

Out of Exile, The Promise of Christmas

12.10.23

Message 3

Matthew 2:13–15 (CSB)

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

¹³After 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.” ¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt. ¹⁵He 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 2:19–21 (CSB)

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰saying, “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.” ²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel.

Hosea 11:1–7 (CSB)

THE LORD’S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

11 When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.

²Israel called to the Egyptians
even as Israel was leaving them.

They kept sacrificing to the Baals
and burning offerings to idols.

³It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
taking them by the hand,
but they never knew that I healed them.

⁴I led them with human cords,
with ropes of love.

To them I was like one
who eases the yoke from their jaws;
I bent down to give them food.

⁵Israel will not return to the land of Egypt
and Assyria will be his king,
because they refused to repent.

⁶A sword will whirl through his cities;
it will destroy and devour the bars of his gates,
because of their schemes.

⁷My people are bent on turning from me.
Though they call to him on high,
he will not exalt them at all.

1. The Arrival of the Magi triggered terrible events.

A. King Herod is outraged and worried.

1. The Magi were viewed as kingmakers.

a. The magi are not some crazy fanatics.

b. They were men of wealth, learning, and influence.

2. Their arrival to worship Jesus, the King, threatened Herod's position.

B. Herod was king by hook and by crook.

1. He killed three of his sons and his wife to prevent them from becoming king.

2. Anyone who threatened King Herod was in danger of dying.

3. A man named Josephus recorded several instances of Herod's cruelty and tyranny.

a. He recorded that, nearing his death, Herod held two thousand Jewish leaders in custody with orders to kill them all upon the announcement of his death so that the nation would mourn his death (but this wasn't carried out).

b. Therefore, King Herod is biblically and historically known as an evil man.

C. This is in contrast to Jesus.

1. Jesus does not rule by cruelty but by love.

2. Jesus is no pretender to the throne but the rightful heir of the throne of the Kingdom of God.

3. Jesus transformed the world by healing the sick and preaching, whereas Herod failed to change the world through sword and intrigue.

2. Jesus' Flight into Egypt.

A. Israel's relationship with Egypt is complicated.

1. It's kind of like that cruel ex-boyfriend or girlfriend that makes you miserable when you are with them but you can't stop thinking of them when you leave.

2. God sent Israel to Egypt in Genesis.

3. 400 years later, God redeems Israel out of Egypt.

4. When Israel becomes a nation, she continually looks to Egypt for military assistance and each time is disappointed.

B. The Passage in Hosea says that Israel longed for Egypt, even while she was being delivered from Egypt's cruel grasp.

²Israel called to the Egyptians
even as Israel was leaving them.

⁵Israel will not return to the land of Egypt
and Assyria will be his king,
because they refused to repent.

1. We can describe this relationship by quoting the GODFATHER Part III: "Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in!"

2. No matter how great, gracious, and merciful God was, Israel still couldn't help but pine for Egypt.

C. One of the cruelest parts of sin is that even though sin makes us miserable, we don't believe we can live without it.

1. Sin causes us untold misery.

2. Yet, those caught in sin's cruel grasp can't help but cry out, "Do it again!"

3. Sin is an enticing mistress and a cruel master.

3. Jesus, a Second and Greater, Moses.

A. If you were a Jewish reader of Matthew, you would catch the references to Exodus.

1. The rescuing of a baby from a wicked ruler sounds like Moses' parents.

2. The word of God to Moses in Exodus 4:19-20, told him he could return to his land because the people who wanted him killed were dead.

3. Moses even tells Pharaoh that "Israel is God's firstborn son, so let them go."

B. Out of Egypt, Jesus came.

1. Jesus probably lived his first two years in or around Bethlehem.

2. Then he lived in Egypt for some years.

3. But why does this matter?

4. Out of Exile, the Promise of Christmas

A. Joseph never planned on fleeing to Egypt.

1. Just a few years before, he was just a man who was going to marry a girl.

2. He was a carpenter, and he was going to get married, raise a family, and live a seemingly ordinary life.

3. But then, after a series of Divine events, he finds himself fleeing a king into Egypt, a neighboring country that reminds him that his forefathers were slaves in Egypt.

