

Christmas Refugees

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 December 2025

Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0 : 0 0] Starting at verse 13 of Matthew 2. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, *! Rise, take up the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you.*

For Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him. And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.

This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Out of Egypt I have called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious.

And he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem in all that region who were two years old and under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping in loud lamentation. Rachel weeping for her children.

[1 : 1 0] She refused to be comforted because they are no more. But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt saying, *Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel.*

For those who sought the child's life are dead. And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Achilles was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.

And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee. He went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

That is the word of the Lord. Amen. Please be seated. As you all know, America has long been a nation for immigrants and refugees.

The U.S. was founded by immigrants and refugees. Now, refugees are not the same as immigrants, though similar. Both come from a foreign country, but immigrants come by their own choice.

[2 : 4 0] Refugees are people forced to flee their country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their country because of feared persecution or armed conflict, violence, or serious public disorder.

Refugees are different. We have some famous refugees in American history. Albert Einstein, who as a Jew, fled Nazi persecution in Germany.

Madeleine Albright, first female Secretary of State in 1997 to 2001, was a refugee from Czechoslovakia, where her father, who was a diplomat, opposed communism.

Christian pastor, a refugee from the DRC, Democrat Republic of Congo, who came to our country in 2016 as a widower with three children.

He was named 2019 Refugee of the Year by Exodus Refuge Immigration for his service to other refugees. Now, let's go on. Many refugees around the world have made positive contributions to the nations to which they fled.

- [3 : 55] But the most famous refugees of all time are none other than the Lord Jesus and his family. You see, Christmas is also a refugee story so that exiles might be brought home. Now, remember where we are. Because of a dream warning them, the Magi have given Herod the slip. Right?
- Maybe it was another angelic intervention. We don't know. It could have been just God giving them a sense of an uneasiness about the intentions of Herod.
- We don't know for sure. All we know is that the Magi put great stock in dreams. That was part of their culture. So they went home a different route rather than report back to Herod about where they found, right, the king of the Jews, the Messiah.
- Herod met with them in secret. And so they left him in secret. Shame on you, Herod. First thing I want you to notice about this passage is that Christmas refugees need God's protection.
- [5 : 10] Verses 12 through 15. The father protects his son and guides his steps here. God sends warning to the Magi by another dream. And here's the thing that we've got to keep in mind here.
- Have you noticed how many dreams are in this passage? From chapter 1 to chapter 2, there are a lot of dreams going on. Now, let's talk about that just for a second.
- These are significant moments in redemptive history, in the history of God bringing his people to himself. So listen, we should not trust in our dreams necessarily as though they too are always God's way of guiding us.
- This was a special moment in redemptive history. There's chapters 1 and 2. All because you had a dream, don't act like it's always a word from the Lord.
- Be very careful. This happens all the time with Christians and we put too much stock sometimes in something that's purely subjective. objective and not enough emphasis upon the objective witness of God's word.
- [6 : 25] We need to read God's word, study God's word, asking God for wisdom to apply his word and the gospel. Don't go asking God for dreams. If he wants to give you one, he'll give you one and he'll make it clear somehow.
- But listen, dreams are not the normal way that God guides his people. The word is. Now listen, it can be a great sign of spiritual immaturity and laziness to rely on dreams, feelings, and omens.
- Situation, you know, something happening. I saw a red moon. A bird landed on my head. A sign from God. Omens.
- That's really pagan religion. Hebrews 1, 1 and 2 says this. Long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.
- Now watch that. But now. But in these days. See, he's putting an end to the old. And he says, but in these days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
- [7 : 37] God says, listen to Jesus. And those whom he sent, his apostles, listen to Jesus and his word. So imagine I warned in a dream and then God sends another dream to Joseph.
- I feel bad for Joseph. He didn't get a lot of sleep. God keeps waking the man up. He's told to flee to Egypt for refuge. And thus, they began their lives as refugees.
- Let's notice some things here about this. Egypt. Egypt. First of all, Egypt was a place of slavery and temptation. The people of Israel were enslaved in that land for hundreds of years before God delivered them under Moses.

Remember? It was also a place of temptation. Because even during the Exodus, they kept thinking about going back to Egypt. And even throughout the monarchy, when God gave kings to Israel, they kept saying, let's go get help from Egypt.

