

Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 2:19-23 | Jesus' Return to Nazareth
March 6, 2022

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 2:19-23
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, we had Pastor Thomas Amos teach us James 1.

I love the book of James.

It is so wise and so practical.

+ **James 1:19**— *My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger,*

I had to laugh when Thomas told me that he was teaching this text because the Sunday prior, the Holy Spirit taught us about anger in Matthew's Gospel.

BTW, out of the three-plus years that I've been preaching here, I've never received so much feedback on a sermon than that one on anger.

So God was speaking clearly and loudly.

And for those of us who ignored that message on anger, God brought Thomas to reiterate a few more things to make His point. ☺

And some people think that God doesn't have a sense of humor!

obviously He does.

Let me quickly review from Matthew's Gospel two weeks ago:

We looked at the text commonly known as the *Massacre of the Children*. *Innocents*

This is where King Herod murdered the children of Bethlehem ~~for no reason~~.

As the Holy Spirit says, "for no reason"

So we looked at why Herod was so angry.

The Holy Spirit said that "*Herod flew into a rage.*"

LW KEYPOINT:

Anger is evidence of our pride.

The most common reason we get mad is because someone is in the way of our plans.

We also discussed three sources of anger.

Because the person you're angry with is not the real reason your angry.

That's a surface-level issue.

So we discussed three root causes of anger—

1. We get angry because our heart is wounded. (*Genesis 37:3-4*)
2. We get angry because of fear and worry. (*1 Samuel 18:8-12*)
3. We get angry because of frustration. (*Genesis 4:3-8*)

Now, that's all a review from the last two weeks.

If you missed that sermon, we have it on the website.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, the Holy Spirit will teach us what happens after King Herod dies.

Remember, Herod was the one who wasn't able to kill Jesus as he planned—so he got angry.

Herod's plans were disrupted by God.

Herod
He thought that the Magi tricked him, but it was really God who caused a divine disruption to both Herod's plans and the Magi's traveling schedule.

Herod ends up losing his mind, flies into a rage, and chooses to murder babies.

A year or so after this event, Herod dies, and now Matthew flashes back to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

This is where we pick up the narrative for today.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:19-23 CSB

Matthew 2:1—After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem,

Matthew 2:2— saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him."

Matthew 2:3— When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

Matthew 2:4— So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born.

Matthew 2:5— "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet:

Matthew 2:6— And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah: Because out of you will come a ruler

who will shepherd my people Israel."

Matthew 2:7— Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared.

Matthew 2:8— He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him.",

Matthew 2:9— After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was—the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was.

Matthew 2:10— When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy.

Matthew 2:11— Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:12— And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

Matthew 2:13— After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up! Take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to kill him."

Matthew 2:14— So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt.

Matthew 2:15— He stayed there until Herod's death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: Out of Egypt I called my Son.,

Matthew 2:16—Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men.

Matthew 2:17— Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

Matthew 2:18— A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
and she refused to be consoled,
because they are no more..

Matthew 2:19— After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

Matthew 2:20— saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who intended to kill the child are dead."

Matthew 2:21— So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel.

Matthew 2:22— But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee.

Matthew 2:23— Then he went and settled in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

PRAY:

*I thought about my ways
and turned my steps back to your decrees.*

*I hurried, not hesitating
to keep your commands.*

(Psalm 119:59-60)

We see this with Joseph today, please teach us Your Word. AMEN!

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 2:19— *After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt*

Here in verse 19, we have a transition in today's narrative.

In verses 16-18, Matthew told us what happened when Jesus, Mary, and Joseph fled from Bethlehem to Egypt—so the text featured Herod.

Now Matt's focus shifts back to Jesus, Mary and Joseph living in Egypt.

There could be a gap of several years between verses 18 and 19.

Matthew 2:19— *After Herod died,*

We already know what a wicked, godless man Herod is.

Is anyone interested in how King Herod "the Great" died?

Do you think Herod finished life well?

At the end of Herod's life, he was in a tremendous amount of physical pain.

Why?

① It's said that he had maggots in his organs.

② He also had constant seizures.

③ Herod had foul breath.

If I were a bettin' man—call me Captain Obvious—I'm guessing the way Herod died is not a coincidence.

There are repercussions to living your life in defiance to God.

Regardless, Herod's dead...

+ **Matthew 2:19**— an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

Joe has another dream.

If you were Joe at this point, would you be a little timid to go to sleep?! 😊

What's Mary thinking?

Did she ever get in the habit of asking Joe if she needs to start packing diapers in the morning?

+ **Matthew 2:20**—^{Angel SAYS} saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who intended to kill the child are dead."

