



God's Presence in the Messy Stories

Scripture: Matthew 2:13-23

Jesus' birth upset the earthly _____.

3 Prophecies woven into Jesus' story:

1. An angel tells Joseph to flee his home and head to Egypt.
 - the exodus story
 - Hosea 1:1
 - Matthew is claiming that Jesus _____ the people of Israel.
2. Herod orders the extermination of all children born "*in and around Bethlehem.*"
 - Jeremiah 31:15
 - Herod is a new _____

God does not cause evil but is _____ with us in times of our distress in the _____ guiding us, in the sending of us to safety, in the _____ of our pain, and in the _____ in our lives.

3. "*He will be called a Nazarene.*"

- No single reference
- lots of theories
- Matthew prepares a _____ path for Jesus to walk.

A promise for all us:

God is likewise with us, _____ onto us through the joys and sorrows, _____ through the triumphs and tragedies that attend our lives — all to share the news of the _____ God has _____ to us in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Start talking.

- If you are transferred to another country for your job, where would you go? What feelings would accompany your placement (displacement)?
- How far away from where you were born do you now live? Would you ever go back to live now? Why or why not?

Start thinking.

- What kind of king do you imagine Herod to be? What does his response show about his view of the Messiah?
- What is Matthew's point in emphasizing God's watchful care over Jesus?
- What relocation options face Joseph? How did God use prophecy, dreams, faith, and circumstances to guide him?

Start sharing.

- When, like Herod, have you felt threatened by Jesus' kingship? How do you react in those times?
- From Joseph's responsiveness, what do you learn about faith and obedience? How long would it take you to say "yes" if God asked you to move on with him? Why the delay?

Start praying. *Be bold and pray with power.*

God, my life is often not what I know would be called ideal. Thank you that in your love you still enter into the messes of life and that you continue to work. That you continue to grant us new life that we wouldn't just endure but flourish and share your hope with others.

Start doing. *Commit to a step and live it out this week.*

- Pray daily for God to reveal Himself to you and one other person you choose to pray for.
- Start living obediently within a world that is consumed in the messiness of sin and selfishness, and allow God to use you to show others God's love.