There was always a temptation to rely on Egypt and not on God. So it's a place of temptation and slavery. Second thing I want you to notice here is that Joseph once again shows himself to be a faithful disciple.

[8 : 52] He doesn't question God's word. He just goes. God said it and that was good enough for him. God said it. I'm gone. Let's go. He doesn't even ask where in Egypt, how long in Egypt, and how are we going to survive in Egypt.

God said go. Now we've had people even move to our city and to our church from other places throughout this country without even having firm jobs.

Because they knew God was calling them. They believe God wanted them here. Listen, when God speaks to you in his word, it is not time to call for a committee.

If the word says it, then your attitude should be to how do I apply this, Lord? We often, we want a second opinion.

We're like somebody told you you had cancer and you were talking to your doctor. Doc, I hear you, but I need a second opinion. And then sometimes a third opinion because you want to get what you want to hear.

[10 : 05] And they keep asking for opinions. Listen, when God is speaking, we don't need nobody else's opinion. Now you might want to ask, do I understand the passage correctly? That's wise.

But other than that, when the Lord speaks, it's not time for suggestions from other people. It's time to listen to what he says.

And here's the thing about this. When he tells them to go to Egypt, he had already provided for them. What do you think they did with all the gifts the Magi brought them? Gold, frankincense, myrrh.

I told you those were expensive gifts. What do you think they did with them? Did they leave them in Bethlehem? No. They took all that loot and went to Egypt. And that's how they financed, how God financed their stay there.

He was leading them. Listen, third thing I want you to notice here. It's a universal truth. Okay? This is, there is no change in what I'm about to say.

[11 : 07] A universal truth. God's enemies always die. Amen. Herod dies while they're living as refugees in Egypt.

Because God always outlasts his enemies. And sometimes he'll do that for us too. When you wait on the Lord rather than do things your way, when he finally opens the door, you'll be able to walk through it.

Trust in the Lord. Now, refugees here, keep in mind, refugees don't plan to be refugees.

They don't want to leave their country. They love their country. Joseph and Mary were never planning to leave Judea. But once again, God had a plan. Listen, God's plan may require you to leave what is comfortable to achieve his glory.

Jesus needed to go to Egypt. Now, hold on. Think about this for a minute. I can imagine they were a little discouraged about leaving Israel. Isn't our son going to be the Messiah?

[12 : 19] How is he going to be the Messiah if he's not in Israel? I think that's a reasonable question. They must have been like, is this the right? Did I hear God right? Here's the thing.

What looks like a detour to you is God's straight path. God only has plan A for your life. There is no plan B for your life.

God has plan A for you. Jesus is the true Israel. He has to go to Egypt to fulfill the word of the Lord. It looked like he was running away from his destiny.

But in God's sovereign plan, he was running towards it. God may cause you to make some detours. You had a plan.

But somehow God says, I want you to go this way instead. Don't argue with him. You may feel like, oh, my life is over. This thing has happened.

[13 : 21] It may be a bad thing. Running for your life is a bad thing, by the way. It may be a bad thing that's happened. And I'm going over here. But I thought we were going there. Listen, God, if you are a child of God, he's at work in the detour.

And if you trust him, you are still running towards the destiny he has worked out for you. Don't fear.

Follow. Just like ancient Egypt, Jesus is called out of Egypt to serve the Lord. God's, see, Jesus is God's true son.

Jesus is the true Israel. He triumphs where the nation of Israel fails. Jesus is the new Exodus who comes out of Egypt. He's the new Moses who delivers his people truly from all that oppresses them.

To know him and to follow Jesus is to enter the eternal promised land, the kingdom of God in the new heavens and the new earth.

[14 : 30] Jesus saves his people from the slavery of their sins and the fear of death. Are you living in the awareness of the Lord's protection for you and the Lord's guidance for you?

Second thing I want you to notice here is that Christmas refugees are also hated by the world. So he sends a word.

This is what spiritual warfare looks like here in this passage. The unseen forces of darkness are brutal and efficient. Herod didn't hear back from the Magi, so he rightly figured they had tricked them.

Yep, yep. Herod got played, y'all. But you don't play a guy like Herod. In other words, you don't steal John Wick's car. If you don't know what I'm talking about, don't worry about it.

