

A Fragile Good

What are some good things that can seem rather fragile?

What do we tend to do with and about fragile things?

→ The joy of travel adventures lost to worry & “planning”

What fragile valuables do you have or seek today?

God, help us to know your good plans and your great power!

1

A Good Mystery

Matthew 2

bib.ly/Mat2.NIV
tiny.cc/cmchandouts



2

The Setting

The Son of God had entered the world
as a helpless baby boy
who was intended to change the course of history
and those in power and privilege
were very unhappy about it!

3

Matthew 2:1-3

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was **disturbed**, and all Jerusalem with him. **When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the whole city was “shaken”** *Matthew 21:10*

Magi = experts in astronomy, sacred texts, knowing the will of the gods
when it rose = older translations: “in the east”

4

Matthew 2:4-6

When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Micah 5:2 and 2 Samuel 5:2

5

Matthew 2:7-8

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

6

Matthew 2:9-12

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were **overjoyed**. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and **worshiped him**. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been **warned in a dream** not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

frankincense, myrrh = very valuable spices

7

Matthew 2

1-12: Magi searched for, found, and worshiped Jesus

- They traveled perhaps 40 days to find Him with probably dozens of people
- They had limited information, so they searched diligently
- This limited information led them to Herod
 - God gave Herod and the Jewish religious leaders enough information to seek Him if they wanted to

13-15: • As the star led again, they experienced

16-18: **overwhelming joy**

19-23: • Upon finding Jesus, they **worshiped** this baby!

8

Matthew 2:13-15

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.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 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.”

Hosea 11:1

9

Matthew 2

1-12: Magi searched for, found, and worshiped Jesus

13-15: Joseph fled from Herod

- The angel of the Lord kept guiding Joseph
 - Egypt probably had a significant Jewish community
- Joseph kept quickly obeying
 - Worry would be very understandable!
 - Yet worry was completely unnecessary!
- Everything was according to God’s unfolding plan

16-18:

19-23:

10

Matthew 2:16-18

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, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was

fulfilled:

“A voice is heard in Ramah, **Jeremiah 31:15**
 weeping and great mourning,
 Rachel weeping for her children
 and refusing to be comforted,
 because they are no more.”

11

Matthew 2

1-12: Magi searched for, found, and worshiped Jesus

13-15: Joseph fled from Herod

16-18: Herod sought to destroy the newborn King

- Those in power and privilege are generally threatened by the arrival of another power
 - ***Evil powers use Scripture to aid in their evil***
- Everything was according to God’s unfolding plan

19-23:

12

Matthew 2:19-23

After Herod died, **an angel of the Lord** appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been **warned in a dream**, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was **fulfilled** what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

**Theme of
many passages**

13

Matthew 2

1-12: Magi searched for, found, and worshiped Jesus

13-15: Joseph fled from Herod

16-18: Herod sought to destroy the newborn King

19-23: Joseph resettled in Nazareth

- The angel of the Lord kept guiding Joseph
- Everything was according to God’s unfolding plan
 - The Messiah would be despised and rejected by many (as Nazareth was)
 - And that also was part of God’s unfolding plan

14

Matthew 2

Magi searched for, found, and worshiped Jesus
Herod sought to destroy Jesus
Yet God kept guiding Joseph
in fulfillment of God's unfolding plan

15

The Big Idea

**Though it can seem fragile
God's work in Jesus is unstoppable
and there is great joy
for all those who diligently seek Him & His glory
(and disaster for those who don't)**

16

A Good Mystery

What makes a good mystery story?

- It is **mysterious** → it is hard to figure it out
- Until you know the **secret** → then it all makes sense

What makes a bad mystery story?

- It isn't mysterious
- Or it never makes sense

God's work in Jesus was like a **good mystery**

- The paths were so often confusing & troublesome
- Yet once completed, they showed God's beautiful design of fulfilling His work in humanity for His glory and our good

17

A Good Mystery

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- It is mysterious → it is hard to figure it out
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What makes a bad mystery story?

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God's work the Church is like a **good mystery** and in our lives

- The paths are so often confusing & troublesome
- Yet once completed, they show God's beautiful design of fulfilling His work in humanity for His glory and our good

18

The Big Idea

**Though it can seem fragile
God's work in Jesus is unstoppable
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19

Application

- Find peace and rest in the God whose good plans are unstoppable**
- Yet God's good plans are often hidden in mystery
 - Our lives are often filled with mystery, weakness, and trouble

20

“But we have this treasure in **jars of clay** to show that **this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us**. We are **hard pressed** on every side, but not crushed; **perplexed**, but not in despair; **persecuted**, but not abandoned; **struck down**, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the **death [mystery, weakness, and trouble]** of Jesus, **so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body**. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, **so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body**. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.”

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

21

Application

Find peace and rest in the God whose good plans are unstoppable

- Yet God’s good plans are often hidden in mystery
 - Our lives are often filled with mystery, weakness, and trouble
 - **To show that the goodness and beauty is His and not ours**
- God’s plans are not helped by our worry & “planning”
- God’s joy is ours when we trust and follow

22

Application

Find peace and rest in the God whose good plans are unstoppable

Find the joy together that comes by diligently seeking Jesus

- Pray as an expression of trust and submission
 - Rather than an expression of worry and doubt
 - We pray to the One who knows His plans
 - And His plans will eventually reveal the life of Jesus in us!
- And pray our hearts → Especially the psalms of lament
 - “Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?” “How long?”
 - “Why have you forsaken me?” “I am like a dry and weary land”
 - “Why do the wicked prosper?”
 - When “the star appears again”, there will be overwhelming joy!

23

Application

Find peace and rest in the God whose good plans are unstoppable

Find the joy together that comes by diligently seeking Jesus

Invite others to know this peace, rest, and joy

- “When the shepherds had seen Jesus, **they spread the word** concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them”

Luke 2:17–18

- Have you seen Jesus? Are you finding His joy and peace?
- Who can you tell? How will you spread the word?

24

The Big Idea

Though it can seem fragile
God's work in Jesus is unstoppable
and there is great joy
for all those who diligently seek Him & His glory
(and disaster for those who don't)

Where do you need this peace, rest, and joy?

→ Let us pray with and for each other

Whom will you tell of this Good News?