



Matthew 2:13–15

13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” 14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord

had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Reflection

I’m not sure you could imagine a more dire situation than the one that the young Jesus finds himself in today. A little child up against an evil and ruthless king. Now sure, Jesus is no ordinary child, just in this chapter Matthew has given him some extraordinary titles like the King of the Jews, the Messiah, and the Ruler who will shepherd God’s people, and so he is no ordinary child and yet Jesus is still a little child, not even two years old. And he’s up against king Herod, who’d held power for almost 40 years, ruthlessly disposing of any threat to his kingship no matter how big or small. Herod had killed his wife, and two of his

sons. To give you a picture of the type of man we are dealing with, when Herod was on his death bed, he ordered that leading citizens of the city should be slaughtered, so that people would weep at his funeral. And so you couldn't imagine a more dire situation – Jesus, not even two years old, up against a monster who'll stop at nothing to stay in power.

But God intervenes. In our last passage we saw Herod secretly craft a plan to locate Jesus. He sent the Magi to locate Jesus and told them to report back to him. But God intervened in a dream and the Magi disobeyed Herod, returning to their country by another route.

And again in today's passage we see God supernaturally intervening. In verse 13 he

sends an angel of the Lord to Joseph in a dream – and this is the second of four times that God communicates with Joseph in this way. But that’s not all that God has done to protect Joseph. You’ll remember yesterday that the Magi gave expensive gifts to Jesus. Well it’s likely that these gifts paid for Mary and Joseph to take Jesus and escape to Egypt. And so our passage tells us that they up and left, they fled Judea and travelled about 110 kilometres to Egypt – another, much more stable Roman province, that was outside of Herod’s jurisdiction.

Against all the odds, Jesus survived because God was with him. Saved in the most unexpected ways. Angels appearing in dreams. Political advisors to foreign governments travelling long distances to

give precious treasures to a poor carpenter and his teenage bride. And God is like this. Through Jesus, God is with us. By putting our faith in Jesus, God's Holy Spirit lives in our hearts and God's hand is over our life – and because of Jesus, this will never change. God is with us. Even when it seems like everything in life is against us – whether it be a surprise redundancy, or the shock of a cancer scare, or mental illness, or depression so deep that everything is numb – whatever it is, through Jesus, God is with us, and he will never, ever let go of any us.

Just as we see in today's passage with Joseph's family, God rarely works in ways that we expect or ways that we anticipate – maybe it's to teach us to trust him more – I don't know, but one thing is sure, and

that's that God's in control of everything. And the Bible promises that in all things, in the end, God is working for the good of those who love him, even if in the moment we can't see what he's doing. A surprise redundancy, mortgage fully redrawn, savings depleting fast, could God be showing you that somewhere along the line you've begun to put your trust more in your finances than in him? And with this realisation, the chains fall off and you're set free to trust his provision like never before. Cancer can mean family members and doctors and nurses and patients alongside you coming to Christ by your faith that gives you the only peace available when the doctor says its terminal. Out of the dark depths of depression can come the highest heights of hope and joy in Jesus. One of the greatest ever Christian preachers,

Charles Spurgeon, suffered from severe depression his whole life – and his words touched millions. Because of sin life is a mess, but God is with us, and he promises to make the best of a bad situation, and in all things work for the good of those who love him, even if we can't see it in the moment.

Consider Joseph, a young carpenter, a good man, loves God, obeys him. And he has high hopes of getting married, God gives him Mary, he can't wait to start a family with her. Everything is going fantastic. Thank you God. And then Mary turns up on his doorstep, she's been visiting family, and she's four months pregnant. God, what are you doing?! All the emotion, the shame, the betrayal – he falls asleep knowing what the Bible says he must do.

He has to break it off.

If your life is in a mess like Joseph's was, and you're asking yourself, 'where's God in all of this?', you need to know that God's got this. Stay true to him, be faithful to him like Joseph, be obedient to him, no matter the situation because God has got this.

Look at Joseph, what a roller coaster, God could have told him in advance, but he didn't, the shame and betrayal, and then one of the most violent and unstable kings in the history of Rome plotting to kill his son, and then a desperate middle of the night dash to Egypt, funded by treasure from the advisors to foreign kings, all the while being guided by the angel Gabriel through dreams and visions. Do you think Joseph saw any of this coming? Planned

any of this? Can you imagine the emotional roller coaster ride? His whole world seeming to fall apart over and over again. First Mary, then a king wants to kill him, now he's a refugee. But God's with him, and God has it covered. And God is with you, and God has your life covered as well. That is if you trust him, and believe in him, and obey him.

Think & Pray

No matter what life threw at him Joseph trusted God, and God took a nobody middle-eastern carpenter, and made him the adoptive father of saviour of the world. So much to think about and pray over. Take some time to do that right now.