“Out Of Egypt”

12/10/2017

Matthew 2:10-15

Please find with me the second chapter of the Book of Matthew.

Most of us here today believe that God is working everything together in our lives for good. Why then, you might ask, does it often seem that when you thought things should go one way that the LORD directed things another way? Or, as one man puts it, He wanted your life to zig when you wanted it to take zag?

Today’s Bible lesson takes us into God’s oversight of your personal life.

Christmas is just a few weeks off. So, I wanted to bring you the gift of a pre-Christmas message today. Now, you’ve likely heard dozens of sermons on the people and the events that led up to the birth of Jesus. And those people and those events do help us to see the blessedness of the birth of Jesus.

But, as it turns out, todays’ lesson is from a post-Christmas event. Post, as you know, means “after.” So, today’s “post-Christmas” sermon is titled “Out Of Egypt.” [Hold off praying here].

The man who wrote this Gospel was called Matthew. And Matthew was a Jewish man who had once collected taxes for the Roman Government. So, actually, he’s a publican. And he’s listed as “Matthew, the publican” in the list of Apostles Jesus chose to be with Him. Now, Matthew knew his OT very well.

Let me show you what I mean and then I’ll pray. Look with me at Matthew 2:11 *“And when they [the wise men]were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.*

*(12) And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.*

*(13) And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.*

*(14) When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: (15) and was there until the death of Herod:* ***that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet****, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”*

Shall we pray?

Those of you who regularly read your Bible know that Matthew is filled with OT quotations and allusions; an allusion being a reference to another book. He quotes the OT no less than 67 times and he often uses this phrase “that it might be fulfilled.”

Matthew 1:22 *“Now all this was done,* ***that it might be fulfilled*** *which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying …”*

Matthew 2:15 *“And was there until the death of Herod:* ***that it might be fulfilled*** *which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”*

Matthew 2:17 *“****Then was fulfilled*** *that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying …”*

Matthew 2:23 *“And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth:* ***that it might be fulfilled*** *which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”*

How much you know about the life of Jesus beginning to end is really a fulfillment of the predictions given by the Prophets in the OT. So, Matthew tells the story of Christ’s birth. And that story goes from fulfillment to fulfillment of the predictions given by Jewish men who were directed by the Holy Spirit hundreds and thousands of year before Jesus walked on the earth. His birth, for example, is carefully and wonderfully predicted for us in the prophecies of old. But Matthew takes us *past* His birth on to the events of the LORD’s early childhood.

Here he quotes an OT verse just as Mary and Joseph are about to take Jesus down into Egypt. So, since Jesus has already been born, today’s sermon is Post-Christmas. I’ve titled it “Out Of Egypt.”

You could easily write a large book on what the Bible has to say about Egypt. Now, granted, we are not told just *where* Joseph took his family to in Egypt. But we do know that it was as much as three hundred and sixty miles south of Jerusalem, probably a three-week journey.

By the way, traveling any significant distance in those days was not easy. It wasn’t without its hazards; such as robbers. There an interesting man-made Gospel called “The Arabic Gospel of The Infancy,” that tells the story of Mary and Joseph being attacked by two robbers on the road to Egypt. But, once they discovered that Mary and Joseph have no money, the bandits take pity on them and let them go without harm. Later, according to this Arabic Gospel, these same two bandits are crucified alongside Jesus and one of them repents and comes to believe on Jesus as his Savior. None of that is true; but it is interesting.

Egypt has always played a huge role in the history of Israel. You certainly know that the LORD delivered the Jews out of Egypt and carried them across the Red Sea back in 1440 B.C.

But the history of Egypt goes back much further; all the way to Noah; the flood taking place around 2,350 B.C. Noah’s second son Ham brought four boys into the world. Ham’s second son was named Mizraim. Genesis 10:6 *“And the sons of Ham; Cush (Canaan), and Mizraim (Egypt), and Phut (Libya), and Canaan.”* Mizraim is the Hebrew word for Egypt.

So, Egypt begins with the second son of Noah.

We also know that Abraham went down into Egypt. Genesis 12:10

We know that Joseph was sold into the Egyptian slave market. Genesis 37:28

We know the LORD sent Ten Plagues upon Egypt. Exodus 7-12

And we know that the Exodus was an Exodus out of Egypt. Exodus 13-14

So, beginning with Ham, the middle son of Noah, the population of Egypt increases so that it develops into one of the major nations of the world right through the end of the OT and, of course, up till today.

Now, what does the Bible say about Egypt. We find that soon after Jesus was born his parents move to Egypt. Actually, the LORD spoke to Joseph in a dream and told him to go to Egypt. Look at your Bible at verse thirteen. Matthew 2:13 *“And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and* ***flee into Egypt****, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.*

*(14) When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and* ***departed into Egypt****: (15) And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,* ***Out of Egypt*** *have I called my son.”*

Now, as you can easily see, the Bible is filled with valuable and very practical lessons. So, what can we see here in Matthew two?

First, God allows significant twists and turns in our lives for His own larger purposes.

