



Advent Week 4

Day 24, Tuesday, December 21st

"When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 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.'"

Matthew 2:3-6

Yesterday we read about the Magi from the East, who, upon noticing the great star ornamenting the night sky, set out on a journey to seek the Messiah and worship him. In stark contrast, here we read that when King Herod and "all Jerusalem" heard about Jesus' birth, they were "disturbed." Disturbed! A big word that in its original Greek could mean agitated, stirred-up, troubled, or afraid.

Isn't it interesting that you don't have to look far to see the same wide spectrum of responses to Jesus' today? You may not even have to look past your own family to see such different reactions to Jesus.

And yet, nobody could argue with Micah's prophecy, written some 700 years earlier (Micah 5). Herod demanded answers, and a voice from the past echoed truth down long corridors of time. Maybe if Herod had not been so worried about losing his status, his position, his rule, his perceived control, he might've noticed something sweetly significant that's reflected in the last sentence of Micah's prophecy- "...a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

This ruler is different. He's come to lead, but in the humblest way. On the list of "dirty jobs" it doesn't get much worse than shepherding. What kind of ruler loves like this?

REFLECT: These days I'm asking, what am I so worried about losing that I'd let it keep me from seeking Jesus and worshipping him? What about you? What are you holding onto so hard that the idea of Jesus ruling your life is, frankly, unsettling? Disturbing?

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, help me to let go of anything that comes between me and You. Help me to invite you with open arms into the rest of it. You deserve my whole heart. Amen.

