

Sermon Title: Christmas Fulfillment
Sermon Text: Matthew 2:13-23
FBC AZ City - 12/23/18

Introduction: (Slide # 1)

Gifts are one reason kids loves Christmas so much. The idea of getting that one gift that you really want keeps kids wide awake on Christmas Eve.

Do you remember the 1983 craze of the Cabbage Patch Kids? There have been over 100 million Cabbage Patch Kids sold and in 1983 there was a crazy demand on them. There was even a Cabbage Patch smackdown that happened in Pennsylvania. It culminated in a store manager warding off crazed parents with an aluminum baseball bat. Getting what you want for Christmas is every kids dream. Christmas Fulfillment.

Parents will do just about anything for their kids. Especially when it comes to protecting their kids. Joseph and Mary were no different. Joseph is warned by an angel to take his family to Egypt because Herod is going to kill all the children in Bethlehem. In the gospel of Matthew, we learn that Jesus is the fulfillment of OT prophecy.

Matthew quotes from the Old Testament three different times in Matthew 2:13-23, and each time he says that the words of the prophets were fulfilled. The first of these quotes is found in Matthew 2:15.

(Slide # 2)

Read Matthew 2:15 (CSB)

“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.”

(Slide # 3)

1. **Jesus is Deliverer from Injustice.**
 - This is a quote from Hosea 11:1.
 - Matthew quotes just part of the verse but he is referencing the context of the entire passage.
 - Hosea is talking about God’s deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt.
 - In Exodus God uses 10 miraculous plagues to deliver Israel out of slavery.
 - The final plague, what we know as Passover, was when the death angel struck down all the firstborns in the land of Egypt.
 - The Israelites were to put the blood of an unblemished lamb on their doorposts and on their lintels and when the death angel saw the blood applied on their doorposts, he would withhold judgment from that household.
 - The Passover signified God’s deliverance.

This deliverance is finally accomplished in Exodus 14 when all the Egyptians are killed in the Red Sea.

By quoting from Hosea 11:1, Matthew is pointing out to us that Jesus’ family trip to Egypt was about much more than simply running away from Herod. This was about painting a picture for us. This was about making a parallel connection for us.

Matthew 2:15 speaks of a **new deliverance, a new exodus**. This is news that all of God's people have longed to hear. This is a rallying cry for the people of God. The Egypt story represents the ultimate deliverance story to God's people.

Moses was the leader that God sent into Egypt to rescue His people from their slave masters. God tells Moses in Exodus 3:10 that He is sending Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. **And in Matthew's day, the people of God were living under the injustices of Herod and other Roman rulers.**

In fact Herod's paranoia and his injustices were well known throughout Judea.

- Even though Herod the Great build the most impressive buildings, including the Temple for the Jews (more impressive than Solomon's temple), his lifestyle was an insult to the moral code of God's people. He had 9 wives and lived an extravagant, pleasure-filled life, and full of power and greed.
- Herod's young brother-in-law was becoming popular and he suddenly suffered a "drowning accident" in what archaeology shows was a rather shallow pool - like a kiddie pool.
- Herod began to believe that his own two sons were plotting against him. He had them strangled.
- Even 5 days before Herod's death, he had another son executed.
- The Roman emperor, Augustus, even remarked, "Better to be Herod's pig than his son."

The Jewish people saw these injustices first hand and their life of taxes and hard labor with very little to show for it under Roman Rule made them desire more than ever the "good ole days."

They wanted all wrongs to be made right. They longed for the Messiah, the Mighty Warrior like King David that will reestablish God's rule and kingdom in Judea. Let's be honest with ourselves...we too, in our modern world, want God to make wrongs, right.

What kind of injustices do you wish could be made right in our world today?

What wrongs have been done to you?

What are you waiting to be delivered from?

- Do you long for the day when people ask for your forgiveness?
- Do you long for the day when a certain person gets what is due to him/her?
- Do you long for the day when politicians actually live a godly life and behave with respect toward one another?
- Do you wish you had different parents? Different spouse? Different job? Different financial situation? Different opportunities?

Jesus didn't come to make all the wrongs right, He came to make the most significant wrong, right. The only wrong that matters is the penalty of sin. **Jesus came to deliver you from the bondage of sin.** You don't have to carry around the weight of those injustices nor the weight of your sin. You can know freedom from sin. Quit carrying the weight of all these things, and let Jesus set you free!

