

Series: **Christmas 2021 - Choir Program**

Today's Title: **"Interrupted Plans"**

December 12, 2021 – *Matthew 2:13-15*

Objective: To help people trust God's plan for their life.

Opening prayer

Making plans.

What kind of vacation person / family are you?

Do you go on vacation - and each day when you get up - figure out what you're going to do that day?

Or...

Do you plan out the entire trip - pre-purchase needed tickets - scout out the restaurants on-line - and plan the details for each day?

Kim is the vacation planner in our family.

She plots out every day.

We talk about what we want to do - and we have a vacation plan before we pack the suitcases.

We don't waste time trying to decide what to do when we are there - we already know what we're going to do!

What kind of plans did you have for your life?

Who would you marry?

What marriage would be like.

Did you plan how many kids you would have?

Where you would live.

What your career would be.

Has it turned out as you planned?

What plans did you have for your kids?

Did you plan where they would go to school?

Did you plan what sports or clubs they would be involved with?

Did you plan what their faith would be like?

How many grandkids you would have?

Planning is a good thing.

The Bible has a lot to say about plans.

Proverbs 15:22

“Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success.”

Proverbs 16:9

“We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.”

Both verses are true.

They don't contradict each other - they are 2 ends of the same truth.

A wise person makes plans - and is open to advice when making their plans.

- They plan for retirement by saving and investing a % of their income.
- They plan for sickness and make sure they have health insurance.
- They plan for their kids' education and save money to cover the costs.

- They make plans for a career and get the education and training they need to accomplish their goals.

The wise person makes plans in many areas of life.

At the same time, the wise person knows there is a limit to the certainty of their plans.

Our plans are not set in stone - they are not unshakable - unchangeable.

Why?

Because God is also a planner - and His plan trumps our plans, because He is God.

He is the Creator; we are the created ones.

He is holy, we are sinners.

We usually don't talk about God being a planner.

Theologians do speak of the providence of God - or the Decree of God - God's plan of salvation.

Those are \$5 words that mean God has a plan - and He is sovereign and all-wise - so His plan will be realized.

This is what the Proverb means when it says:

“We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.”

Should we make plans?

Absolutely.

Should we trust in our plans?

Only to a point.

We must ultimately realize that God may have a different plan for us.

He may have a different path in life than the one we have planned for.

- I never planned on being a pastor.
- I never really thought about being a pastor.
- I was planning to be in media - radio or television.
- My dream plan was to be a professional athlete - playing baseball or football - but when you're a senior in H.S. and only 145 lbs., that plan gets put up on the shelf.

Joseph had a plan.

Joseph was a businessman.

He was a carpenter - a mason - and he had a plan.

He was going to marry this girl, Mary, and they would live in Nazareth - at least for a few years - and they would have kids, raise the family, and enjoy each other, their kids, and live a faithful life to God.

A perfect life in 1st century Israel.

But his plans changed when before their wedding - before they were intimate - Mary got pregnant.

That was not the plan!

They got through that - worked it out - with a little help from an angel.

But now the post-card / Norman Rockwell vision of their future was gone - shattered.

Word of Mary's pregnancy got out - people in Nazareth gossiped and spread rumors.

All sorts of ugly rumors.

But because of the angels visit to him, Joseph knew Mary's innocence - and he knew God was at work - in their life!

Due to the Roman census, Joseph and Mary had to make the long, difficult trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem - with Mary about ready to give birth!

It was hard to make plans for travel in those days.

No Hilton or Marriott app on the phone to reserve a hotel room. They made it safely to Bethlehem, but right away, Mary went into labor and the only place they could find shelter was in a stable - with the animals!

Not part of Joseph's plan.

After the baby was born - a boy - they named Him Jesus - just like the angel told him.

After a few nights in the stable, they found a home to stay in. They had to stay longer than they planned.

You can't go on a long trip back to Nazareth with a newborn only a few days old!

After a period of time - maybe a few weeks or a month or two - some VIPs from the east visited and gave some very expensive gifts to their baby boy.

Gold

Frankincense & Myrrh - valuable resins used for incense, perfumes, and medicines.

