



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: Advent: The Light that Overcomes Our Inner Herod**

**Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor**

**Scripture: Matthew 2:1:3**

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi<sup>[a]</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

<sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

(NIV)

### **Sermon Outline:**

In today's scripture, we see King Herod's response to hearing the news of the birth of Jesus. King Herod becomes paranoid, anxious, and insecure and because of this, decides to create a plan to find Jesus.

The spirit of King Herod shows up in our world and in our lives every day.

The question for us is will we choose the way of Herod, or we will choose the way of Jesus?

One of the constant themes we see the in Advent and Christmas stories is that God has way of interrupting every character in these stories and reminding them they are not in control. We are reminded of this also, as God interrupts our lives reminding us that we are not in control.

**We do not lose control of our lives. What we lose is the illusion that we were ever in control in the first place.**  
**-Barbara Brown Taylor**

We all like to be in control to one degree or another. Inevitably we will come against forces and situations that remind us that we are not in control. When you do not feel in control do you go live the way of King Herod, or do you live the way of Jesus?

In today's scripture, Herod realizes that his time in being absolute control might be coming to an end, so he devises a dangerous plan to try and find Jesus. Herod is threatened by difference and wants to control anything that threatens his peace. His personality was such that he only surrounded himself with people who agreed with him and did what he asked them to do, demanding total control.

Letting go of control can be extremely difficult for us, as we don't have the emotional capacity to be with others who do not have the same views that we do. While there are a time and place in our lives where we need to practice healthy control, there are other times when we practice unhealthy control which does damage to our lives and those around us.

Two types of existence that Herod lives:

- **Defensiveness:** Seeing everyone as a threat, where walls are erected as a means of protection.
- **Scarcity Existence:** Lives according to zero-sum game existence: in order for me to succeed you need to fail.

### **Poverty of Spirit:**

Nothing to protect, nothing to possess, and nothing to prove.

Jesus invites us to live a life marked by Poverty of Spirit, where we are not overtaken by the criticism of others or from the praise of others.

Four declarations we need to hold onto to help us as we continue to live in a world that is increasingly unpredictable:

- I don't know.
- I need help.
- I am loved.
- Christ is enough.

In this season of Advent may be all be reminded that must trust in God and know that Christ is enough.

**Sermon Summary:**

This Sunday, Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor, concludes our Advent Series: The Light that Overcomes. Pastor Rich explores The Light that Overcomes Our Inner Herod, and how Herod's reaction to the birth of Jesus is an important lens through which to see our own fears and impulse to control.

**Sermon Questions:**

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, were you raised by people who exerted total control over you, or did you other have family members who lived their lives this way? Did your experience cause you to feel the need to be the one who was always in control and, as a result, demand this from others? Journal about your responses to these questions, offering them up to God and asking for healing where you may need to heal.
3. Which of the two ways of existence listed above - defensiveness or scarcity existence – do you most relate to? Do you feel as those around you are a threat and end up putting up walls to protect yourself from these people? Or do you live a scarcity existence feeling as though other must fail so that you can succeed? Can you find time this week to share this with someone, either a close trusted friend or another brother or sister in Christ, asking for prayer?
4. Where are you being invited to let go of control and trust in King Jesus? Only Jesus can bear the weight of the world. Where are you trying to make things happen I your own strength? The invitation for us today is to open up our hands and live a life of love and trust in God.