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[0 : 00] This is reading taken from Matthew chapter 2 verses from 1, 9, 11, and 12. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Mezei from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews?

He saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all of Jerusalem with him.

When he had called together all the people's chiefs, priests, and teachers of law, he asked, Where were the Messiah was to be born? In Bethlehem in Judea, they replied, For this is what the prophet has written.

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

Then Herod called Mezei secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search carefully for the child.

[1 : 20] As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too can go and worship him. After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to the country by a different way. That's all right. Wonderful. And I want to begin by telling you a story about me and my family, but it's more to do with my parents and my grandfather.

I'm about eight years old, and for Christmas this year, my parents have saved, and they have excitedly planned a trip to Thailand.

We currently live at this time in Abu Dhabi, where my parents are missionaries with Youth for Christ. And this Christmas, we're going to pull a Christmas with the cranks, and we're going to go to Thailand. And we're going to have a lovely Christmas by the beach.

[2 : 40] There's going to be blue skies. It's going to be just the right temperature. It's going to be fantastic. And they're very excited. But just before the trip is about to happen and we're going to travel there, my mom and dad get a call from my grandpa.

Now, my grandpa prays and has been praying and has had this strong sense from the Holy Spirit, God, that we should not go on this trip.

He says, I don't know why, but God is letting me know to tell you that you should not go on this holiday.

Now, if you want to take a step back for a moment and contemplate this situation, for most of us, if a family member said, I've been praying, I don't think you should do this thing that you have been saving money and time and effort to do, because I don't know why, but God is telling me to tell you to not do this, logically, it doesn't make sense to listen.

What you would probably do is you would rationalize it and say, okay, thank you for that. We're going to go enjoy our holiday now. But they have a choice. Are they going to respond to what my grandpa has told them, or are they going to do what anyone else would probably do and go on this trip?

[3 : 56] And so I'm actually going to leave you with my grandpa on the phone here for a moment, and we're going to look through this passage together. And I want to just bring us back to where we were last week with Martin and look back at where we've been in Matthew so far and see where God is leading us through the book of Matthew.

And as we're going through Matthew and we talked about listening to the Holy Spirit, this week I want to continue that theme by exploring what it means to act in courage in response to the wisdom that we receive from the Holy Spirit.

Because knowledge is empty without courage. Knowledge is empty without courage. If you have your Bible, please turn to Matthew chapter 2, verse 1.

Now Matthew is a biographer of Jesus, and when you open up the New Testament, it's the first book there. There are four Gospels, biographies of Jesus' life, his death and resurrection.

And Matthew is one of the 12 disciples. He is Jewish, and he has a Jewish audience in mind when he is writing this biography of Jesus' life. So when you're reading the book of Matthew, you will want to pay attention to details because they're often there for the audience, and they would have these light bulb moments where they go, Oh, so this is how that connects to our faith that we have been practicing for 2,000 years so far.

[5 : 21] And in chapter 1, we begin with this genealogy, which shows us how Jesus is descended from Abraham, is descended from David, from who a future king is going to come.

He's descended from Jeconiah, the king who went into exile with his people. And you see the whole story of Israel's history in this genealogy, and it results in Jesus being adopted by a man called Joseph, whose wife Mary gave birth to Jesus, a virgin through the Holy Spirit.

And we see how Joseph faithfully responds to what the Holy Spirit tells him, and what an angel tells him in a dream. And up until now, no one in the biography of Matthew, other than Joseph and Mary and God, has talked about Jesus and who this baby is.

But that's about to change. We get so used to this story during the Christmas season that we often don't take time to think about it throughout the rest of the year. So I'm actually really excited that we get to talk about this story now, as opposed to just at Christmas, because we're going to focus on some details.

We often might miss when we're reading the story. So Matthew 2, 1, it says, After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem.

[6 : 41] So there's three things I want to focus on here. During the time of King Herod, Magi from the east. If you're a Jewish first century reader, these are going to open up different avenues of thought that are going to make you think, oh, okay, so that's contextually relevant.

And this matters to me in these ways. So in the time of King Herod, that's King Herod the Great.

There's a few Herods when you read the New Testament. King Herod the Great is the first big one.

Now, we'll get to him in a moment, but the only thing I want you to know about Herod right now is that he's not from Israel. He is originally an Idumean, which is the area just underneath Israel.

