



Advent - Part 2

(from 12/04/16 sermon - Spencer Teal)

I. **OPEN** - See if there is anyone who wants to share a short testimony, or if there are there specific praise updates to begin CG.

PRAY

Q - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance?

***READ ALOUD Matthew 2:13-23**

II. **REFLECT**

As we continue in this season of advent, we run upon a very peculiar story. We read in Matt 2:2 that the wise men came from the east asking, "*Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.*" What did the wise men call him? KING. And who did that upset? KING Herod. And how did he respond when he felt threatened that another King might be coming on the scene? He attempted to eliminate him. And when he realized that the wise men had tricked him by not revealing where Christ was, he "became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under..." We tend to skip this part of the Christmas story and fast-forward to the part where the angels are rejoicing and baby Jesus is born. But, make no doubt about it, His birth was preceded by a terrorist attack initiated by a very jealous King Herod. This led to lots of moving on the part of Joseph and Mary, and and thus began the life of a very transient Jesus...a Jesus who was always on the move.

Discussion - We're quick to condemn King Herod for his cowardly terrorist attack when he felt threatened that another King was being born, and rightly so. But...let's look into our own hearts.
Q - In what ways are we often threatened by others (that has nothing to do with physical harm)? Have we ever been threatened by a better athlete? A pretty girl or good looking boy who you saw as a threat to your relationship? Someone who has the boss's eye? Give some real life examples?
Q - How do we often try to "eliminate" them by use of our words, thoughts, and actions?
Q - Discuss our identity in Christ and how we should apply the Gospel in these situations.

In this story we are given a short lesson in geography. We see the wise men coming from the east, probably from Arabia. They visit Jesus in southern Israel in Bethlehem. We then see Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt in the south. Then they head back to Israel but keep going further north into Galilee. And we know that Jesus was later raised in Nazareth. The bottom-line is that we see a very transient Jesus from his birth all the way throughout His ministry years.

Q - What are the implications of Jesus being so geographically transient? Why does it matter that He was always on the move from the north to the south to the east and to the west? **Read Acts 2:8.** Take time to think about how this verse has allowed us in the region of Appalachia on the other side of the world to partake in this same Gospel and worship this same Savior that the angels had spoke of in Luke 2. Thank Him! **Q** - How do Acts 2:8 and this transient savior impact the church today? Impact each of us individually? Where is our Jerusalem? Judea? Samaria? Uttermost parts?

In Luke 19:10 we read, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” There’s something about this “seeking” that coincides with transient Jesus. This is why we see Jesus in so many regions, in so many towns and cities, surrounded by so many different people and types of people, and in so many different settings (weddings, funerals, synagogues, etc.).

On Sunday the honest question was asked if we as a church, or you and I individually, are ever guilty of “snobbery.” What was meant was, are we being intentional by rubbing shoulders with people that are different from us. Do we have relationships with the lost? Do we know an atheist? Are we friends with individuals who are truly poor...or downcast...or addicts? **Discuss. How can we each be more intentional as we, likewise, seek out the lost?**

III. FURTHER APPLICATION -

In our ongoing attempt to be more intentional with our focus on Christ this advent season, 1) what can you add to your plate to bring this kind of intentionality and 2) what can/should/will you take away that might be hindering you from being intentional?

IV. CLOSE

Final thoughts?

Groups are encouraged to conclude by singing a few Christ-centered Christmas songs/hymns.

V. BE ON-MISSION -

We encourage everyone to participate in advent this year utilizing the advent packet provided on Sunday.