

CHRISTMAS FOR THE REST OF US

Week 3: Facing Fear
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



RECAP

In the third sermon in this Christmas series, Josh looks at the Christmas story and helps us discover that the first Christmas wasn't peaceful and silent, where all was calm and all was bright. Instead, we discover that the shepherds dealt with something that many of still deal with today: fear of the supernatural.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Josh started by talking about a traumatizing experience and watching a scary movie as a child. What's the scariest movie you ever remember watching? What was it that made it so scary? Was it a movie with the spiritual or supernatural? Why do those movies tend to be so scary?
2. Read Luke 2:8-9. Josh said that the supernatural can be scary because it is unseen and unknown. Talk about your history and experiences with the supernatural. Has it ever been scary? What unseen or unknown parts of the supernatural leave you with the most questions or the most fear?
3. Josh gave two reasons why God hides the supernatural from us: to remind us there's more out there than what we can simply see and to motivate us to seek God. What are things in life that are unseen but are incredibly valuable to you, things that you might be tempted to forget because of your distraction with what's right in front of you? How long could you go if you heard the notification ding on your cell phone without checking it? How has your innate curiosity to know what's out there driven you to seek after God?
4. Josh gave two specific ways that we can begin to interact with Jesus. For each of these two, talk through how each of these has helped you in your journey to embrace the supernatural and know God:
 - Lean into church.
 - Get to know Jesus.

NEXT STEP

What lingering questions do you still have about the spiritual or supernatural? What unresolved fears do you still have? Send questions to josh.daffern@cbcva.org and he'll answer them in future blog posts.

For more information (training and support) on how to start and lead a small group, contact steve.lizzio@cbcva.org

CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2018
WEEK 3: FACING FEAR
LUKE 2:8-20

WHY ARE WE AFRAID OF THE SUPERNATURAL?

1. The supernatural is _____.
2. The supernatural is _____.

WHY IS THE SUPERNATURAL HIDDEN?

1. To remind us there's _____ out there than what we can simply _____.
2. To motivate us to _____.

HOW CAN WE INTERACT WITH THE SUPERNATURAL?

1. Lean into _____.
2. Get to know _____.

Bonus Content

Sunday (This Handout) - 7 Questions Worksheet on John 1:14 and Small Group Questions for this week
Monday (Blog) - 2 Reasons Why We're Afraid of the Supernatural
Wednesday (Blog) - Why Does God Hide the Supernatural World From Us?
Thursday (Blog) - The 2 Best Ways to Interact with the Supernatural World

For bonus content and much more, visit: joshdaffern.com

John 1:14

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The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. *John 1:14*

1. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL READERS?

If you start with today you're twenty centuries too late.

John the Evangelist wrote his eyewitness account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus *"that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name"* (John 20:31). The beauty and wonder of Jesus is that he was God made flesh, the hidden made seen and the unknown God made real and visible. John records that when Jesus (as the Word) became flesh, he did not cease being God. He was both fully divine and fully human, in the divine mystery known commonly as 'the incarnation.' To those who would later scoff at the notion that God could be seen visibly by human eyes and still live to tell the tale, John records that Jesus was not an idea or an image, but a real person that was seen by his followers.

Jesus was not only God, he was the embodiment of both grace and truth, two things humanity sorely needs. To those who believe that they are the definition of their own truth, that there is no absolute truth, Jesus came as truth personified. He is the standard by which all truth is ultimately judged. The natural response to that is to see ourselves in relation to Jesus and realize that we fall far short. That's why Jesus came not just full of truth but full of grace as well. As John would later write, *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him"* (John 3:17). Jesus was the perfect embodiment of both the unyielding, unbending truth of God and the overwhelming, scandalous grace of our loving Heavenly Father.

GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

σκηνώω (*skēnoō*) is translated into the English word "made his dwelling" and is a beautiful word picture because of its literal translation in the Greek. It literally reads "he tabernacled" among us, which draws on the rich imagery of the Old Testament, where God during the days of Moses dwelt among the Israelites in a tabernacle built to His exact specifications. To a Jew, the tabernacle invoked the idea of the temporary dwelling of God Himself. In the same way, when Jesus of Nazareth walked this earth, he was the temporary dwelling of God Himself on earth in human form.

2. WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? *Scripture without context makes no sense.*

Perhaps one of the greatest arguments this countered was a popular Greek ideology during that time that very much believed in the spiritual but could not see how Jesus could be both God and human. In this popular ideology, the Word (the logos) represented the best of the what was pure, what was good, what was spiritual. By contrast, everything visible, everything we can see or touch, was saturated with evil. If Jesus was divine (by this argument) he could not also be human, because everything visible is evil and tainted. For centuries a myth arose that Jesus was a ghost, an image of a man that appeared but was not actually flesh. John sets the record straight that Jesus was both God and man, both divine and human.

3. WHAT TIMELESS TRUTHS ARE THERE?

Since the Word doesn't change it still matters today.

- Jesus has always existed as the Word. He was with God at the beginning of creation, and all things were created through Jesus. Jesus is God.
- Jesus is God made flesh, dwelling among humanity.
- When we see Jesus, we see God. When we know Jesus, we know God. When we believe in Jesus, we believe in God. When we follow Jesus, we follow God.

5. HOW DOES IT APPLY TODAY? *Information without application becomes stagnation.*

- The best way to get to know God is to get to know Jesus. Jesus is the invisible God made visible for all of humanity.
- Jesus embodied both grace and truth, and as his followers, Christians need to embody both grace and truth. The easy decision to make would be to choose a camp, either universally judging everyone who sins (truth) or automatically condoning anything anyone ever wants to do (grace). As followers of Jesus, we must exhibit Jesus, who did not choose a camp but lived out both grace *and* truth.

4. WHERE ELSE IN SCRIPTURE DOES IT SAY THIS? *The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.*

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. *John 1:17*

"I and the Father are one." *John 10:30*

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" *John 14:8-9*

6. HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE THE WAY I LIVE IN COMMUNITY? *The Bible comes alive in me when I live it in community.*

- As a human, you were created with this innate desire to know your Creator. In your own spiritual journey, how has getting to know, believing in and following Jesus helped you encounter God?
- If you were honest, which camp do you tend to land in more often than not: grace or truth? Talk through a contentious issue facing you or our culture today and discuss how we can live out both grace *and* truth in this issue.

7. HOW CAN MY LIFE GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THESE VERSES? *If I trust God and step in faith, what kind of life will God create?*

Just imagine what kind of transformational impact we could have in our communities if we lived out the essence of Jesus and we embodied both grace and truth? In a world where we're pushed to choose either outright condemnation or unconditional approval, what if we could live like Jesus? What if we could take an unquestioned stand for the truth yet do it in such a way that people gravitated towards us because of the overwhelming grace we exhibited? What if we expressed God's unwavering truth in a way that drew people in towards Jesus, rather than pushed them away? The spirit of Jesus (Holy Spirit) now lives in us, the Spirit of grace and truth. If we want to change the world in the same way Jesus did, we need to strive for living a life full of both grace and truth.