Bethlehem was a very small town. Matthew then records that the father was not being paranoid about Herod's intention to kill Jesus.

[15 : 44] Here, here's where we see the great dragon, Satan, seeking to devour the son even as a child. You want to look, we'll check it. I don't have time to go here, but Revelation chapter 12.

Go check that out. Verses 4 and 5. You'll see the picture of this where the great dragon is seeking to destroy the Lord Jesus. Herod commits one of the great atrocities recorded in Scripture.

Just like Pharaoh sought to kill Moses, the old covenant deliverer, at his birth. Remember? Herod commanded the drowning of all male children born to the Jewish people.

Even now, at the birth of the Son of God, another evil king seeks the death of God's Son and decides to destroy little boys.

Two years of age and below. I can't even imagine that. Now, keep in mind, the text says it was Bethlehem and the surrounding region.

[16 : 56] We have no idea how many children perished. We don't know. Bethlehem was very small, the surrounding regions. This was not a big area. Bethlehem was five miles from Jerusalem.

We don't know how big an area the soldiers went. Some scholars feel that it was, I'm going to say, only 200 children. Only. If it was just one, that was too many.

To be put to death before they had begun to even live. He chose that age because the Magi had given him a similar timetable.

I can't imagine what those mothers and fathers felt like as their sons were snatched from their arms. Herod would do anything to protect his throne.

Yet even this horror, believe it or not, even this horror was in the plan of God. Listen, if it was not in the plan of God, that means the devil is running amok.

[18 : 05] If God is not sovereign, who is? If he's not sovereign, you have no hope. Because your life can be destroyed and you're wiped out and you'll never see glory.

God is in control of his historical events. He didn't put this evil in Herod's heart. But he did use it for his own glory and the good of his people.

This horror fulfilled a prophecy Matthew records from Jeremiah 31 15. That's the text he's quoting from here.

In that prophecy, Rachel stands for Israel. Ramah. What is Ramah? Ramah was a place. When the Babylonians came into Israel and destroyed that city, they took captives and they marched the captives back to Babylon.

Ramah was the staging area. They would grab people, take them to Ramah, gather them all together, and then march them from that place all the way to Babylon.

[19 : 15] Ramah. That's what he's talking about. A historical event that took place. And Rachel being a symbol of Israel, because she was one of the mothers of two tribes of Israel.

She is seen weeping, as it were. Matter of fact, she died in childbirth, by the way. She died in sorrow. As Benone, or Benjamin, was born.

She died in grief. And here's a picture of Rachel now. Weeping. Because her children are being, the children of their country are being carried off, never to be seen again.

This is the weeping that he describes here. But see, you've got to go to Jeremiah, you've got to read Jeremiah 31 for yourself sometimes. Because in Jeremiah 31, God also says some things there that are very important.

Verse 16 and 17, he says this. Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears. For there's a reward for your work, declares the Lord. And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.

[20 : 23] There is hope for your future, declares the Lord. And your children shall come back to their own country. See, God, see, in that same place where God is telling the people of Israel, though you, because of your sins, you are being led away.

But listen, I've got a future for you. I've got a plan. Dry your eyes. I'm going to do a work. Even later in that chapter, same chapter, he promises a new covenant.

He promises that a people who have rebelled against him, who have turned their back against him, that he's going to save them yet. He's going to create a new covenant. Chapter 31, verse 31.

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord. When I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

My covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord.

[21 : 26] I will put my law within them. I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God. And they shall be my people. No longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, know the Lord.

For they shall all know me. From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity. And I will remember their sins no more.

That's the new covenant. See, that's the new covenant in Jesus. He's promising them. He's promising the people that though your lives look out of control. Though there's great grief and sorrow attacking you and coming against you.

Though there's even great danger. Don't worry. I got you. I'm doing something that cannot be stopped. Your blessing is coming.

And that blessing is right here in our passage. The birth of the Messiah. The Savior. Not just of the Jews, but the Savior of the world.

[22 : 32] All who put their trust in the Lord Jesus. Though as Phil Riken says, this was the dark side of Christmas. Yet, at the dark side of Christmas, there is light shining.

There's light shining. Yes, and there will be dark sides in your life too. Listen, Joseph and Mary and Jesus were not just refugees in Egypt. They were political refugees.

