

I. CHECK-IN

- Check in. How is everyone doing?
- Reflect on last week's challenge:
"Spend some time this week reflecting on the ways in which God's grace is at work in your life. The hope is that this reflection will give you an assurance that you are saved."

II. SCRIPTURE

LUKE 1:26-38

When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom." Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?" The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God." Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

TOBIT 3:7-10

That same day in the city of Ecbatana in Media, it happened that Sarah, the daughter of a man named Raguel, was insulted by one of her father's servant women. Sarah had been married seven times, but the evil demon, Asmodeus, killed each husband before the marriage could be consummated. The servant woman said to Sarah: You husband killer! Look at you! You've already had seven husbands, but not one of them lived long enough to give you a son. Why should you take it out on us? Why don't you go and join your dead husbands? I hope we never see a child of yours!

III. PRAYER

Spend some time sharing prayer requests with each other. As the small group leader, we ask that you do two things:

1. write them down
2. ask someone to pray

IV. CHALLENGE

This Advent season, find ways to open yourself to hearing good news from God.

V. DISCUSSION

- What stands out to you in these scriptures?
- Do you have any stories of a time you have scared someone or you have been scared?
- When have you allowed fear to get the best of you? How did you react to that fear?
- Have you ever heard of the Apocrypha? What are your thoughts about these books that were left out of our bible?
- What stood out to you about the scripture from Tobit?
- While it is a bit of a stretch, it is possible that this story influenced Mary's fear. What is currently influencing some of your fears today?
- Mary allows the angel to speak and in doing so her fears are calmed. What can you do to allow yourself to hear the goods news that God is sharing with you today?