And they are descended from what used to be a country called Edom, which is originally descended from a man called Esau. If you're reading your Old Testament, you will go, oh, okay, so Herod, Esau, the brother of Jacob.

Not from the line of Jacob, from the line of Esau. Magi. Magi are a group of intellectual elite from the region of ancient Near East.

[7 : 49] So we're looking at Babylon, we're looking at Persia. And these Magi are usually astrologers. They're the kinds of people that will spend time looking at the sky, trying to understand what the gods are telling you.

And then they will go ahead and tell other people what the gods have been saying through the stars. And if you're a Jewish First Testament Jew in the first 30 or so years of AD, you are going to be thinking that Magi are not good people.

In fact, throughout the whole Old Testament, astrologers are banned. If you are a follower of Yahweh, the God of Israel, you know that you cannot interact with Magi.

They don't call them that back then. They call them people who worship the stars, people who seek out diviners, people who try to understand what the gods are saying. Because the God of the Old Testament, unlike all the gods in the countries around Israel, this God actually tells his people what he expects of them.

The rest of them had to figure out through dreams, through cat bones, through stars in the sky.

They tried to understand what Baal, what Ra, the sun god, what all these different deities in these countries were trying to tell people to do so that they could have a good life.

[9 : 06] If I want it to rain a lot, I need to make Baal happy. So how do I know how to make Baal happy? Well, I'll see if there's a star in the sky that tells me what I need to do. And it varies from God to God as to how that will work.

And these are what astrologers do. And God says, you're to have nothing to do with them because they're going to tell you that the gods are saying something to you that I have not told you. Unlike that jealous boyfriend who doesn't tell you what he expects and that gets mad at you because you did something that they didn't communicate. Unlike being at a job where your performance is graded harshly from expectations that were never told to you, this God, the God of Israel, Yahweh, tells his people what he expects of them and what makes him happy. And so if you see Magi pop up, you realize that these are not friends of Jewish communities in the first century. These are people that are considered scammers and con artists because if you're an Israelite, you do not believe that there are any other gods other than Yahweh. And so we get to this third thing in this first verse. And don't worry, we won't spend as much time on each verse here. But from the East, if you're reading your Old Testament, and you are a Jew, you're going to see from the East a significant because when God made man and woman in Genesis, he makes them in the Garden Eden.

[10:30] They sin, they eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and they are banished from the Garden and they go East. And then ever since then, they have been slowly moving back towards the West into a place that God has prepared for them in Israel.

And so, these magi come from the East, the place where they've been progressively moving away from, and they end up in Israel.

And shockingly, these magi, these astrologers, come all this way. We don't know that there were three, by the way. We don't know that they rode on camels. That's pulling from Isaiah, that language.

And they're not kings, they're astrologers. They might work with kings, but they're more intellectual stargazers. And they come all this way, and they say, where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

Now, why do they care about the king of the Jews? It's normal for people to go and show respect to new kings and queens of the ancient Near East.

[11:34] And so, when they travel all this way, it's to pay homage to a new ruler. But even more so, it says, we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. So, in the language that an astrologer understands, God has made known to them that a Jewish king has been born.

This is significant. So, we see a star. They come to worship. They see a sign that is in their own context, and they act. They don't wait for more information, a name, a birthplace, whatever.

They go to the first place that makes sense if you're going to go and find out where the king of the Jews is born, which is Bethlehem, right? No. It's going to be Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel. And so, when they arrive, they arrive with probably a large entourage of maybe camels, horses, all sorts of people accompanying them. And they arrive in the city of Jerusalem, and they say, where is the new king of the Jews that's been born?

We saw this in the stars. So, why does that matter, the stars? Well, in the Roman world, there were occasions where supernovas and staric moments in the stars had happened, apparently, coincidentally, on days in which significant events had taken place.

[12:46] So, there's the coronation of an emperor and a supernova takes place, and so astrologers start to gain a bit more merit than they had used to have. So, if you come to Jerusalem, a city, and you say, where is the new king, this is going to ring alarm bells for the people who are already in power.

And it says in verse 3, when King Herod heard this, he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him. So, imagine you're the prime minister of London and, you know, foreign dignitaries from another country come in and they say, where is the new prime minister?