These gifts were things this couple from Nazareth had only heard about.

When the VIPs left, Joseph and Mary packed everything up. It was time to go back to Nazareth.

But...the plan changed...again.

Matthew 2:13

“Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy Him.””

I don't know if Joseph was a planning kind of guy.

I don't know how organized he was - how structured he was in his life.

Was he a *'go with the flow'* kind of guy - or more structured or consistent in his routines?

That's a good question and conversation to have with Joseph in heaven...but it didn't matter.

When God directs - When God commands - a wise person listens and obeys.

3 Imperatives in vs. 13 (in the Greek):

Take - flee - remain

3 things Joseph and Mary didn't plan on doing.

But through an angel God was commanding them to:

“take the child...flee to Egypt...remain there until I tell you...”

“flee” = Gr. *pheugo* (where we get our word fugitive) - present tense - meaning ‘keep on fleeing’.

The VIPs also had a dream (vs. 12) and the sense in this passage is the VIPs might have told Joseph and Mary what the angel told them in the dream.

Which probably prompted Joseph and Mary to pack up the suitcases - get the baby stroller and portable playpen - and get out of town!

Then Joseph has a dream (vs. 13).

Joseph and Mary obey God’s commands.

vs. 14-15

And he (Joseph) rose and took the child and His mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.

This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

End of vs. 15 - Quote from Hosea 11:1 - “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

In the original context, this was a quote describing the Exodus from Egypt - as God called and led Israel, His son, out of their bondage / slavery.

This change of plans - this detour to Egypt - was not only for the protection of baby Jesus - and Joseph and Mary.

It was to make sure the prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled.

Nobody else in human history could have matched up so perfectly to the many prophecies written about the Messiah in the O.T.

This was also a picture of Israel's redemption out of their slavery - their exodus from Egypt.

With Jesus - God will call His Son out of Egypt - signaling a new exodus. (Matthew, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament, by Charles L. Quarles, B&H publishing, p. 29)

This exodus would not be out of physical slavery, but spiritual slavery - spiritual bondage.

Through Jesus God would bring spiritual redemption to all who believe in Him.

Last week we looked at the genealogy in **Matthew 1** and we saw the amazing grace of God and the lineage of Jesus in the blood line of King David and the royal line of King David - and how Jesus was uniquely qualified to sit on the throne of David.

Here, in **chapter 2, Matthew** is proving through fulfilled prophecy - that Jesus is the Promised Messiah the prophets spoke about.

There are about 300 prophecies about the Messiah in the O.T.

Matthew selects 4 of them - and the 4 he selects are prophecies that relate to 4 different geographical locations.

2:4-6

The VIPs (Wise Men / Magi) arrive in Jerusalem - and go to Herod's palace - and ask him, “Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?”

Herod gathers the chief priests and scribes and they told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “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.””

This is a prophecy from **Micah 5:2**

2:15

The 2nd prophecy is the one in our passage today, from **Hosea 11:1** - “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

2:17-18

The 3rd prophecy predicted the horrific mass murder by Herod of the baby boys in Bethlehem, from **Jeremiah 31:15**.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

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.”

2:23

The 4th prophecy, which Matthew says was “spoken by the prophets” (plural), spoke of where the Messiah would live - where He would be from - what He would be called or referred to.

And he (Joseph) went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

They escape from King Herod by fleeing to Egypt - a place of refuge for Jews in the 1st century.

This was not solely for the protection of the young family, but God orchestrates their movements to fulfill Messianic prophecy - which proves Jesus meets the qualifications of the Messianic office.

But the events of **vs. 13-15** also demonstrate the sovereign control and plan of God.

It is a reminder that our plans are subject to God’s plans.

Proverbs 16:9

“We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.”

Have your plans fallen apart?

Are you frustrated with the direction of your life?

Frustrated with the circumstances you find yourself in?

Get on your knees - bow your head - and pray - asking God for help.

Submit to His plans for your life.

Look to His leading - ask Him to guide and direct you - look to the Bible for His direction in life!

Know that God has a plan - and even though His plan is not always easier - His plan is always better...has more blessing...and ultimately and more joy.