I’m going to guess that Joseph might have wondered “Why Egypt?” He also might have wondered “How long will it be till Herod dies?” And he might also have wondered “Where will we stay in Egypt?” And he might even have wondered “Where will my income come from?” And he might also have wondered “If our son really is the Messiah of Israel, how could even Herod have any power to kill Him?”

Folks, all of your questioning when it comes to the LORD’s directing your life as He has will likely lead you to greater doubts than to just simply trust Him that He knows what He’s doing with you, with your family, and with your life.

Remember what’s going on here. God is directing Joseph to go to Egypt and He will certainly also direct him up out of Egypt. And what is Joseph to do? He’s to learn one of the greatest secrets of life in this world; the power of waiting; waiting on the LORD.

How many times have you felt that God should “hurry up”? Folks, while you’re in a hurry, God is not. So, what do I need? I need a waiting heart. Psalm 37:7 *“Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him …”*

Psalm 62:5 *“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.”*

Do you remember the story of the death of Lazarus? When he was ill, the Bible says that Jesus waited for days before He went down to Bethany. And, by the time He’d arrived, Lazarus had died. You see, no one, except God Himself could see His plan. His plan included the resurrection of Lazarus. And the same holds true for you and me.

Here’s the lesson. A waiting heart “does not rush the Lord or complain when things happen slowly or when the plans of life suddenly are overturned. By faith we go down to Egypt in the middle of the night, knowing that one day by faith we will come “out of Egypt.” *Both the going and the coming are part of God’s plan for us*. [Found on [www.keepbelieving.com](http://www.keepbelieving.com) “Out Of Egypt” by Ray Pritchard Dec. 5, 2007].

Now, you know the story of Jesus’ life. You know that He returned to Galilee to live in the town of Nazareth. And you know that God eventually poured Jesus’ life out as a Sacrifice for your sins. But Joseph didn’t know any of that.

And neither do you or I know His plan for your future. Your place and my place is to wait on Him and let Him have His will right now for what He intends for you. A rushing spirit or an anxious spirit or a constant questioning of the LORD is more of a hindrance than a help in your Christian life.

So, first, God often allows significant twists and turns in your life for His larger purposes.

Second, everything God does in your life is rooted in His love.

Now, turn back with me to the passage that Matthew quotes here. It’s found in Hosea chapter eleven. Hosea comes right after Daniel and right before the Prophet Joel. And look with me at Hosea 11:1 *“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”*

Hosea preached to Israel. Israel was the northern king-dom, the ten northern tribes. And he preached alongside another prophet by the name of Amos. Both of these men had a huge burden on their hearts. They had to preach against the priesthood, against the king, and even against the people because they were so idolatrous and so immoral. And they also had to preach against their self-centeredness, their materialism, and their daily disobediences to the Laws of Moses.

Hosea preached seven hundred and fifty years before Christ. Hosea and Amos were the last of the prophets to Israel. They had to preach the judgment. They had to announce that judgment was about to come upon the nation of Israel in the form of the Assyrian Empire. And yes, the Assyrians attacked Jerusalem in 722 B.C. and took almost all of the Jews into captivity to Assyria.

But the main lesson you will find in the Book of Hosea is very enlightening. It’s this. The Jews of Hosea’s day, for the most part, day after day and year after year had rejected God’s love. Who can you think of right now that has been rejecting the LORD’s love for them?

So, no matter what grace God showed to the Jews; no matter how much He loved them; no matter how many times He intervened and miraculously delivered them, they rejected His love.

Here in Hosea 11:1, when God reminds them again of His love, He points to the day when He miraculously removed them from Egypt back in the days of Moses. Hosea 11:1 *“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”*

Through this entire sermon in chapter eleven, Hosea reminds the Jews how time after time God showed them His love and their response was refusal and rejection.

Look with me at verse two. Hosea 11:2 *“As they [the prophets of the LORD] called them, so they [the people] went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. (3) I taught Ephraim [the Jews] also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. (4) I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat [food] unto them.*

*(5)* *He shall not return into the land of Egypt, and the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. (6) And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels. (7) And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.”*

Do you see how Matthew uses Hosea’s sermon? He’s telling us that, just like it was an act of pure love that God dealt with the Jews, it was an act of pure love that sent Joseph and his family down into Egypt.

And, also, just like the Jews time after time refused the LORD’s faithful love for them, how often have you done the exact same thing? No, you don’t understand the twists and turn of your life. And yes, there are plenty of things you don’t like about the way God works. But, folks, God is love. He’s the one in charge of the twists and turns and the zigs and zags of your live. And folks, He *will* not and cannot take you down a path that is not “love-laden.” He’s the faithful love of your life. And, as you know, when something is “laden,” it’s loaded. God’s care for you is “love-loaded.” He *is* love. He acts in love. And when you choose, like Israel to reject that love, still God loves you. Do you think He will quit His love for you? No way.

