

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

“Troubled” | Rev. Jordan Griesbeck | January 3, 2021

Old Testament Reading: [Isaiah 60:1-5](#)

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. 3 And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

Epistle Readings: [Ephesians 3:1-6](#)

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— 2 assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, 3 how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Gospel Reading: [Matthew 2:1-12](#)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “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.” 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” 7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” 9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to

Introduction

The coming of Christ is comforting but also troubling. As Herod was troubled at the news of Christ’s birth, there are things about it that should trouble us: troubling news, troubling guests, and a troubling way.

Background

- Troubling News: There is a king, and the king is not us.
 - Herod was troubled when he heard the news because his kingship was threatened ([Matthew 2:3](#)).
 - We are like Herod: we try to make ourselves king, so the real king seems like a threat.
 - Sin is trying to be our own king.
- Troubling Guests: Those you would expect to reject Jesus worship him; those you would expect to worship him reject him.
 - The wise men were foreigners and astrologers who may have worshiped the stars.
 - The people of Israel ignored or tried to kill Jesus.
 - The Gentiles become “fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus” ([Ephesians 3:6](#)).
 - God invites unexpected people to him ([Luke 14:21-24](#)).
 - Even Herod had his chance as he heard the prophecies from Micah 5 ([Matthew 2:5-6](#)).
- Troubling Way: Those who encounter Jesus are never the same and go out by a different way, worshipping differently than the world, which can mean suffering and death.
 - The magi enter the house; so should we enter the house of God ([Matthew 2:11](#)).
 - The magi worship; so should we worship.
 - The magi offer gifts; so should we offer gifts that are costly and sacrificial.
 - The magi go out by a different way; so should we leave reoriented to a new way.
- These things that trouble us should also comfort us. If you are in Christ, you have nothing to fear.
 - God is king, not you; a day in his courts “is better than a thousand elsewhere” ([Psalm 84:10](#)).
 - God has invited new guests, including you ([Ephesians 3:4-6](#)).
 - God has indeed prepared a new way that leads not to death but to life ([Mark 8:35](#); [John 14:1-6](#)).

Discuss

- How do you respond when God doesn’t let you have your own way and shows that you are not king?
- Can you think of instances when Jesus welcomed a “repugnant cultural other” or when God welcomed such a one in the Old Testament?
- How wide is your gospel? Is it wide enough for your “repugnant cultural other”? How can you extend the grace of the gospel to him or her?
- As a Christian, do you ever feel strange or different from the world because you worship God? If not, in what ways might you do well to learn to become more different from the world?

Conclusion/Application

Though we may be troubled at first by the news of Christ, his chosen guests, and the strange way on which he leads them, we are comforted when we respond by entering the house of God, worshipping differently from the world, offering precious gifts, and going out by a new way, transformed by the gospel.

Prayer

Dear Father, thank you for sending your light into the world. Please let us rejoice exceedingly at the coming of Jesus and look forward with joy to his coming again. Help us come into your house, worship you as king, and offer pleasing gifts to you. Transform us and lead us out by a new way, rejoicing in you and giving thanks for the new life you bring.

rest over the place where the child was.
10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.