



Fear Not

Herod: Fear of Losing Control (Matthew 2:1-23)

By Pastor David Hillis, 13 December 2015

BIG IDEA: Unchecked fears make us feel like we've lost control and can make us lose control.

- When we don't bring our fearful emotions under control - when we leave them unchecked to mess with us - those fears can make us feel like we're losing control of our lives. They can even make us lose control - make us overreact, try to control our environment and even others around us; acting out in anger or trying to persuade or convince people to do what we want. The more we try to control situations, so often, the more we actually lose control.

Herod's Unchecked Fear

- Herod never stopped to take a look at his fears and submit them to God. He very much was working hard to control his own life.
- God in general calls us to control ourselves, not others. God wants that control to be rooted in faith, not in fear; self-control is an act of submission. Anything else tries to make others submit to your will, and whether we try to use persuasion or our tempers, or passive-aggressiveness or manipulation to get what we want, our unchecked fears are actually taking control of us.
- What we fear the most reveals what we value the most, and where we trust God the least.

What fears are controlling you?

- What fears, whether big or small, have been able to maintain a place in your life, maybe even start to establish roots? How do those fears at times cause you to react in ways outside of God's plan?
- Fear-based reactions will never be better than a response of faith and trust in God, and His plans. How might God be calling you to respond like Joseph rather than Herod, and trust Him in scary, uncertain times?

My Next Step

What fears do you have in your life right now that you need the voice of God to speak into? Is God calling you in some way to trust for His answer, rather than trying to control the outcomes yourself?

FOR FURTHER STUDY/REFLECTION THIS WEEK:

1. Review Matthew 2 again this week, asking God to help you see insights from the story that you can apply to your own life. What are your typical patterns or behaviors when you are fearful and want to control outcomes?
2. God is the unseen actor throughout this passage. In what ways can you see His "behind-the-scenes" actions (verses 6, 15, 18 and 23)? Take a few moments to consider how He has been working behind the scenes lately in your life.
3. The Magi not only found Jesus, but they worshiped Him and witnessed to the entire city of Jerusalem concerning His birth (verses 2-3). In what ways has your search for the Lord resulted in worshiping him and telling others about Him? Who do you see that God has put in your path to live and share your Christian journey with who does not yet know God's love? How can you take steps of faith in that direction and not give into fear?
4. Read Psalm 91. In what ways does this Psalm make you think of Jesus, Mary and Joseph? Which verses from Psalm 91 are encouraging you to learn to trust the Lord's promises and protection?
5. Read Deuteronomy 31:8. What might God be saying to you today about the times you might have felt like God had not been with you? That he had failed or abandoned you? Allow yourself to be in a place of listening prayer for God to speak.
6. In what areas of your life today have you sought to control that has been God-honoring? When has it not been? Consider those moments and why God is showing you they were or were not.