



St. James Presbyterian Church

A ministry of the Presbyterian Church USA

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SERMON STUDY & DISCUSSION OUTLINE

12.12.2021 – Christmas Story Life Lessons #2 – HOPE, from contrasting characters

Matthew 2

In Matthew 2, there are two contrasting characters from whom we can glean their own understanding what hope means. Herod showed the bad kind of hope that any of us could have. The Wise Men showed the opposite of what good hope could lead to. To understand these opposite kinds of hope should teach us what to avoid and what to follow in our daily life. May we all always be pulled and be willing to follow the good hope that the Wise Men pursued and eventually were blessed by.

Lessons Herod: the bad kind of hope

- *Jealousy was the prime reason that drove his mind and heart! He wanted to be the only king! No King of the Jews should be above him. This was his singular hope and reason for being!*
- *Herod went to do everything possible to stop any other king than him. Whether deceiving the Wise Men or ordering the merciless killing of innocent young boys. Herod showed his true evil colors.*
- *Because he failed in seeing the fulfilment of his evil hope, he died angry.*
- *We always think of Christmas as a time of joy and peace. Herod had all of it the opposite!*
- *How are you approaching this Christmas and those to come? Try not to be Herod-like!*

Lessons from the Wise Men: the good kind of hope

- *God gives us intellect and a curious mind to seek and understand great things beyond us. The Wise Men sought the fulfilment and truth behind the prophesied coming of the Messiah.*
- *Not driven with a bad motive like Herod, they were blessed by God to be one of the early witnesses of Christ's birth. Their honest seeking led to having a good kind of hope about the Messiah.*
- *With hope, they prepared to gift Him, expected and proper for a King.*
- *Traveling from afar, God protected them. They went back safe and blessed with divine hope.*
- *As we go through our daily life, how much of God-given hope drives and guides us? Like the Wise Men, how willing are we to humble ourselves and trust God's Word and guidance?*

Hope in Christ...

- *overcomes fear, anger, jealousy, dishonesty, and yes... sadness*
- *brings joy to worship and to life itself*
- *leads to good and God-honoring life decisions*
- *makes any one of us real and honest influencers for Christ*

But then, I sometimes think and act like Herod.

But deep down in me, I also want to become more like the Wise Men.

Can I still turn my life around? How?

Always with a good kind of hope.