calls ordinary people into extraordinary purposes.

PRAY: “Lord, help me see Your invitations as grace, not burdens.”

TUESDAY — Troubled Yet Trusting

READ: Luke 1:29

REFLECT: Even favored people wrestle with fear and uncertainty.

PRAY: “Lord, meet me in my wondering.”

WEDNESDAY — Courage to Face Fear

READ: Luke 1:30–34

REFLECT: Obedience requires courage because following Jesus costs something.

PRAY: “Make faith greater than my fear.”

THURSDAY — Empowered for the Impossible

READ: Luke 1:35–37

REFLECT: God never calls without empowering—“No word from God will ever fail.”

PRAY: “Holy Spirit, overshadow my fear with Your power.”

FRIDAY — The Greater Bethlehem

READ: Philippians 2:5–11

REFLECT: Jesus faced every fear on our behalf—His courage strengthens ours.

PRAY: “Jesus, thank You for being the courage I lack.”

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Ask your group: “Where do you feel God inviting you to courage?”
- Normalize the presence of fear—Mary experienced it too.
- Highlight the contrast between Mary’s fears and God’s promises.
- Encourage sharing personal stories of faith > fear moments.

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Identify **one fear** keeping you from obedience—relational, spiritual, financial, vocational, or emotional.

Name it.

Pray over it.

Tell someone.

Take **one courageous step** this week.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What invitation from God are you currently wrestling with?
 2. Why does God's calling often create fear and deliberation?
 3. Which fear listed in the slides (reputation, rejection, loss, uncertainty) resonates most with you?
 4. How have you seen God's presence give you courage in past seasons?
 5. What does it practically mean to make God the **object of your faith** above your fears?
 6. How does seeing Jesus as the "Greater Bethlehem" strengthen your courage?
 7. What would a courageous act of obedience look like for you this Advent?
 8. How can your group support one another on the road to Bethlehem?
-

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT — Thank God for inviting us into His mission.

CARE — Pray for those wrestling with fear, uncertainty, or loss.

CULTIVATE — Ask the Spirit to produce courage through trust and surrender.

COMMISSION — Pray that we would walk the Bethlehem road with bold faith.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, thank You for inviting us, like Mary, into Your mission. Give us courage where we feel afraid, clarity where we feel uncertain, and strength where we feel weak. Help us trust that no word from You will ever fail. As we journey to Bethlehem, make us people of bold, surrendered faith. Amen.