Herod saw Jesus as a rival king. A threat to his rule. Of course, Jesus didn't come to sit on some earthly throne.

He don't care about sitting on some throne in Israel. Or sitting on some throne in the White House. Or sitting on some earthly. He doesn't have just an earthly made throne. That's not why. He will later say as he grows up, my kingdom is not of this world.

But my kingdom has real world applications. Real world influence. And real world power. But it's not of this world. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, will come in its fullness when the king comes again.

[23 : 44] But even now, that kingdom is influencing. And Herod, Herod was right. Jesus was a threat. He was right about that. No doubt.

He's right about that. Jesus is always a threat to rulers and authorities who are wicked and evil, who oppress their people. He's always a threat to them. That's why.

Why do you think in various countries around the world where Christianity is forbidden? Why is it forbidden? Jesus is a threat. Because you say, listen, this is what you're saying.

When you trust Jesus as your Savior, here's what you're saying. My allegiance belongs to Christ and his kingdom above everything else.

That's what you're saying. That means your country does not have your first allegiance. That means your family does not have your first allegiance.

[24 : 43] You have a new kingdom that has your first allegiance. And when you say that to totalitarian regimes, they can't take it.

Because the state must own you. The party must own your mind and your heart. Whatever party it is, Communist Party, Republican Party, or Democratic Party, must own your allegiance.

And Jesus says, no. He is our only wise, to use Paul's word, only wise potentate. He is king of kings.

Lord of lords. Premier of premiers. Presidents of presidents. He is the only one. And Herod was right. He was a threat.

He was a threat. And so, he comes after Jesus with everything he can. Listen, I don't know when Joseph and Mary heard about the massacre.

[25 : 53] Remember, they slept out by night. Doesn't mean that Herod's army came that same night. Don't go there. That probably isn't true. He did come. They did come, though. And when the, I can only imagine when this family heard what Herod had done to those children, it was bittersweet.

Wouldn't it be bittersweet? They were thrilled. They were happy that they escaped, that their child was alive. But then they had to weep when they realized those children that were left have been put to death.

Christmas reminds us, saints, that in life there will be great sorrow, great pain, and even great danger in our lives.

But God has sent us comfort and joy in his son. He is the comfort for the nations. He's the comfort you need right now.

Even at this time of year, he is the comfort. He's what 2 Corinthians says, and blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the same comfort which we ourselves are comforted by God.

[27 : 18] For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. Sorrows and pains.

Some sorrows and some pain you will take to the grave. You need to understand that. We are not delivered from sorrow and pain in this life, but we have comfort.

There is comfort for you in Jesus. God the Father has promised to comfort you in the midst of your sorrow and grief and pain and suffering.

The question is, where are you going for comfort? Where are you going for comfort? It's so easy to turn to eggnog. If you know what I mean.

The kind of eggnog my dad used to keep in the back of the refrigerator. You see, up front in Christmastime, up front there was drinks, right, and all kinds of nice stuff.

[28 : 26] But in the back of the fridge, at the very top, in the way in the back, there was this bottle with eggnog in it. And a little something-something. Make your hair fall out.

It's easy to spike the eggnog and guzzle it down to find comfort. Let's be honest, come on. Why do you think so many Christmas parties, folk getting drunk?

They come, it's Christmas. For some people, Christmas means it's time to get drunk. It's time to party. It's time to drown my sorrows.

It's time to find a little bit of happiness. And Jesus says, no, you don't need that. I'm your comfort and joy.

He's our comfort and joy. And he's our guide to guide us away from the enemy's tricks and traps if we listen to him.

[29 : 33] We can pray Matthew 6, 13, can't we? Leave us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

We can pray that prayer. In times of need, Lord, I'm being... Don't you understand? That's when you're most susceptible to falling for the devil's lies is when you're hurting.

When you're looking for comfort and joy, when you're looking for help, you can always find it somewhere else other than Jesus.

But it won't last. And some of it will downright hurt you. And here, I'm so happy to say that Jesus in the gospel has won for us God's protection from the evil one.

God's protection is won for us through this baby being born on that day. And that baby will grow up. Christmas refugees, right here, in the Christmas refugees we see in this passage, we see the beginning of Satan's defeat in our security.

[30 : 45] While asking, Christmas refugees are given a home. That's what a refugee wants. That was the whole point of being a refugee, period. Refugees are looking for a home.

