

God Guides the Faithful

by David Servant

David Servant explores how God guided Joseph and emphasizes the importance of obedience and faithfulness in receiving divine guidance.

Duration: 24:23

Scripture: Genesis 12:3, Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:10-11, Matthew 2:13, Matthew 2:19-20, Matthew 2:22-23, Hebrews 10:7

Topics: "Gods Guidance", "Faithfulness"

Description

This sermon delves into the guidance of God, using the story of Joseph being led through dreams and obedience. It emphasizes the importance of following God's general commandments before seeking specific guidance, highlighting how God gradually reveals His will as we prove our faithfulness. The narrative of God guiding Joseph to Egypt, then Israel, and finally to Nazareth showcases how God's guidance unfolds in stages, leading to His perfect will. The sermon also touches on the unique value of Jesus and how His sacrifice atones for the sins of many.

Transcript

Welcome to HeavenWord TV, I'm David Servitt. Stay with me as we look at how God guided Joseph and consider how God will guide you. Well, thank you so much for joining me today.

Great to have you back once again as we're continuing our chronological study through the New Testament and we've just begun our journey. We're, of course, studying the life of Christ, starting in Matthew chapter one. We're now in chapter two.

Previously, we were looking at the story of the arrival of the magi from the East who were coming to present their gifts before Jesus. And we talked about how they must have had some supernatural revelation in order to do what they did. They traveled perhaps months, maybe even years.

Just seeing a star in the sky isn't enough to know that you're coming to worship the King of the Jews. And so somehow God revealed to these Gentiles, and there probably were a lot more than three, they brought three different gifts but it weren't necessarily just three wise men who came from the East, God revealed to these Gentiles that something worth traveling for, a historic event had occurred and they were going to be blessed and privileged to be a part of that. So we left off last time in Matthew chapter two and let's start today in verse number 10.

All right? Matthew 2 verse number 10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. They were happy to be back on the track.

And after coming into the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell to the ground and worshiped him. Now, who do you worship? Well, the pagans do worship statues, but they worship them because they're deceived about them because they think this is God, I suppose. It's not natural normal to bow down and worship before something or someone unless you think that thing is greater than you.

And they believed at bare minimum this was the king of the Jews, but you don't, you might bow down before a king, but you don't worship a king. Only God should be worshipped. And so here's a really an amazing foreshadowing of God revealing himself to the Gentiles in a public way before a watching Jewish world.

He sent those Gentiles right into the heart, I mean, of Israel, just six miles south of Jerusalem in Bethlehem. They come, they announced to all Jerusalem, everybody has heard it. There's a buzz about the place.

God has sent Gentiles here to worship the king of the Jews, the Messiah, the one whom Micah has foretold would be born in Bethlehem. What a testimony, what a foreshadowing of what was to come. What an amazing indication of God's love for all people, not just for the Jews, his chosen one.

He's always trying to help Jews see that you're special, but you're, you know, I love everybody. Jesus died for everybody and I sent him to be the savior of all mankind. Remember, we read this previously, God said way back in Genesis when he revealed himself to Abraham, he said, in your seed, all the families of the earth, all the families of the earth, not just the family of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the descendants of Israel, but all the families of the earth will be blessed in your seed.

And that singular seed was Jesus. So he was the savior of all, praise God. And I just love this story.

Maybe I'm belaboring the point too much, but here are these Gentiles and they're bringing him these very precious gifts. In verse number 11 again, then opening their treasures, they presented him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. All right.

Some people try to find significance, some symbolism and all of those things. I don't know much about that. Okay.

Some prosperity preachers try to tell us that Jesus was rich from the start because he has loaded with gold. I'm more inclined to think that God was thinking about preserving Jesus because there was a plot being formed against him by Herod at that very moment. Remember, he already told the Magi to go there and worship him and then come back to him.

So there's a plot being formed to kill him. God's going to give instructions to Joseph and Mary to get out of there and they're going to sojourn as a family in Egypt for some time. That gold that they got was probably God's provision to get him there and sustain him for some time.

All right. Wonderful. Now in verse number 12, and having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the Magi left for their own country by another way.

So they bought some time for Jesus and his family. Verse number 13, now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him. This is one way that God might lead us, but this is not the only way that God might lead us.

I can't tell you that I've been led frequently through dreams. I can tell you that I've had an awful lot of dreams over the years. And if I was to think that every dream I had was from God, I would be a very, very confused person and I'd be all over the place doing all kinds of strange things.

So just because you have a dream doesn't mean it's from God. It's proven scientific fact that people are dreaming all the time. When they go deep into sleep and most of us don't even remember our dreams.

But if you have a dream from God, God's able to help you to understand this is not just because you ate too much pizza. This is a dream from me. An angel appears to Joseph and says, get up and flee because Herod is going to try to search for the child to destroy him.

