SMALL GROUP BIBLE DISCUSSION

FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 21, 2014

TOPIC: COME INTO THE TOWER

Sermon in a Sentence: Run into the "Jesus Tower" to find complete safety and salvation.

Key Scriptures: Micah 5:2, 4-5a; 4:1-8; 2 Samuel 22:1-3; Proverbs 18:10; Luke 2:1-20; Psalm 61:1-4

Points to Make:

- We certainly know that Bethlehem was the town in which Jesus was to be born. Micah 4:6-8 gives a clue as to exactly where His birth would take place: "And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem" (v. 8).
- The Lord, who would reign forever in Mount Zion (v.7), would come to the place described in v. 8 as the "tower of the flock", "Migdal-eder" in Hebrew.
- Throughout Kings and Chronicles, various other towers are mentioned as important components of the defense system of Israelite cities (e.g. 2 Kings 9:17; 17:9; 18:8; 1 Chronicles 27:25; 14:7; 32:5).
- King David fought many wars, endured great hardships and unfairness and finally, late in life, came to a place of peace and rest. 2 Samuel 22:1-3, one of his psalms, is good to consider in this discussion.
- David knew the importance of towers; however, his was not a tower made by man, but by Jehovah God Himself. Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV) puts it this way: "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."
- As many before them, the shepherds in Bethlehem had built a tower to protect themselves and their sheep. It was a lookout against raiders, a place of shelter, and a place for them to help ewes give birth in inclement weather. Many things could be done outdoors, but especially in winter, the tower was a wonderful asset.
- As there were living quarters in most towers, it would not have been strange for Mary and Joseph to stay at Migdal-eder when there was "no room in the inn".
- (Quite possibly, one of Joseph's relatives had arranged this accommodation for them. The scriptures give us no indication they were going door to door looking for a place for Mary to give birth to the Messiah!)
- Think of the significance of Jesus being born in that tower and laid in that manger. For centuries, young lambs had been offered up as sin sacrifices to God – losing their lives, shedding their blood, as the payment for human sin. Perfect, spotless lambs were required, the perfect lamb substituting for imperfect humans.
- It is not hard to imagine that many of the lambs born at Migdal-eder would have ended up on the altar in nearby Jerusalem, purchased as sacrifices for those who came from far away to worship at the temple.
- And so it was, that at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, John the Baptist pointed Him out to the crowd and said: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36).
- Once again, we turn our attention to the Christmas story and the events in Bethlehem, as recorded in Luke 2:1-20.
- The shepherds had been visited by angels. They were stunned! They were told they would find Christ the Lord, the Saviour of the world, lying in a manger as a tiny baby!
- They did not have to ask where to go. There was no confusion in their minds as to where this manger would be: in the tower of the flock. Migdal-eder. The place where lambs were born! The scripture says they "came in a hurry and found their way to Mary, Joseph" and, of course, "the baby … in the manger."
- Jesus was the one and only true, spotless, Lamb of God; the perfect One substituting for the imperfect many, His blood being shed to deliver humanity from the ravages of sin and death.
- King David began his working life as a shepherd and proved to be ready, willing and able to protect his sheep (1 Sam. 17:34-36a). But even he realized his strength was not enough to see him through all his situations. So he prayed in Psalm 61:1-4 (NKJV):
- Hear my cry, O God attend to my prayer From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For You have been a shelter for me, A strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah
- This prayer is not stale. It is as fresh today as when David first prayed it. It is a prayer we need to pray.
- He *has* been our refuge. He *has* been. our tower of strength. He *has* been our covering, our tent, our refuge when our hearts have been faint.
- During this Christmas season, we know where to find Jesus. He is in His tower. The name of the Lord is the strong tower. Calling on the name of Jesus brings us into the orbit of His strength and power, wisdom and love, healing, deliverance and salvation.
- The door is wide open. Come into the tower. No one can defeat those who are in this tower because Jesus is in the tower!

Reflection Tools

- From what do you need shelter right now, even perhaps (as in the case of Mary and Joseph) in the midst of something the Lord has directed you to do?
- Do you often turn to other "towers" for refuge in times of need (e.g. food, shopping, friends, drugs, etc.)?
- Do you know how to access the "strong tower"? If not, how can you learn (perhaps beginning with this lesson)?

PRAYER TIME

Lord, when my heart is overwhelmed, I put my trust only and securely in You.

Ice-breaker: what is the strangest place in which you have taken refuge – from something serious or maybe a sibling?

NOTES