(Slide # 4)

2. Jesus is Hope in the Midst of Hurt.

Jesus is deliverer from injustice but He is also hope in the midst of hope.

Read Matthew 2:17-18 (CSB)

“Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 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.”

(Slide # 5)

This quotation is from Jeremiah 31:15. The prophet is talking about the time when the people of God were taken into exile. This is when they were forced out of their homeland, stripped of their own property and dignity and forced to relocate in other cities, separated from their families and friends.

The Babylonians came and attacked Jerusalem, invading people's homes and destroying the entire city, and then they took all the people to Ramah, a place just north of Jerusalem. At Ramah the people were put into caravans and scattered apart from one another. Can you imagine if this happened to your family?

What kind of reaction would you have to such an event? Imagine the weeping and crying - the loud lamenting that would take place in a scene like that where families are torn apart. This is the kind of scene that Matthew refers to when describing the weeping and crying over children who had died in Bethlehem under the orders of Herod.

Jeremiah tells the people of God that God has not forgotten them. He will initiate a new relationship, a new covenant with them. God was going to bring His people together again around this new covenant.

It's like Matthew is saying, through the previous message of Jeremiah, **“Yes, the pain is real, but there is hope for your future, and that hope is here!** Jesus has come! Jesus is our hope in the midst of hurt!

What kind of hurts are you carrying today? Do you need a good cry this morning?

- ★ **Perhaps you are still hurting from loss.** You have suffered the most devastating loss through the death of a spouse, death of a child, death of a grandchild. Jesus knows your pain and wants to bring healing. Consider attending GreifShare.
- ★ **Perhaps you feel abandoned.** You can identify with being stripped from loved ones because it seems like everyone that you try to love, ends up hurting you. God loves you. Jesus will never leave you or abandon you. Jesus wants you to seek His love and acceptance and wants you to **quit looking for your acceptance in other people or other relationships.** Will you let Him love you today?
- ★ **Perhaps you are suffering from physical pain.** Your pain isn't necessarily an emotional pain but it is physical. You have tried doctors, you have tried pain medications and it seems like nothing works. You wonder if this pain is just going to be your continual future existence. You wonder why God doesn't hear your cries for help and deliverance. What does hope look like for you in the midst of your physical pain? Have you meditated upon the martyrs and fellow believers that have suffered for the cause of Christ? What was their attitude? How did they remain focused on hope in the midst of physical pain?

Jesus is our Deliverer and He is our Hope in the Midst of Hurt and...

3. Jesus Comes from Human Insignificance.

In this morning's Sunday school lesson we discussed the town of Nazareth, and Matthew mentions this idea in his gospel.

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Read Matthew 2:23 (CSB)

"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."

(Slide # 7)

In this verse, Matthew isn't quoting from any particular prophet. In fact, none of the prophets ever say precisely, "he will be called a Nazarene." Really, the prophets never even talk about Nazareth as a place at all...and that is Matthew's point.

If there is one thing I know...I know what it is like to grow up in a small town. I grew up in LaFeria, Texas - population less than 3,000 people. If I did anything in that town, in school, my parents knew about it before I got home. Very few people in the state of Texas even know where La Feria is.

Nazareth had nothing to offer. We learn from Matthew's gospel and the other gospel writers that Nazareth was not a well respected place. Nazarenes were scorned, and despised.

The King of the Universe has come to save sinners, and from the very start He is going to be despised and rejected just because of where he comes from.

Do you ever feel insignificant? Do you ever feel as though you don't really have anything to offer? Perhaps you struggle to have friends. Perhaps you have been made fun of most of your life or been told that you would never amount to anything. Perhaps when you compare yourself to others, it seems like no matter what you do or say...you can never measure up to the standards of others or yourself.

Here's the good news of Christmas for you. God uses the humanly insignificant. In other words, if you feel as though you are a nobody...you are in good company with everyone else in Nazareth. The Savior of the world came from Nazareth.

God wants to use you if you will just obey Him.

(Slide # 8)

Conclusion:

The story of Christmas is not simply about what happened 2,000 years ago in the New Testament times, or even referencing back to OT times. The story is about you and me. We are all in need of deliverance, we are all familiar with pain and hurt in this world, and we can all seem rather insignificant at times.

Jesus has come. Jesus has come to give us new life in Him, a new hope for the future, and He comes to give us significance. Will you trust Him? Will you accept His salvation? Will you depend upon Him for your future?