Looking for a place that can be secure and lay down roots and prosper and grow. That's what they're looking for. So God sends another dream.

Joseph is in Egypt. God sends another dream to him. And he says to return to Israel. So Joseph begins to head back into the land of Israel.

He's heading for Judea. I think he's heading back to Bethlehem. That's where they came from. Remember, they didn't go home. They stayed in Bethlehem.

He's heading back there again. But then he realizes that Herod's son, who's just as messed up as Herod almost. The Romans deposed him later because he was incompetent and brutal.

[31 : 44] Arcalius. He was a mess. When Joseph said, Arcalius is running this thing? Oh no. We can't go there. So where should we go? And God once again leads him.

Leads him to Nazareth? I mean, really? Back to the place where they were thought to be an immoral couple?

Well, at least Mary was thought to be an adulteress. God provided a home for them, even among those who didn't like him. You gotta do that for you.

Sometimes God's, listen y'all, sometimes God's plan will bring you back to where you started. Listen, but you're not the same.

You're not the same. Listen, when Joseph and Mary, when they entered Nazareth, they were not the same couple. They had seen God's deliverance.

[32 : 50] They had been chased. They had been hunted. They had seen God deliver. They had seen God provide. They had seen God be with them. And now when they returned to Nazareth, they're not walking in as people who are just defeated.

No, they're walking in with faith. Some of you know the Lord of the Rings. I know. I'm out there on a limb again. Lord of the Rings. Remember the first book, The Fellowship of the Ring.

When the hobbits leave the shower. They're the little people. The hobbits. Little people. They were a mess. They were a bunch of weaklings. They couldn't fight. They didn't know anything. They were just like children.

They were kids. Go to the end of the story. Return of the King. Come on. You know what I'm talking about, Lenard. When they go back to the shower. When they go back home, they're not the same folk.

They go back as warriors. And they handle their business when they get back there too, by the way. The movie didn't show you that, but the book does. Listen, when Joseph and Mary show up again, they show up as people who have been through the fire.

[33 : 53] And though they're going back to a place they didn't want to go, they're going back fortified. They're going back strengthened. God may bring you back to where you started, but if you followed them and trusted him, you're coming back to that place, you're not the same.

You're coming back with strength in Jesus. Oh yeah, you're still a weakling, but in Jesus you're strong. Am I talking to my...

Anybody? Amen walls. That part got me good, y'all. I'm sorry. That encouraged me. It really did.

They can take the stairs now and the whispers in Nazareth. They're ready to raise God's son. They're ready to raise him in the midst of people who are gossiping about them.

They're ready to raise him so that he would be called the Nazarene. Now, here's the thing. We can't find a specific prophecy in the Old Testament that says he would be a Nazarene.

[35 : 02] There are two ways of thinking about that. One, it was an oral tradition. It was not written down, but it was a tradition that was being passed down because they heard through a prophet somewhere that this would be true.

That's possible, but I lean toward the other side. Here's the other side. Nazareth was not a place of respect. Nazareth was a place where one of the disciples said this, Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

When he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was this great rabbi, this great preacher, he was like, really? He's the Messiah? You think so? Can anything good come from there?

It was like being from the hood, wherever your hood is. But being from, and can anything good come out of West Philly? Can anything good come out of 55th and Gerard Avenue, where I grew up?

And the answer is, with God, all things are possible. He's a Nazarene. And that fits, though, doesn't it? That fits with what the Bible says of him in Isaiah 53.

[36 : 17] That he would be despised and rejected. A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. That fits the idea that Jesus comes from a place where people are despised. And so he comes as a Nazarene, a despised one.

See, he's a Nazarene for us. So that we would never be rejected by God. But instead, welcome into his glory. Jesus is our home. Jesus is your home.

Wherever you are, even if you're in prison, if you are in Christ, Jesus is your home. He's your security.

He's your comfort. He's your joy. He's that place of warmth. That place that you can go to and say, Lord, I need you. He's that blanket around you.

He's that fireplace that keeps you warm. He's that place where you hang your lights. And you go, wow, Christmas. Wherever Jesus is, you're safe.

[37 : 24] Wherever he is, you're safe. And if you're with him, you're safe. Well, that's it. That's all I wanted to say. Let me wrap this up. Let me get myself into trouble now.

