Christmas Tears December 15, 2019

*Matthew 2:13-23 Series: Christmas Surprises*

So joy to the world, and to every celebrating or grieving or hurting soul in it. The Lord has come. Let heaven and nature—and even those who stand watch with lighted candles in the land of the shadow of death—sing. – Leigh C. Bishop

Intro: It’s Christmas Eve in Romania in 1989. What do you say?

1. Jesus’ life begins in flight but promises deliverance.
2. Jesus was hunted by a paranoid ruler.

v. 13 *Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.*

1. God’s Word leads people through crisis.

v. 13 *an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream*

v. 13 *Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you …*

1. In Jesus, God has brought about a new exodus.

v. 15 *This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”*

* Why does this passage so seldom make it into our popular depictions of the Christmas story?
* How would Jesus’ life be shaped by beginning his life as a refugee, unsafe in his own homeland?
* In what way is it hopeful to see Jesus’ deliverance and return from Egypt as patterned after God’s deliverance of Moses and Israel from Egypt?

1. Jesus’ life begins amidst murder but promises comfort.
2. Jesus was born to a world desperately in need of a Saviour.

v. 16 *Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious …*

v. 16 *he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under*

1. In Jesus, God wipes our tears and offers the hope of a new covenant.

v. 18 *“A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”*

Jeremiah 31:16 *Thus says the LORD: “Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work …*

Jeremiah 31:17 *There is hope for your future, declares the LORD …*

Jeremiah 31:31 *Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant …*

* Instead of bringing Jesus into this world, God could have just killed Herod and avoided the massacre that he caused. Why do you think that God brought Jesus instead of killing Herod? What does that tell you about how God sometimes works in our lives?
* In Jeremiah 31:15, which Matthew 2:18 quotes, Rachel “refused to be comforted,” but in the next verse God urges her to do so and offers hope (even though the painful circumstances aren’t immediately reversed). What does it take to receive God’s comfort when it feels like we’re beyond comfort?

1. Jesus’ life begins amidst prejudice but promises peace with God.
2. Jesus retreated to a town that would label Him as a loser.

v. 22 *when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there*

v. 22 *being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee*

v. 23 *And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth …*

John 1:46 *Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”*

1. Jesus went to a despised place so that He could become the despised One.

v. 23 *so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene*

Isaiah 53:3 *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

1. As the despised One, Jesus bore our sins, making peace between us and God.

Isaiah 53:5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*

* How would growing up in a town with such a poor reputation affect Jesus?
* The Father could have protected Jesus in such a way that He might have grown up in Jerusalem or Bethlehem and not faced the prejudice He did. What do you think He didn’t?
* Where do you most need prayer in applying this passage?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Matthew 2:1-12.

Notes