The angel repeats the same instructions to Joe from verse 13 nearly verbatim.

Instead of going to Egypt, the angel tells Joseph to go to Israel.

The Angel

He also tells Joe why he's going back to Israel.

Matthew 2:20—because those who intended to kill the child are dead."

Many times, if not most of the time, God doesn't tell us why He does certain things.

Did your father feel obligated to tell you everything that he was doing or why he was doing it? Of course not.

However, God does tell Joseph.

He's told him twice.

But not so much with us.

We learn this from watching Jesus and His Disciples.

Most of the time, Jesus didn't tell His disciples precisely what He was doing or why He was doing it.

Jesus told His disciples to "**Follow Me.**"

And then Jesus turned around and started walking.

And He expected people to follow Him without complaining.

and without being interrogated as to where they were going,

how long it would take, or why they were even going in the first place.

Do we do that today?

Jesus is leading us somewhere we don't want to go,

and we act like our children in the backseat of the car on a family vacation, asking, "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?"

Matthew 2:21— ^{Joe} So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel.

It's no surprise that Joseph is immediately obedient at this point.

Last week we learned that the angel told Joseph to go, and he went. Now the angel told them to return, and Joe did.

That's a big lesson for us today—Living a life of obedience is a simple godly life.

BUT, don't make the mistake of thinking that obedience equals problem free-life... as we'll find out next.

Matthew 2:22— But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he (Joseph) was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, ^{Joe} he withdrew to the region of Galilee.

Joseph remains obedient to the Lord's command through the Angel.

Joe most likely plans on going back home to Bethlehem, which is in Judea.

I would imagine that Joseph and Mary are excited to go home, don't you?

They have been away from friends and family for years.

It's at this moment, they hope that they will see family again and maybe their lives will settle down from all this traveling and drama and all these surprises.

Many of them don't realize why they left in the first place.

So Joe and Mary start the journey back home, ^{and} then they receive some unsettling news. BUT

Joe knows Herod is dead, but it's not his death that is the talk of the town.

Herod's evil actions linger in Israel.

Let me give you an example—

Herod had a propensity for provoking the Jews for fun.

One of the dumb things he did before he died was set up a Roman eagle over the Temple's gate.

That's a problem for the Jews.

Think about the imagery here...

When the Jews walked into the Temple, they ^{first had to walk under} saw this Roman eagle on their way to worship YWHW—the One True Living God.

What kind of subliminal message is Herod sending?

That would be like someone setting up a statue of Buddha on our church property for everyone to see as you drove up the hill.

Would anybody have a problem with that?

It's called Idolatry, and it breaks one of God's top ten.

Exodus 20:4—Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth.

Eagle

So, two Jewish Rabbis decide to do something about the idolatrous eagle above the Temple's gates.

Judas (not Iscariot) and Matthias, decided to tear it down.

When Herod heard about it, he took care of the situation like he's always taken care of problems in the past—Herod executes the rabbis and then dies himself.

Fast forward to the next Passover, and a Jewish insurrection breaks out because of the murder of these two rabbis along with other things.

A man named Archelaus enters the scene.

Archelaus is Herod's son and reacts like his father.

Archelaus murders three thousand Jews during that particular Passover because of the insurrection.

Many of those people, btw, had nothing to do with the revolt.

we learn here that

The rotten apple doesn't fall far from the rotten tree, does it?

The thing about Archelaus is that he was as cruel as his father, but nowhere near capable.

He was inept—a spoiled little boy with way too much authority.

He eventually lost his job because of how he handled the revolt.

Regardless, Joseph hears this front-page news story.

It obviously rattles him and Mary.

So things are not getting better for Jesus, Mary and Joseph—they are now worse.

KEYPOINT #1:

Obedience to God's will causes healthy tension in your life.

Joseph and Mary would have been safer staying in Egypt from a practical *human* perspective.

Think about that.

God told them to go back to the land of Israel—and Joseph is obedient, yet, Joe continues to deal with problem after problem.

If you were Joe, what would you be thinking?

How much praying/complaining/worrying would you be doing?

"Come on God, when do I catch a break?"

"I've been obedient! I don't understand. I'm taking care of Your Son the best way I can." What have I done wrong? What sin do I need to confess?

And even though Joe doesn't understand what's happening at this moment, he is still exactly where God wants him to be.

Joe is safe in the arms of God, even though it doesn't look or feel like it.

But even though Joseph is in the center of God's will, he's still afraid.

How do we know?

Matthew 2:22—he was afraid to go there.

Joseph has a unique situation. He has an Angel *telling him next steps through dreams* leading him through dreams.

He has God teaching and telling him what to do.

For us, it's a bit different.