Get the car ready, Sandy. Hold the door, Carl. As Christmas, we should be the most welcoming to refugees and immigrants.

Working to serve and settle them in Jesus' name. Yes, we should be. Many legal immigrants and refugees in our country are living in fear of deportation.

Should we be quiet about that? I said legal. We let them in. We said you can be here. And yet so many of them right now are living in fear of deportation.

Is that right? Even illegal immigrants should be treated with respect as human beings, with families.

[38 : 35] I'm not saying we should open the door to illegal immigrants. I'm saying if they're here, let's treat them like human beings. We may have to deport them. Okay, amen. But treat them like human beings.

I keep hearing stories. You've been hearing them too. Are they true? Of people being ghosted off the streets by ICE and their families have no idea where they are. I keep hearing stories like that.

Are they true? You tell me. You let me know. If they are true. Should we say, is that right? That you snap someone off the street and no one in their family knows where they are.

Is that right? Are we acting like the FSB, the Federal Security Bureau of Russia? Or the MPS, the Ministry of Public Safety of China?

They ghost people. Is that what we want to be as a country? Let me give you the word of the Lord, just in case you think I'm crazy.

[39 : 41] Leviticus 19:34. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you. You shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

I am the Lord your God. Listen, saints, that's for us. That's the word of the Lord to us today. Don't go old covenant.

That statement has not been repealed in scripture. He's speaking to his people. We are his people. Should we care? Keep in mind, on one sense, all of humanity are refugees from the Garden of Eden.

We're all refugees. We were justly forced out of the Garden because we rebelled against the holy divine government. Adam and Eve were political refugees.

They rebelled against God and his good government. But in Christ, we are brought back into God's kingdom. The new covenant doesn't refer to us refugees, though it could.

[40 : 47] It refers to us as strangers and aliens. The people of God are strangers and aliens. What does that mean? We're living productive lives in cities and countries that are not our final home.

They're home, but not our final home. We live according to the ways and customs of our king, not our culture. We evaluate all of life through our allegiance to Christ, his kingdom, and his word.

Because our citizenship is in heaven. Are you looking at everything, including immigration and family and work?

Are you looking at everything through the lens of Christ, his kingdom, and his word? Or are you looking at everything through a political party's perspective?

Or a sociological perspective? Or a psychological perspective? Are you looking at life through the lens of Christ, his kingdom, and his word?

[41 : 55] That's how you evaluate everything. And too many Christians, I suggest to you, too many times we're falling, we're not looking at things through the lens of that.

But it's through other perspectives. And when we do that, we do harm. To people and to the glory of Christ. I know I get in trouble.

But that's okay. You show me from the word that I'm wrong, and I will repent. But if you can't, ask yourself the question. Whose kingdom are you fighting for? Whose kingdom?

Whose kingdom? Whose kingdom controls you and your thinking and your way of looking at life? It's going to be one or the other. Whose kingdom?

Listen, we are all self-sovereigns, seeking to protect and promote our own puny kingdoms. And when that kingdom is threatened, we fight. We dig in. When someone threatens Derek's puny kingdom, he's going to come out swinging.

[43 : 02] He's a self-sovereign. Bill's a self-sovereign. Well, maybe not you. Sister Warren's a self-sovereign.

We all want to be in control. We are the Herod. In our sin, we are the Herod. And if you threaten my kingdom, I'm coming for you.

If you threaten my plan for my life, I'm coming for you. But I'm so glad Jesus died for people like Herod. Maybe not Him particularly, but people like Him. People who are willing to say, Lord, forgive me.

You are the only sovereign that I will follow from now on. Your love has swept me off my feet. You are patiently working with me in your gospel so that I stop being a self-sovereign.

Because I'm bound before you, the living God. Bow to His rule daily, saints. Jesus became a Christmas refugee so that you could become citizens of the kingdom of heaven forever.

[44 : 18] Father, bless your name. Help us, Lord, to really understand Christmas. And help us to live out of that perspective that Jesus is our king.

His kingdom is real. And help us to evaluate everything through that lens. Forgive us, Lord, for using other lenses that don't show us the reality as we need to see it.

Open our eyes through your word and spirit. And help us to follow King Jesus wherever He leads us. Knowing that we are safe because He is our home.

In His name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.