If you're the current prime minister and you've been prime minister for 40 odd years, like Herod has been, you're going to feel a bit weird. So, why is Herod disturbed? Well, Herod is an unhinged, paranoid man.

We know Herod historically. He is very, very, at best, unwell. Herod was what's called a client king, where, when Rome used to conquer areas, they would lift up someone from the region and put them in charge.

And Herod had carried favor with Julius Caesar and then Mark Antony, so famous people, and he would flock to them, gain their favor, and they made him governor of the region.

[13:58] And eventually, he married a princess, which is all fine and well, except for the fact that he was already married, so he had to banish his wife and son. Not quite unlike a king in the UK at

one point.

So, to get influence, he marries a princess, and eventually, through the approval of Rome, becomes a king, and he is allowed to be a king, as long as he pays respect to the true masters, which is the empire, which is Rome.

So, he executes his favorite wife, he executes his mother-in-law, he has three of his sons executed. There's a famous saying that it's better to be one of Herod's pigs than his sons.

This is potentially apocryphal, but it does a good job of demonstrating how unlikable this man was. But he also funded massive building projects across the country.

And so, you have these temples, these massive architectural wonders showing up all across Israel, and Herod's the one to thank for those. When you see the temple that Jesus goes to in the New Testament, that temple is primarily built and renovated by Herod, which is all well and good, except you have to be able to fund building projects.

[15:17] And you do that by taxing your people. And Herod taxed his people very heavily. So, this is going to set up the rest of the book of Matthew, because whenever you have these moments where the tax collectors are looked badly upon, it's because of people like Herod that came in and said, okay, we need to raise taxes so we can build the rest of what we want to do in this country.

Very, very unpopular by the end of his life. But one of the other things he would do, because he was paranoid, because he wanted to belong, and he was an outsider, is he called himself the King of the Jews.

He famously called himself King of the Jews. And that's not just Jews in Judea and Israel, it's all the Jews. Because at one point, when the Jews went into exile in the Old Testament, only one third of them ever came back.

So, he's saying, I'm king over all of these people. When Herod is mad, as we've seen with the executions, it's a scary thing. But it says, all of Israel is disturbed with him.

Why are they disturbed? Hopefully, if you're a good Jewish scholar, you've been reading your Old Testament, and you're expecting a coming king, a Messiah, to liberate you from the bondage of evil.

[16:30] And yet, for whatever reason, they're not that excited. May I suggest to you today, that it's because they wanted the kingdom, without the king. Something that we all can struggle with, as well today.

So, what does Herod do? He calls together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, and he asks them where the Messiah was to be born.

Now, if you are a good Jewish scholar, like Herod would have claimed to have been, you wouldn't need to pull from other religious leaders, because you read your Bible, and you know what the prophecy says.

But he doesn't, because he doesn't really follow Yahweh. He follows himself, and he follows Rome. And so, he hears about where Jesus is supposed to be born, before the Magi do, but not because he is a good, obedient, faithful person, because he had to go and get help.

So, they tell him, in Bethlehem, in Judea, which is a small village slash town, one on the outskirts of the area. For this is what the prophet Micah has written.

[17:41] This is the prophet, it's Micah. But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For you, for out of you will come a ruler, who will shepherd my people from Israel.

What do we see here? We see Herod doesn't know any more than the Magi. If he's a good Jewish believer, like he says he is, this shouldn't be news to him, but it is. He has access to all this information.

He could be reading this every day if he wanted to, but he doesn't. Herod is religious. He wants to make himself look good in the faith community by building massive temples, but he doesn't actually do any of the heart work to be the kind of person transformed by a relationship with God.

When it comes to the real moments of day-to-day faith, he doesn't act. We often pride ourselves on information we collect about Jesus without bravely acting on the things that we know to be true already.

This is why Jesus' brother later in the New Testament says, do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. So verse 7, when Herod finds this out, he calls the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.

[18 : 55] So that's how he knows how old roughly Jesus should be. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.

We already all know that that is nonsense. But the interesting thing that we sometimes gloss over is that it doesn't actually sound like he wants anybody to worship Jesus. Because as soon as they find him, before they worship him, which he knows they want to do, they've already told the whole city they're there for that.

