



Holy in a Manger- Little Herod
Sermon Discussion Questions – Dec. 18

Scripture Passages:

Matthew 2:1–3 (NIV84) After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

Matthew 2:7–8 (NIV84) ⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

Matthew 2:13–16 (NIV84) 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. ¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under . . .

Genesis 6:5 (NIV84) ⁵ The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV84) ⁹The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.

Mark 7:21–23 (NLT) ²¹ For from within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³ All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.”

Luke 14:26 (NLT) ²⁶ “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.

Romans 8:7 (NIV84) ⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God.

Romans 8:6–7 (NLT) ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God.

Warm Up:

This week’s message focuses on one character in the Christmas story. As you think about popular Christmas movies and stories, which characters do you relate to most and why?

Now think about the Christmas story in the bible. Which characters in the Christmas story do you most identify with? How do you see yourself in that character?

Discussion:

1. In this series, Pastor Tom has been talking about what it means to be holy. What are some ideas or images that come to your mind when you hear the word holy? Who are some people in your life who you think have modeled holiness or Christlikeness and how?
2. Read Matthew 2:1-3, 7-8, and 13-16. What do we learn about Herod from these verses? How is Herod described? What does he do?
3. Looking back at Matthew 2:13-16, what can we learn about God from these verses? How might this story of Herod and Jesus connect with our lives today?
4. Excerpt from Pastor Tom’s message: *I wonder if King Herod’s role in the Christmas story is preserved, because there is a little King Herod in all of us.*

What do you think Pastor Tom meant by this statement? What might it look like to have a “little Herod” inside of us?

5. Pastor Tom later on made this statement: *If you want to be king, and someone else comes along saying he is king, then one of you has to surrender.*
Read Luke 14:26.

How have you seen this power struggle in your own life or in the lives of someone around you? What might Jesus have meant in Luke 14? What might lead us to resist messages like this?

6. "In every heart . . . there is a "little King Herod" that wants to rule and that is threatened by anything that may compromise its omnipotence and sovereignty. Each of us want to be the captain of our own soul, the master of our fate." Timothy Keller

What do you relate to the most in this statement and why? What might it look like for us to give up the need to be the captain of our own soul? How can we know how we are doing when it comes to surrendering to and trusting God?

7. Read Romans 8:6-7.

What options does this Scripture give us for approaching life? Have you ever let the Spirit control your mind? If so what did that look like?

8. Toward the end of his message, Pastor Tom shared two errors he made early in his faith:
 - I sought the things God could give me—love, strength, forgiveness and happiness, but I did not seek God himself.
 - I was seeking God as I wanted him to be, but not as he reveals Himself in Scripture.

Have you ever found yourself wrestling with either of these two struggles? If so, what was that like? What are some things that we can do to counteract struggles like this when they crop up in our lives?

Next Steps:

Pastor Tom wrapped up this week's message, asking the question: Where is the true king?

How can you know who is on the throne in your life? What might it look like to fully surrender to Jesus? Are there areas where you might be holding back?

Take some time to reflect on your life. Consider writing down or thinking through areas where you know you have let God lead. Invite the Holy Spirit to show you any areas where you are holding back.

If you identify places where you need to surrender, share that with someone in your group and spend time praying together that God would teach us how to allow him to be our king.