

Advent: Fear Not

Permanent Love In The Face Of Fear

ISAIAH 49:8-21

CORE TRUTH

Week of November 23, 2025

The permanent and perfect love of God, revealed in Jesus, is our only true comfort in the face of fear. When our doubts return and our faithfulness falters, His love holds steady.

WELCOME to remind us why we're here.

⌚ Spend about 5 minutes here.

Mission – To become more like Jesus – together.

Vision – We work out our salvation side-by-side—with honesty, humility, and hope. We walk with one another, not just to talk about Jesus, but to be transformed by him. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Guidelines – Our Group Guidelines help us live out our mission and vision with kindness and humility. We encourage you to read and discuss the guidelines together regularly—they can be found on the last page.

HEAD to help us examine what the word shows and let in what's true.

⌚ Spend about 10 minutes here.

- What do you notice about the way God speaks to His people in this passage—especially in the face of their fear, doubt, or failure?
- What repeated words or images in this passage emphasize God's nearness and commitment to His people?

HEART to help us wrestle with what we believe and be with each other in it.

⌚ Spend about 30 minutes here.

- When fear or doubt rise in your life, what does your heart tend to believe about God's love for you?
- When have your circumstances made you feel forsaken or forgotten by God? How does this passage speak into that experience?
- Isaiah 49 paints God's love as more reliable than even a mother's love. How does that image land with you?
- Even when your faithfulness falters, God's doesn't. Where in your life do you need to hear that truth today?

HANDS to help us live out the truth with the Spirit as we go out into the world.

⌚ Spend about 15 minutes here.

- **Meditate on the following reflection now and throughout the week:** Jesus, allow your permanent love to be louder than my fear this week.
- **Use the following prayer based on Isaiah 49 to close your time together:**

God of comfort, When fear speaks loudest, remind me: I am not forgotten.

Your love is permanent. You came near—and you are near still. Amen.

LEADER RESOURCES

NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE

Advent: Luke 1:5-25

GR^oUPS

Advent: Fear Not

Permanent Love In The Face Of Fear

ISAIAH 49:8-21

SETTING THE SCENE

As we enter the season of Advent, we're turning our attention to how the coming of Christ meets us in our fear. Fear is something we all experience—often more than we admit—and it can quietly control our lives. But God speaks directly to our fears, offering powerful promises and personal comfort.

Isaiah is a book that proclaims God's coming judgment on his consistently rebellious people, but it also resounds with a promise—no matter how far they have wandered, he will not abandon them. Though Israel's unfaithfulness led to devastating consequences—captivity under Assyria and Babylon—God's love remained. In his mercy, their exile would become a doorway to deeper hope. Not because they had been faithful, but because he had promised to be. "Do not be afraid," He says. "My love is unchanging, even when your circumstances suggest otherwise. Where you have failed to be faithful to me, I will remain faithful to you."

SCRIPTURE

8 Thus says the Lord: "In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages, 9 saying to the prisoners, 'Come out,' to those who are in darkness, 'Appear.' They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture;

10 they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them. 11 And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be raised up. 12 Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene." 13 Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

CORE TRUTH

Week of November 23, 2025

The permanent and perfect love of God, revealed in Jesus, is our only true comfort in the face of fear. When our doubts return and our faithfulness falters, His love holds steady.

14 But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me." 15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me. 17 Your builders make haste; your destroyers and those who laid you waste go out from you. 18 Lift up your eyes around and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, declares the Lord, you shall put them all on as an ornament; you shall bind them on as a bride does.

19 "Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devastated land—surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up will be far away. 20 The children of your bereavement will yet say in your ears: 'The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in.'

21 Then you will say in your heart: 'Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away, but who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; from where have these come?'"

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP GUIDELINES

- **Safe Group:** We strive for an environment where everyone can be open, and honest about his or her struggles and victories.
- **Confidentiality:** What is said in the group stays in the group.
- **Listen:** We want to value one another by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond while someone is sharing.
- **Pause:** Allowing a pause in the conversation after one person shares and before the next person shares gives the person sharing a chance to finish. A pause also gives the group an opportunity to consider before responding.
- **Silence:** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for people to think deeply, to gather their thoughts in order to share, and to genuinely consider what others have shared.
- **One Conversation at a Time:** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.
- **No Fixing:** We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Give encouragement and ask questions, but try not to solve or fix one another.
- **No Rescuing:** When people are sharing something deeply personal, please resist the tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or their situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause people to stop sharing.
- **Be Curious:** By asking the next question, we communicate genuine interest. We keep the conversation moving forward while building relationships and intimacy.
- **Be Self-Aware:** Be mindful of how you are personally affecting the small group environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. Be sensitive about the amount of time you share, whether too much (dominating) or not enough (hiding).
- **Use "I" Statements:** It is very easy to talk about other people's issues, but, for our purposes, we want to put ourselves on the table. Use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "people", "you", "us", "we", etc.
- **Resolve Conflict Biblically:** As a group we commit to extend grace to one another. Conflict is not bad, it's an opportunity for growth. We are all being transformed to be more like Jesus. Conflict and change are a part of that journey. (Matthew 18)
- **Manage Technology:** Let's respect one another by silencing alerts on our devices.

Scan the QR code if
you need childcare
reimbursement.