He says, before you do that, come get me so we can do this all together. Okay, what's he going to do? Well, we know what he's going to try and do later in the chapter. But he's going to try and do it. Herod anticipates a future outcome where someone could come and form a rebellion and an insurrection, this baby, this two-year-old, and he wants to stop it before it's able to grow into something else.

He now knows what's happened. He knows that the promised one is born in Bethlehem. And if someone has been born in Bethlehem, if he's a true faithful person, he's actually going to go and worship.

But as we see what happens, he doesn't do that. After they had heard the king, it says in verse 9, they went on their way, and the star they had seen, when it rose, went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

[20 : 20] When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. Why would you be overjoyed? Before we get to the joy, which is really actually very cool, let's go back to the star for a minute because I know that for some of you, when it comes to matters of faith, we think about things like science, and we find it really hard to reconcile the two.

And I just suggest to you today that this isn't a contradiction between how things work and reality. God may be doing something here that is miraculous. So it doesn't mean that there is a supernova event that's moving across the sky.

It might have been. We know that there is a supernova event around the year 4 BC that's recorded in China, but it doesn't necessarily have to be that for this to be true.

There are lots of commentators who believe that the way the language of shining star appears in the Greek might actually indicate that this is an angel shining in the sky actually leading them, and they may not know that.

Does it matter? At the end of the day, what matters is the person who sent the star, which is God, to let these people who speak in the language of stars know that something significant is happening, and they are overjoyed.

[21 : 34] If you're an astrologer and you're a professional con artist, as I would, you know, humbly suggest that astrologers in the first century were, using stars to tell people about what reality is.

I'm not talking about current astrology. Let's not have that conversation today. I'm talking about first century people who said that the stars spoke on behalf of gods, that they were moving and living beings. If you're a professional con artist, and it turns out that for once you're actually right, this is going to be shocking news to you.

Oh my goodness, we've arrived at this house. The star is here. Something real is happening here. They have been acting in faith.

They have left their home country, traveled all this way for this event, and they get here, and they're overjoyed. And on coming to the house, it says in verse 11, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him.

Again, okay, we read this and we go, okay, great. And we look at the pictures of the stable and these three wise men or kings bowing down next to a baby, giving these gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

[22 : 43] You have to, let's take a step back for a second and see that these are probably men between the age of 30 and 50, and they encounter a baby, and they kneel down in an act of worship and bow down to this baby as the king of the Jews.

So who are they not doing this to? They're not doing this to Herod. We don't see anywhere in here that they do this with Herod. They may have bowed down to Herod, but the text tells us that they bowed down to a baby, and when you do that in that culture, that's a way of expressing that this person is socially superior to me.

We don't know that they think that Jesus is God yet. The frankincense tells us that they might be clued in on something unusual about Jesus, but we don't get affirmation that they're worshipping Jesus as God.

They're worshipping Jesus as king. They've gone to a peasant's house. We know from Luke that Mary and Joseph are not rich. They don't have a lot of money, so they're going to a poor person's house.

They go and find a baby, and they bow down in worship in a culture of honor and shame this is not just significant. This is potentially very scandalous for these prestigious men from another country to do this, and in lots of ways, the way they worship here is shown as a lot less about music and rhythms and praise, although it includes that in our lives today.

[24 : 14] It's about posture. It's about acting in faith. They worship by assembling their entourage. They worship by journeying. They worship by showing up. And they worship by gift-giving as well.

We often focus on the gifts, and the gifts are very interesting, but we often forget about the people giving these gifts. These wise men obey the calling of a foreign god to worship a foreign king. They don't fully understand, and they do it without a hint of complaint, about a hint of doubt, although they may have had that. We don't get any idea of what's going on in their heads as they're rationalizing, bowing down to a baby peasant boy of another country, in direct contradiction with what that country's law would say is what you should do, which is bow down to Herod and Rome. So their theology, however imperfect, wherever they come from, be it Babylon or Persia, their professional lives, however suspect, they show obedience and model that for us at the very beginning of Matthew.

Something very cool, which I don't want to spoil how Matthew ends. Hopefully you've all read it. But Matthew begins with this prologue, which is chapters one and two, right? And so we're getting towards the end of the prologue, and then it's going to kick off with Jesus's life and ministry, beginning with his baptism.

[25 : 33] But at the very end of the book of Matthew, we have this moment where the disciples, who are in theory the insiders, they encounter Jesus having been resurrected, and they worship him, though some are afraid.

