

Welcome to the Christmas season! This month we will be examining a number of characters from the Christmas story that either missed Christmas, or nearly missed Christmas. As we consider their stories, we will discover that we too can miss Christmas if we are not careful.

Sermon Outline:

Matt. 2:1-8 (Selfishness)

King Herod – is an illustrious example of selfishness and its destructive power. His self-centered behaviour caused him to miss (and even resist) Christ that first Christmas.

There is ugly stuff inside **every person**.

- All have sinned.
- We carry in us - a sin nature
- Christ came to free us from sin and give us a new nature.

If we are not careful ... our old nature will rise up in us and cause us to miss Christ.

1) Selfishness will keep me from receiving Christ.

I must dethrone myself and place Christ in his rightful place ... on the throne of my heart.

2) Selfishness leads me to the wrong perspective.

Just like the sun belongs at the center of our galaxy ... Christ belongs at the center of our lives.

If we place our desires, our plans, our agenda at the center of our lives ... nothing else works the way it should.

3) Selfishness will cause me to overvalue ME and undervalue YOU.

Overt selfishness is ugly. So we often hide our selfishness in small ways.

ME is just a **little bit bigger** than **YOU**

How to get self on the shelf:

- 1) Acknowledge selfishness
- 2) Place Christ at the center
- 3) Make YOU bigger than ME

Conclusion: We have been called to die to self and to live in the new nature Christ gives.

The best Christmas will be the one that is not about ME.

Suggested Discussion Questions:

- What are some of your favourite Christmas traditions?
- Why is it important to understand that we have a sin nature in our bodies? How should that reality change the way we view others and ourselves?
- **Lightning round:** Often the greatest obstacle between Christ and me is ME! True or False (go around the circle)
- Herod's selfishness drove him to actively resist the coming of the Christ. In what ways could selfishness in our lives stop the work of God?
- What is the difference between a self-centered life and a Christ-centered life? How would each of these two play out in a family, workplace, or relationships?
- Selfishness often shows up in subtle ways. For most of us it will present itself as ME being just a little bigger than YOU. In what way (specifically) do you play the ME bigger than YOU game?
- Are there any practical steps you can take this Christmas to move SELF to the shelf?
- How can your small group pray for you and support you at this time?
- Pray together.

Additional Reading / Devotions:

- The incarnate Christ (John 1:1-18)
- The sin nature (Romans 7:21-25)
- The spirit filled life (Romans 8:1-17)
- YOU bigger than ME (Philippians 2:1-11)