

**Hope is Here Series**  
**“Move In His Direction”**  
**12/26/20**  
**Newport News**

## Opening

-Welcome to our series: Hope Is Here...tonight's message: Move In His Direction.

## Introduction

-We are going to look at three groups of people in the Christmas story: The Magi, The Shepherds, and Joseph and Mary (The Parents)...each them are a powerful prophetic picture how we can feel far from God!

- The Distant (The Magi)
- The Disenfranchised (The Shepherds)
- The Doubting (The Parents)

**-The nearness of God chases away my despair and restores my hope...move in His direction!**

-Zephaniah 3:17 (The Message)

## **The Distant - The Magi**

-Matthew 2:1-2

-There are lots of theories on the country of origin for the Magi...two prevailing ones are Persia (modern day Iran) or Sheba (modern day Yemen)...regardless, both are incredible journeys and when we look at the time line of visit of the Magi, it very **likely took them two years**. (talk about how Daniel may have played a part while in captivity).

*-Just because God is near doesn't mean my journey to Him isn't far. My journey can be far even though He is near. Why? Because "distance" is measured in emotion!*

**-People often feel far from God because they have drifted away from Him morally...when we negotiate moral boundaries, we feel emotionally distant from God.**

-(talk about Young Life illustration from youth camp)

-When you put all these people in a circle around Jesus, regardless of their sin...yes, theologically this is true, Jesus is the same distance from everyone.

*-BUT...experientially, this isn't true. Your "felt" distance matters and that "felt" distance is dictated by the severity of your sin and the longevity of your compromise!*

-Psalm 145:18...Move in His direction!!!!!!

### **The Disenfranchised - The Shepherds**

-Luke 2:8-18 (read from Bible)

-someone religious told the shepherds when they were young... "you aren't good enough..."

-Bet Sefer

- At age 6
- Memorize Genesis – Deuteronomy

-Bet Talmud

- At age 10, only those with promise...
- Memorize rest of OT...39 books...

-Bet Midrash

- Apply to be a disciple
- Abandon everything...
- "Come, follow me!"

...at every stage, if they weren't advanced, they were told to go and take up the trade of their fathers...fishermen, carpenter, or shepherds!

**-People often feel far from God because they feel disenfranchised by people who claim to represent God. When we let others determine our worth to God (instead of the promises of Scripture), we lose our sense of the nearness of God.**

-Have you ever stopped to think about where all the "pious" people were that night?

- Prayer meeting at the Synagogue?
- Group of friends discussing Scripture?
- A rabbi giving instruction to his disciples?

- Maybe in a offering being collected to feed widows and orphans?

-And who was invited to come and see Jesus...not them!!!!!!

-Matthew 23:13...Move in His direction!!!!!!

### **The Doubting - The Parents**

-Luke 1:26-38 (read from Bible)

-Has the sovereignty of God ever left you feeling like you weren't given a choice and even though you wanted to respond like Mary...you didn't?

-Romans 9:14-20

**-People often feel far from God because they don't like that God didn't give them a choice. We tend to withdraw from God emotionally when we doubt His choices for us circumstantially.**

-Some things to remember when your circumstances feel unfair...

- Generation burden...Samuel/Hannah (1 Samuel 1)
- Sovereign provision...Elisha/Widow (2 Kings 4)
- Witness to unbelievers...Nebuchadnezzar and furnace (Daniel 3)
- Demise of our enemies...Lions Den (Daniel 6)

-Psalm 39:7...Move in His direction!!!!!!

### **The Band**

**-The nearness of God chases away my despair and restores my hope...move in His direction!**

**-Zephaniah 3:17**

- What is your moral compromise? (distant)
- Whose voice is too loud in your life? (disenfranchised)
- Why do you feel your life is unfair? (doubting)

-Move in His direction!

### **Close**

-(set up for prayer)