We've learned that the primary way God speaks to us today is through His Word. Heb 1

When we read the Word of God by the Spirit of God, we get direction.

We hear His voice.

But let me ask you:

- What's the first thing that you do when you're afraid?
- Who is the first person you speak with?
- Do you talk to anyone at all? - Do you keep it bottled in?
- How many mentors do you have in your life?
- Who is disciplining you?
- Do you try to figure life out on your own?
- Where do you go for answers?—And why do you go there?
- Do you expect God to do everything for you?

We see Joe get his answer in verse 22.

Matthew 2:22— *And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee.*

Joe has another dream where God warns him to stay away from Archelaus.

Why? Bethlehem is only five miles from Jerusalem.

Archelaus may want to finish what Herod started.

So although Joe is afraid, he gets his answer and chooses to move through the fear and keep traveling.

KEYPOINT #2:

Fear doesn't have to control or paralyze you.

Joseph can change plans quickly—he keeps moving—he keeps the family moving by leading in a godly way.

He's able to adapt.

As the prophet John Wayne once said, "Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway."

Joseph's teachable. *saddles up - He's teachable.*
Joe is faithfully submissive -
 He's able to apply correction immediately.

So here we have a wise man, Joseph, who we know will make a wise decision.

Proverbs 8:33—Listen to instruction and be wise; don't ignore it. *Joseph listens*

Proverbs 9:9—Instruct the wise, and he will be wiser still; teach the righteous, and he will learn more. *Joe continues to learn About God*

Proverbs 10:8—A wise heart accepts commands, but foolish lips will be destroyed. *We know Joe accepted these commands because of his obedience.*

A wise, godly person wants to be corrected.

He wants to learn more. *we see that w/ Joe.*

Back to...

Matthew 2:22— And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee.

Over time, these dreams become less specific about what the dreams are and what the angel says.

The tone in verse 22 is that it's up to Joseph where to go and live.
Isn't that interesting?

Why doesn't God tell Joseph exactly where to go?

Answer: Because God trusts Joe.

Joe has been tested repeatedly and proven worthy to be trusted.

It's the same way with you and me, BTW.

Many times, we pray a prayer like this...

"God, please tell me exactly what to do Lord, and I'll do it."

Sometimes God does tell us, but most of the time, He doesn't.

For example, we pray, *"Lord should I move across the country and take the job, or stay here?"*

"Lord, should I marry the girl?"

And God says....<>

Why doesn't God answer those prayers

Why does God choose to remain silent?

Is it possible that we misinterpret God's silence?

We think God is not listening, or He's mad at us, or too busy for little ol' me.

A better question...

Is it possible that God invites us to do something new—when He appears silent?

Maybe He's inviting you to be quiet with Him.

Is it possible that God doesn't want to give you an answer—

But would rather give you Himself— in the form of a relationship as you grapple with what to do?

KEYPOINT #3:

God's silence is meant to grow us up into maturity.

He's building spiritual muscle.

Get this!

God is trusting you to make a good and godly decision that benefits you AND the Kingdom of God.

We ask... "Should I stay or take the job?" "Should I marry the girl or not?"

Answers through His word, church, prayer.
God says, "It's up to you. I'll be with you either way."

So what God is saying is, "I trust you."

God is trusting Joe with where to live because Joe has proved himself faithful in the past.

And we think to ourselves, "Yeah, but that's Joseph, what happens when I mess this whole thing up?"


Ahh. You will mess it up at times.

You're just like everyone else—you got a bad case of the normals.

But here's the thing—when you do mess it up—this is where the comfort of knowing God's Word comes in.

KP#4 ~~It's not about feeling - It's about knowing.~~
Romans 8:28— We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

+
 ① Do you know that?
 ② Do you love God?

③ Has He called you? 

Then you don't have a problem.

God is the ultimate chess player—Chess Master.

~~Do you believe that today?~~

Do you realize that God is with you with every breath you take and in every decision you make—even if its a poor decision? *I*

IT'S NOT ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL, IT'S ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW.

+ **Matthew 2:23**— Then ^{Joe}he went and settled in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that ^{Jesus}he would be called a Nazarene.

Where is Joseph going now? —Nazareth.

Nazareth is out of Archelaus' territory.

It's about 55 miles north of Jerusalem,

A man named Antipas rules this area of Israel.

Antipas was also a son of Herod—Archelaus' brother.

Antipas is the one who is now ruling Galilee since his daddy died.

So just when Joe and Mary were almost home—they're almost to Bethlehem,

They now have another week of traveling in front of them with a Child who is at least two, maybe three years old at this time.

Look what happens in verse 23.

Matthew 2:23— that ^{Jesus} ~~he~~ would be called a Nazarene.