So you see the book of Matthew begins with a moment of worship of Jesus, and it ends with a moment of worship of Jesus. And everything in the middle is trying to tell you what it is that Jesus is all about and who Jesus is.

It says, Okay, so the gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Okay, so the gold, frankincense, and myrrh really quickly. Gold, you give to a king.

Frankincense, you give to a religious kind of situation as an offering. So that's why we think maybe they're clued in on something, but we don't have enough evidence to say that they understand who Jesus is.

And myrrh, the kind of thing you give to a person about to die or who has died to help the smell of their decaying body not override this sacred moment where someone has passed away.

[26 : 39] You know, you kind of consecrate the body. And as we look at this, people typically will spend time going, Okay, so it's all parts of Jesus' ministry, right? He is king. He is priest.

He has also died for our sins and resurrected. Where the intellectual elite, though, come from, these things may mean different things, but this is a fulfillment of something that's happened in the Old Testament.

Just like Micah has now been fulfilled because Jesus has been born in Bethlehem, we see in Solomon, the first thing that the Queen of Sheba does is she comes and she brings gold. So when you're a Jewish reader, you're going to read this and you're going to go, Oh, this is significant because this is just like with Solomon.

Or, Oh, this is significant because here is a baby that's been basically anointed a king and there's already a king in charge, just like David, who was anointed as king when there's King Saul already in power.

So if you're reading this, you're going to be going, Oh, wow, okay, all these significant things about this baby. You can't make this stuff up. Why would you anoint a baby? That's offensive to a lot of people. You're supposed to earn your credibility.

[27 : 50] You're supposed to be born into a palace. They represent these magi, a system that's diametrically opposed to the self-revealing God.

Interpreting the stars, interpreting bones and dreams to try and figure out what a God wants from you, this self-revealing God, they show up to whatever he is calling them to do and they worship. We see a God who is working out his purposes to fulfill prophecies through ancient astrologers, those who had not been welcomed in Israel. They had not been part of the community and they were banned.

God has invited the outsiders to come and worship and to be included and involved in what God is doing. Where people who everywhere else in the Bible have had negative connotations, even in the New Testament.

You have moments where magi and sorcerers and astrologers show up later on in the New Testament and it's bad. But for whatever reason, this one moment they show up and despite who they are, they are welcomed and they are the people that God chooses to be the first evangelists for Jesus.

[29 : 05] Because that's what they're going to do. They're going to leave and they're going to leave Israel and they're going to go and tell people about this baby. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they return to their country by another route.

We often gloss over this passage a well and I want to be mindful of time, but this is really, really important. They are warned in a dream. They have a choice. Because what they should be doing, let's say they worship Jesus, they're supposed to go back to the king who gave them a direct order to go back and tell him where Jesus is.

They have to decide are they going to follow the way of this king of the world or this king of all eternity. And they don't even know and understand all of this yet. If Herod finds out and catches them, the outcome is not good for them.

They know who Herod is. They know what he does to people he thinks has wronged him. They could also put their families in danger. Everything, their way of life is in jeopardy if they disobey Herod.

He has a military outpost not far from Bethlehem. If he finds out soon enough, he can do bad things to them. They aren't rival kings that are owed a certain amount of respect.

[30 : 13] Herod could kill these people. Despite that risk, they act. They obey God. Knowing the right thing to do is not the same as doing the right thing. Herod knew enough to know that he should worship this king.

He lied saying he wanted to worship Jesus. And as we see how the chapter 2 ends, he's going to kill probably about 30 young babies between the ages of 0 and 2 to try and wipe out any possible opposition.

He's so wrapped up in himself that any other king is a rival needing to be disposed of. The Magi who are friends of God historically have been included and the king of Israel has not.

He has self-eliminated. These Magi, they obey God. They trust God with the outcome and respond in trust and in action. So there's two kinds of people listening to this today.

There's the person who feels like they're on the outside. Maybe you came to church today and you're like, I don't know what this is about. I don't know if I belong here. And I want to let you know that God is inviting you to be part of this grand story that he has been doing throughout history.

[31 : 23] That God, who is love, who loves you, wants to know you and to have a relationship with you. You who have felt like an outsider, belong.

