

# Sermon Study Guide



## #4: Writing Straight with Crooked Lines

A Covid Christmas: Discovering Joy & Peace in Troubled Times

December 20, 2020 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

*The hardships caused by COVID-19 have made it difficult to see how disruptions and upheavals fit into God's plan for us. In this mini-series, we look to God's Word to help us discover that even in troubled times and amidst life's biggest upheavals, joy and peace can be found in Christ.*

### Reflect

From the many times you've heard the Christmas story, which part of it did you assume was true but later on found out wasn't really based on the Bible or was just a myth?

### Read and Discuss

#### Scripture

Matthew 2:12-23

#### Discussion Questions

The Christmas story, wonderful as it is, is set in the background of a very tumultuous time for everyone involved. However, God's handprints are clearly seen, revealed through Jesus Christ. These three revelations of who God is and how He operates gives us joy and peace through troubled times.

1. ***God's protection and provisions often come in unexpected and unconventional ways to reveal His deep love and care for us (v. 12-15).*** Instead of reporting back to the evil King Herod, what happened after the wisemen left the home of Mary, Joseph and Jesus? What instruction did God give to Joseph and why? Would it be easy to live in a foreign land unprepared? How did the sovereign God provide for the family's needs unexpectedly? In your case, how has God been providing for your needs during this pandemic?
2. ***God came in the person of Jesus to save a fallen world where people are sinners and life is unfair (v. 16-18).*** How did Herod respond when he realized that the wisemen deceived him? Why does his response depict a picture of the world that Jesus was to save? How would you describe the world right now in that it is indeed a fallen and sinful place? What

does it show you that everyone indeed needs Jesus, the Savior, in his or her life? Aside from the fact that Jesus Christ can save you from your sin and give you eternal life, what else is in your life right now that needs saving by Jesus? Is it a restoration of your marriage, mending your broken family, or to show you His grace so that you can accept an injustice done to you? Discuss.

3. ***God's leading may not make sense, but it is part of His perfect plan to teach us to trust Him (v. 19-23).*** What happened after Herod died? Why was it significant that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus settle in Nazareth? How did the winding path of moving from Nazareth to Bethlehem to Egypt then back to Nazareth serve a great purpose of protecting Jesus and His family? Read Proverbs 3:5-6. What do these verses tell you to do when you walk with God? What life experience, especially in winding paths, did God use to make you fully trust Him in your life?

### Respond

**In Walk:** The coming of Jesus Christ, God Himself, in human form was to reveal who God is, that His protection and provisions often come in unexpected and unconventional ways to reveal His deep love and care for us. He came in the person of Jesus to save a fallen world where people are sinners and life is unfair. It is part of His perfect plan to teach us to trust Him. How would these truths bring joy and peace in any circumstance you are in, even during troubled times? As you look back over your life in 2020, how do you see God guiding you? How would you thank God and praise Him for who He is and what He does through the Christmas story?

**In Prayer:** Heavenly Father, You loved me so much that I can observe and celebrate Christmas because of Your desire to save me from my sin through Jesus Christ. And thank You for Your continued love for me—for guiding me, protecting me, wanting me to learn even when things don't go the way I want it to be. Help me to always seek Your will and follow Your lead. There is really nothing better than to be in the center of Your will, guided and loved by You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.