Get this... Joseph navigates through His problems so well that Joe's decision to settle in Nazareth actually fulfilled what the OT prophets said about Jesus as Messiah!

In other words, Joe's decision to settle in Nazareth was God's plan all along.

Dang! God is the ultimate Chess Master!

Why Nazareth? Is there anything special about Nazareth?

Is it some super holy place?

well Nazareth is located in a hilly area in the southern part of Galilee.

The town was not really a town. It was more like a small village.

Two interesting things about Nazareth:

1. It was near a major intersection of trade routes.
2. The Roman military unit in charge of Galilee was located there.

And when you combine these merchants and traders traveling near Nazareth with the Roman military stationed there...

Nazareth, ironically, was a kind of hub for world news.

News traveled fast to Nazareth.

Now, The people who lived in Nazareth had a certain kind of attitude.

It was an attitude of independence from the rest of Israel.

There's a posture of defiance.

We learn this when Jesus goes to preach the Gospel there in Matt 13. They are so unbelieving that Jesus only does a few miracles.

So, ironically, Nazareth is not a holy place.

It was known for its crudeness and violence.

The term *Nazarene* is a term of disrespect.

Remember when Nathanael asked Philip, "***Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?***" (John 1:46).

Nate knew Nazareth's reputation, just like everyone else.

That's like us knowing, "What happens in Vegas...."

Let's take one last look at verse 23

Matthew 2:23— Then he went and settled in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

But we do have an issue that I need to mention.

The prophets said that ^{Jesus} he would be called a Nazarene.

So, evidently, the prophets of the OT were known to say that the Messiah would be called a Nazarene—even though it's not recorded in Scripture.

There's no verse to confirm or deny this.

It's not a problem--even though some people make a problem.

Matthew is referring to the general teaching of the prophets.

He's not referring to a specific passage.

That's no cause for alarm because most of what the OT prophets said was not recorded.

What was recorded by the prophets is precisely is what The Lord wanted.

Matthew is simply repeating the general message of the prophets that the Messiah would be lowly and despised as a Nazarene.

PREACH:

We read this narrative, and it seems like Joseph has a Holy Spirit-filled GPS implanted in his brain.

- The Spirit tells Joe to go, and he goes.
- The Spirit tells Joe to stay, and he stays.
- The Spirit tells Joe to go again, and he does.

Wow, that's pretty cool.

"I wish God did that for me!"

And here's the thing, God does.

Now, he probably doesn't do it in dreams.

Especially with the volume and consistency of dreams that Joseph had.

However, if you are a child of God, He does speak to you.

And the primary way God speaks to you is through the Bible. Heb 1

The problem is that we as a culture don't want to obey The Word of God.

We think God's commandments are suggestions.

We confuse sanctification with salvation.

Yes There is only one way to be saved—through Christ alone.

Salvation is based on works, just not yours!

Salvation is based on the person and the work of Jesus Christ alone.

But Jesus is not going to do everything else for you when it comes to your sanctification. You have to join Him, is cooperate

Think about this:

Jesus wouldn't have returned to Nazareth if it weren't for Joseph's obedience.

It's rare to find someone who has this kind of obedience.

Why was Joe obedient to the Lord?

Answer: Because Joseph loved God.

Joe had a very different view of love than we do today.

We confuse love with emotions.

Joe knew that the only way to love God was to submit and obey His commands.

The same thing is true for us today regardless of what culture says.

John 14:15 — If you love me, you will keep my commands.

Does anybody need to preach on that? *conditional statement*

Is Jesus being subtle or ambiguous? *☺*

No, we need to choose obedience.

The great thing about Joseph is the he is model for obedience.

Joe knew that God's timing was perfect, so when the Angel said, "Go!" He went.

Many of us tend to believe the lie that when God says "Go!" That we have all the time in the world. *- that it's up to us when to go.*

But that's not true
Either we obey or disobey.

Our decision is either of faith or unbelief.

Many times we are unprepared when God says, "Go!"

But Joseph was prepared and he safely brought his family home.

We want to be careful here, because if we are disobedient to God—our disobedience could and most likely impact the lives of others.

When God speaks, it's out of the context of eternity.

In other words
There are implications to our disobedience.

Imagine what would have happened if Joe said, "No thanks, I like Egypt better."

Next week, we will meet someone who knows what obedience looks like.

We're going to meet a new character in Matthew's Gospel, John the Baptizer.

AKA...Crazy John.

Why was he crazy?... You'll have to come next Sunday and find out.

PRAY:

- Continued teaching on obedience
- how obedience is tied to love
- what it means when you're silent
- The difference between feelings & knowing.

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