And so Joseph obeys and he got up and he took the child and his mother while it was still night and he left for Egypt. And so God didn't give him a whole lot of forewarning, did he? I mean, it was urgent. Get out of there right away that very night you're under the cloak of darkness.

All right. And let's see verse number 14. So Joseph got up and took the child and his mother while it was still night, left for Egypt.

He remained there until the death of Herod. Death of Herod is kind of just spoken of as an incidental thing. Herod died.

And I would add as a commentary, Herod died and went to hell because he was selfishly ambitious. He did not love Jesus. He did not rejoice in the birth of the King of the Jews.

He was only threatened by Jesus. Okay. So we'll talk about that as we continue in this story.

All right. Be right back. Okay.

Let's continue with our study of the life of Jesus Christ working chronologically through the New Testament. We're now back again in Matthew chapter two, looking at the flight to Egypt. Matthew chapter two and verse number 14.

Jesus remained there in Egypt until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet out of Egypt I called my son. Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the Magi, he became very enraged and he sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the Magi.

And so this gives us again a little bit of insight as to how old Jesus was when the Magi visited him or perhaps how long it took for the Magi to travel. Herod used what they told him as a reference point. Let's see, if I'm going to eliminate this king of the Jews, who's the threat to me, to be safe, I'm going to have to kill every child in Bethlehem and all around there under two years of age.

And that's exactly what he did. Now, a question could be asked at this point in time, and I've certainly asked this question at times. God was able to warn Joseph and Mary to get out of town before Herod's soldiers got there to kill all the children.

God obviously knew what was going to happen. He warned Jesus. So why weren't the other mothers and fathers warned? Why didn't God prevent the deaths of all those little precious children? I mean, that, it was a horrible, horrible thing.

The little sentences that we read in passing here don't do it justice. The terror of that day when the soldiers rode into Bethlehem and other places around there, snatching up children, little children, toddlers and babies, and ripping them from their mother's arms and killing them. I mean, this is a horrible holocaust.

And so God could have prevented it. Why didn't he? Well, we could ask that question, couldn't we, about any tragedy. And I just have to say, there's no pat answers.

You could say, well, they all deserve to die. What? Little babies deserve to die? Come on. That's hard to swallow.

So the only thing that I can bring that I am sure of out of this passage that raises so many questions is simply this. This indicates to us that Jesus was very special. Okay.

His value was greater than the value of all those other children who died in the slaughter of Herod. In fact, if you took the value of all children around the world and threw in all the adults together, the entire population of the earth, and put them in a scale and put Jesus over here to value Him and put all those other people, the world's population on this side of the scale, and it was a scale that measured value, it would tip to Jesus' side. In fact, that's an understatement.

It would, in a microsecond, tip to the other side and those people would fly off out into infinity in space because the value of Christ as God, as the Son of God, is of no comparison to the value of those of us who are just human beings. Okay. You say, well, what difference does that make? Well, it makes some difference.

It helps us understand why Jesus was uniquely preserved, but also helps us to understand how one person's death and suffering on the cross can atone for the sins of hundreds of millions and potentially billions of people. You know, if I was to be the one who was going, if I was sinless, first of all, and I was to be chosen to die, or I voluntarily gave my life to die to be a Savior, I could only potentially save one person because I'm just one person. So you give a life for a life, that's only fair.

But can you see how the Lord Jesus Christ, being of infinite value by His relatively short sufferings, and I'm not downplaying His sufferings at all because He suffered horribly, He bore upon Him our sin in His body on the cross. He suffered the wrath of God. He was separated from God the Father.

He cried out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? You see, so He did suffer. He did die, but not suffering now, He came back into life and so forth. He's seated at the right hand of God the Father.

For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, you see. So how can that act by one person for a limited amount of time somehow pay the penalty to release potentially billions of people from their rightful place in hell? It's who it was. It was Jesus.

So a little gospel message thrown in there as we look at this tragic event. And so Matthew goes on in verse number 17 to say that, then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled. And he quotes from Jeremiah in verse 18, a voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children.

And she refused to be comforted because they were no more. Now that's a little bit of a cryptic prophecy. And you say, well, what does that got to do with the fulfillment of the slaughter of all these innocents there in Bethlehem and the surrounding regions? Well, if you know the story of Rachel, of course, she's a wife of Jacob, renamed Israel, as they were making a journey right in that same area when Rachel was giving birth to the son who was ultimately named Benjamin.

She had tough labor and she died in labor and it was right in Bethlehem of Ephrata. And that's of course contained in scripture. And so somehow symbolically by her death and her mourning and so forth, right in that area, she's identified with the city or the town of Bethlehem.

And that's where this happened. And all these mothers are crying for their children. Okay.

So yeah, it's cryptic, it's vague, but it's explained to us now, Jeremiah nailed it. Okay. But when Herod died, behold, 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 into the land of Israel for those who sought the child's life or death.

And so here's some further guides, which you want to talk about a little bit more next time. Okay. Be right back.

