

2024-12-01 - The Cast of Christmas - Part II - Light vs. Darkness: Herod & The Magi

Summary

In this sermon, we explore the narrative of Matthew Chapter 2, focusing on the characters within the Christmas story and how God moves in their lives amidst darkness. The sermon highlights the contrast between human struggles and God's divine intervention, using the Advent season as a backdrop. The darker Advent candles symbolize the world's darkness before the arrival of Jesus, the Light of the World. The story of King Herod's opposition to Jesus' birth serves as a reminder of the spiritual and worldly darkness that exists, yet God's plan prevails. Through the Magi's journey and Joseph's dreams, we see God's guidance and protection, emphasizing that even in times of fear and uncertainty, God is actively working to lead us through the darkness.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather today, we ask for Your presence to fill our hearts and minds. Open us to the lessons You have for us in this story of Your Son's birth. Help us to see Your light in the darkness and to trust in Your guidance. May we be receptive to Your Spirit and grow in our understanding of Your love and grace. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is your favorite Christmas tradition and why?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 2:1-12
2. Matthew 2:13-15
3. Matthew 2:19-23

Questions

1. What does the symbolism of the Advent candles mean to you?
2. How do you see darkness in the world today, and how do you respond to it?
3. What can we learn from the Magi's journey and their obedience to God's warning?
4. How does the story of Herod challenge us to think about power and fear?
5. In what ways have you experienced God's guidance in difficult situations?
6. How can we 'poke holes in the darkness' in our daily lives?
7. What role does humility play in our relationship with God and others?
8. How can we find peace and joy amidst the fears and challenges we face?

Life Application

This week, identify one area of your life where you feel darkness or fear. Pray for God's guidance and take a step of faith to bring light into that situation, whether through prayer, an act of kindness, or sharing your faith.

Key Takeaways

1. The world is in darkness without God, but Jesus is the Light of the World.
2. God's plans are greater than any darkness or fear we face.
3. Humility and worship are key responses to God's presence.
4. God guides us step by step, even when we don't see the full picture.
5. We are called to be light in the darkness, reflecting Jesus' love.

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for the light of Jesus that shines in our darkness. As we leave this place, help us to carry Your light into the world, bringing hope and love to those around us. Guide our steps and give us courage to face each day with faith. In Jesus' name, Amen.