And for those of you who are insiders, I want to challenge you. Maybe look back on your prayer time and Bible reading this week and as you think about how you've been talking to God and asking him for wisdom, have there been areas in which he has made you uncomfortable?

Are there things in your life he has convicted you of that you've maybe tried to rationalize, maybe tried to put away because it hurts. It hurts when God tells us to do something we don't want to do, to say sorry to that person, to act in such and such a way that's different.

How many times have we all felt the Holy Spirit nudge us to do something and then we deal with that voice inside us that says, I think I know better. I think I can rationalize this with the Bible and we know that God has been telling us to do something and we're not doing it.

Whether it's inviting someone to be a part of this community or something else. God already knows the outcome and execution of how things will work out if he calls you to do something.

[32 : 30] If he's talking to you and inviting you into a way of wisdom, what we need to ask is for the courage to act on that wisdom. What God is asking us to do doesn't have to make complete logical sense to us before we act in faith.

What didn't make sense to the Magi resulted in one of the most beautiful moments in all of history where these outsiders are invited in and they get to be a part of what God is doing.

God has grace and mercy for us in our lack of courage. He isn't thwarted by your lack of courage. He is constantly reconciling all of creation to himself.

The story of scripture is about how God reaches out in love to those who feel like they don't belong, who feel like they're on the outside. And for those who were enemies of God, they've been invited in.

The Magi, the scammers, charlatans, using the stars to interpret the wills of gods that aren't real, tell political figures what to do and how to live their lives and yet these are the people God invites in.

[33 : 31] Nothing can stop God's grand plan of grace. Not Herod, not the Magi, not the people of Israel. 1 Corinthians 1.18 says, the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved, it's the power of God.

Herod was perishing in his self-worship. The Magi show us a different way. For us, we can have confidence knowing that God who is present with us in everything, who prepared the way for his son's arrival, who set the prophecies in place, is the God that's inviting us to have fullness of life in him today.

We should ask God for wisdom. We also need to ask God for the courage so that when we ask for wisdom, we also ask for courage to act on that wisdom. For the Spirit of God, Paul says in the second letter to Timothy, the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid.

It gives us power, love, and self-discipline. Meaning courage isn't something you have to work hard to squeeze out of your own willpower. It's something that comes from the Holy Spirit. So ask God for courage who graciously gives wisdom and courage.

God gives us every good thing we have. Courage comes from him. God will equip you for every good work he has for you to do. What you need to do is to practice trusting him with the outcome.

[34 : 49] And that is hard to do. Jesus is always inviting us to the next courageous moment of faith. So let's pray that we have the courage to act on it. And I want to circle back to my parents on the phone with my grandpa.

It would look very foolish in the eyes of the rest of the world to go ahead and cancel holiday plans that had been planned and saved up for and excited.

You muster all this excitement among the whole family and then you go ahead and say I cancelled the plans because my grandpa says no. But they did. They listened. And they sensed something from the Holy Spirit when they heard what my grandpa had said to them.

So they cancelled the holiday. We did not go to Thailand that year. That was 2004. On Boxing Day that year when we were supposed to have been there the most powerful earthquake in recorded Asian history took place.

One of the worst tsunamis in recent history hit all around that area. Almost 230,000 people have been estimated to have died across 14 countries. We were supposed to be there and we weren't.

[35 : 58] because my grandpa had the courage to listen to what the Holy Spirit was telling him and to share that with my parents no matter how foolish that may have seemed because my parents had the courage to listen and to act and that's the same courage that we receive from the Holy Spirit that we're invited to live in today.

Courage that led the Magi on an international trip to ignore the desires of a mad king and to worship King Jesus. I'm going to pray now as we go about worshipping Jesus this week may we be a people that listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us and that ask God for the courage to act on what the Holy Spirit has been giving us wisdom about.

Let's pray. Father in heaven we thank you so much for the gift of love that you have given us in Jesus. We thank you for how radically you have shown us your love.

That he who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteous ones of God. That love is that before we did anything God loved us and sent his son to be an atoning sacrifice for our sin.

That you Jesus are king and lord over all. Help us to lay down our lives this week. Help us to sacrifice our way and follow you.

[37 : 21] May we be a people that listen to you. Help us to have the wisdom to do what you are telling us to do but help us also to have the courage to act on the wisdom you have already given us because we love you and we want to please you.

We thank you for loving us so well. It's in your name Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.