So we've been blessed to deliver some rice to them today to help sustain them. All right. Let's continue in Matthew chapter two.

I want to read once again what we read previously, verses 19 and 20, because in this segment, I want to talk about God's guidance. God led Joseph on this occasion through a dream. And that is one way that God leads us, but that's not the only way God leads us.

I would say in my experience over the years, trying to determine God's guidance more than any other way, God guides us, of course, through his Bible and through the scripture. I got a copy of the Bible on my computer here in case you're wondering why I'm pointing to my computer. God's looking for people who are going to obey his general commandments to everybody.

And it would make sense, wouldn't it, that before he begins to give us specific guidance, he'd want us to be following his general guidance that applies to everybody. And so when people are looking for specific guidance, they first need to ask themselves, am I already following the guidance God gave me? Why should I expect God to give me more guidance if I'm not following the guidance he already has given me? So God gives his guides, listen closely, to people who are obedient, to holy people. And come on, isn't that just borne out in scripture as well as in our own experience and so forth? People that are going their own way, God's not apt to give them specific guidance because they're not listening to the general guidance anyways.

And then here's something else to learn. That same principle applies. Even in a specific guidance, God first gives general guidance.

Like for example, anyone who has been called by God to serve in vocational ministry. Now, everybody's called to serve in ministry, but vocational, that is you're going to do this for a living every day of your life. Or you might take the weekends off, sure.

God gives them that calling, but they don't know exactly what he wants for them yet. And you start off doing something for the Lord. That's it.

God calls you. You know you're called, so you take whatever opportunity he gives you first. You prove your faithfulness in small things.

God has given you some general guidance beyond just the scripture now. He's calling you to vocational ministry. You do whatever your hand finds to do to prove your faithfulness.

And then God begins to hone you in to what he has prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And it's absolutely lovely. And it takes years, let me tell you.

And anyone who's been in vocational ministry can tell you the same thing. He hones you and hones you down as you prove you're faithful. And again, we all are unfaithful at times.

We blow it. Yours truly, I'm a perfect example of the person who's blown it, but God's mercy is new every morning. Thank God for that.

You get up when you fall and you get back in the race. And then he gives you more guides. And eventually you get right into that niche that he's been preparing for you for a long time.

So we're going to see that today in how God guided Joseph. Verse 19. But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, get up, take the child of his mother, and go into the land of Israel.

For those who sought the child's life are dead. What was the guidance? You're in Egypt right now. You're going to go to Israel.

Israel's a pretty good sized place. Go there. Well, if he gets there, he knows he's in the right country.

And is it optional where he lives? Well, actually not, as we continue to read the story. So Joseph got up, verse 21, took the child, his mother, and came into the land of Israel. So now he's followed the initial guidance that God has given him.

He's in the right country. Verse 22. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, who died a few verses ago, he was afraid to go there.

So he's trying to figure out where am I supposed to go in Israel. And then after being warned by God in a dream, so here's another dream, he left for the regions of Galilee. So Israel was divided north and south, Judea and Galilee.

And he's getting a little bit closer now. It's a little bit more specific. And he's warned by God in a dream.

We don't get the specifics there, but as a result of that dream, and as a result of his fear of Herod's son, he heads toward the regions of Galilee. And of course, Galilee was where... I made one mistake. Galilee is just a region that is in the northern part of Israel.

And that's where Jesus spent a lot of his time in ministry. And he came and he lived in a city called Nazareth. And so we can be sure, although it's not said to us in the previous verse, that that's the city where God directed to him to go in Galilee.

And this was to fulfill what was spoken to the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene. So it's nailed right there that it was God's will for him to go to Nazareth. But can you see, that's not what he told him at first.

No, sir. He told him first of all, get out of here, go to Israel, general guidance. He makes the step of faith.

He begins moving in the right direction. He gets across the border into Israel. And now it becomes more specific.

I want you in the region of Galilee. I want you in a town called Nazareth. And apparently that is the town where Jesus Christ spent quite a few years of his childhood growing up.

Now, again, let's bring it home in application to our own lives. It doesn't matter whether you're called to vocational ministry or not. Everybody, this means you, God has prepared good works from the foundation of the world that you should walk in them.

Specific things, not vocational ministry necessarily, but specific things. Well, you can be praying for God to give you that guidance, but he probably isn't going to get you right into that perfect niche that he had planned for you until you start doing what scripture says, following the general commandments, right? Okay. And then as you seek his guidance, doing whatever your hand finds to do to prove that you'll do anything.

Lord, I just am your obedient servant. I want to follow you. And as you take those steps of faith, the guidance, month by month, sometimes it's year by year, you slowly, slowly, slowly, as you prove your faithfulness, get closer and closer to God's perfect will for you.

Okay. Good lesson to learn. And if you know that, wow, you are indeed blessed.

Okay. Well, thanks for joining me. See you next time.

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