Hosea 11:8 *“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. (9) I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.”*

Even when God sent Assyria into Israel, He did so with a gracious love. And, in case you don’t remember what happened to Admah and Zeboim, here’s what happened. Deuteronomy 29:23 *“And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: …”*

You see, God, through Hosea, was telling the Jews that He surely had to judge them with the Assyrian Empire. But, they would not become like those cities He once destroyed with fire and brimstone. Even in His judgment, God is loving and gracious.

But, let me add one more thing here. We all know that sometimes a son or a daughter spurns your love. How do you handle it? There’s a sermon you need to read that might bring you some clarity. It’s called “Praying for Your Prodigal.” It’s by Ray Pritchard.

In it he says this to mothers and fathers of children who stray from home, from them, and from the LORD.

“We need to be reminded that an astounding miracle lies at the heart of our faith. We believe something absolutely incredible–that a man who was dead came back to life on the third day. We believe that God raised him from the dead.

Now if God would do that for his Son, indeed if God has the power to raise the dead, who are we to question God’s power to change the hardest hearts? After all, if you go to the cemetery and stay there waiting for a resurrection, you’ll wait a long time. There are lots of people going in and no one coming out.

You will see plenty of funerals and no resurrections. What are the chances that a man who had been tortured and then crucified and then buried in a tomb would be raised from the dead? The odds would seem to be against it. You can’t start with what your eyes see or what you can figure out.

And you can’t trust your feelings in something like this because your emotions can play tricks on you. We must therefore start with God who can raise the dead, not with the person who is spiritually dead. *If it is God alone who can raise the dead, then our focus must be on God alone*.”

So, first, God often allows significant twists and turns in your life for His larger purpose.

Second, everything God does in your life is rooted in His love.

Third, what God allows sometimes can’t be comprehended; Matthew 2:16

Do you recall what happened after Joseph took Mary and Jesus into Egypt? What did Herod, the Great; Herod, the First, do. He unleashed unequalled anger upon hundreds of innocent people; verse 16.

Matthew 2:16 *“Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.*

*(17) Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, (18) In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”*

This often referred to in history as the “slaughter of the innocents.” And the Bible tells us that is was the direct result of Herod’s uncontrolled anger. The wise men, directed by God, never came back with their report. So, Herod retaliated by slaying every child under the age of two, the age of Jesus at this time. And, I’m sure he also feared that this baby king might sometime overthrow him.

Sometimes the LORD allows people the freedom to choose wickedness over love and evil over kindness and murder over peace. Herod chose to act out his anger and bitterness towards the fact that the wise men went back to Persia by a different route.

How many times have you seen people in your life punish and hurt and chastise others after and sometimes because of a decision you made? I don’t think there is anyone who understands these things.

Why some people choose to go down the path they choose is not for us to understand. And when you say to them “Why did you do that?” They have no answer. They’ve chosen sin over God and evil over right. But, in doing so, they often seal their own fate. By the way, history tells us that Herod also murdered three of his sons along with his mother-in-law [Josephus, Jewish historian of the first century A.D.].

No, we can’t understand why God allows some of the things He does. But, that’s for Him to be concerned with. Our place as Believers in Him is to know this. Pastor Charles Spurgeon once said it like this. *“God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart.”*

Spurgeon got this quote from the 18th century English Pastor and poet named Samuel Medley (1738-1799). It’s from his poem “The Wisdom and Goodness of God.” It might be the greatest poem ever written. It goes like this.

*1 God shall alone the refuge be,
  And comfort of my mind;
  Too wise to be mistaken, He,
  Too good to be unkind.

2 In all his holy, sovereign will,
  He is, I daily find,
  Too wise to be mistaken, still
  Too good to be unkind.

3 When I the tempter’s rage endure,
  Tis God supports my mind;
  Too wise to be mistaken, sure,
  Too good to be unkind.

4 When sore afflictions on me lie,
  He is (though I am blind)
  Too wise to be mistaken, yea,
  Too good to be unkind.

5 What though I can’t His goings see,
  Nor all his footsteps find?
  Too wise to be mistaken, He,
  Too good to be unkind.

6 Hereafter he will make me know,
  And I shall surely find,
  He was too wise to err, and O,
  Too good to be unkind.*

I think this side of Heaven there will always be things that baffle us, especially things a large and devastation as the slaughter of the innocents. But, God is God and man is man. He’s too wise to be mistaken and O, too good to be unkind.

The things God sometimes allows we simply cannot comprehend.

First, God often allows significant twists and turns in

your life for His larger purpose.

Second, everything God does in your life is rooted in His love.

And third, what God allows sometimes can’t be comprehended.

So, each one of us needs this post-Christmas sermon. There are, I’m sure things in your life that this passage has shed its light on. Now, what will you do with God’s word? Will you let it fall on deaf ears that are dull of hearing? Or, will you let God be God.

Today is your day to surrender. Today, you need to walk in light of His Word and to trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Here’s the Prayer of Surrender. You can make it yours today.

*“LORD, I am Your servant. I surrender all that I have and all that I am to You. Take my life and everything in it because it’s all Yours. Bless and use each one as You please. I am Your servant from this day forward. In Jesus’ Name, amen.”*

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 344 “Grace Greater Than Our Sin”