4. Joseph never imagined that he would be a character in the blessing of Israel.

B. But he finds himself starting a family in Egypt.

1. We know that Jesus had other brothers and sisters.

a. By this time, it is certainly likely that there was another kid.

b. And while in Egypt, perhaps a couple of more.

2. But because of the anger and hatred of another person, Joseph is NOT in Bethlehem but in Egypt.

a. God KNEW this was going to happen.

b. But God did not CAUSE Herod to kill the sons of Bethlehem.

- c. But in His foreknowledge, God protected His Son.
- d. On Christmas Eve, I'll show us from how God spared Jesus from Herod's wrath so that, on a hill called Mt. Calvary, Jesus would experience God's wrath toward sin so that we might be saved.

3. Egypt had a purpose, although Joseph couldn't see it.

4. Sometimes, our story doesn't make sense until God interprets it for us.

C. Is there anyone here today who finds themselves in a place they never expected or planned?

1. Perhaps because of your own sin or the sins of your parents or spouse, you find yourself far from where you imagined.

2. You find yourself in what feels like your own Egypt, full of uncertainty, pain, exclusion, and exile.

3. You can't see God's plan and you don't understand God's timing.

4. You just know that you are not where you had planned.

D. And you are asking, "Can anything good come from this place?"

1. Does the testing, waiting, hoping, and searching have a purpose?

2. Does God see me?

3. Does God know where I am?

E. Jesus went to Egypt so we could see Him as the chosen Son of God.

Notice this:

1. When God called Israel out of Egypt, He called them "His Son".

2. When God called Jesus out of Egypt, a place of exile, He called Him, "His Son."

3. And now, on this side of the Cross, the same God is calling you and I out of our sin, our exile, and our own Egypt, so that we might be called the children of God.

Romans 8:14–17 (CSB)

¹⁴ For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery (EGYPT and EXILE?) to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, ¹⁷ and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

5. Sin and the Greatest Exodus.

A. Hosea's prophecy tells of God's love of a prodigal, wayward son named Israel.

1. Israel lusted after Egypt, even while God was leading them.
2. Israel never gave up her false gods.
3. Israel was not faithful.
4. Yet, God loved Israel.

B. The Christmas story tells of a rebellious people loved by an Amazing God.

1. The Christmas story is about a people who weren't deserving but were still loved.
2. The Christmas story is about God showing up amongst people who weren't faithful but still loved.
3. The Christmas story is about God with a distracted people
4. The Christmas story is about a people intent on rebellion but still loved.

C. Romans tells us, While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1. Jesus shared in our suffering but was without sin.
2. Jesus shared in our temptation but remained sinless.
3. Jesus was tempted, tested, and tried as we all are, yet remained perfect and pure.
4. In other words, Jesus experienced ALL that a sinful Egypt could offer.
5. Because He has shared in our experience, He sympathizes with you and I.

D. And **just as God loved Israel through it all, Jesus loves you too.**

1. Hosea tells us He leads us with "cords of love."
2. Hosea tells us that God eases the yoke and bends down to feed us.
3. Hosea tells us that He is a God that heals.

Close. Good News to wandering Exiles.

A. I know many of us are experiencing a heavy season.

1. It's stressful
2. It's heavy
3. Unsettling.
4. Chaotic.

B. The Good News is that God doesn't wait for wandering exiles to come home but came to us.

1. Just as the father in the story of the Prodigal ran to greet his Son, God sent Jesus to be Immanuel and Jesus, the one who saves us from our sins."
2. Jesus is greater than Moses, setting us free from the captivity of sin.
3. Jesus is greater than King Herod, a true and righteous King.

4. Jesus is greater than our circumstances and our struggles.

C. Today, I invite us to worship Jesus, the One who makes it possible to be called "sons of God."

1. If this year feels especially heavy, will you be sure to tell that to Jesus?

2. It can be as simple as, "Jesus, I need you so much right now."

3. Give me hope, strength, and joy in the middle of this struggle and pain.

"The birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus means that one day everything sad will come untrue. ~Tolkien