

## TITLE

Scripture used: Matthew 2:11 and Isaiah 43:1

## OVERVIEW

### Big Idea:

We are gathering on this last day of 2017 and finishing the 4-week The Star series. For some the year has been good, with career and financial advancement. For others, it was a year of personal setbacks (health, relationships, career) and lives shattered or disrupted by catastrophes. We have the hope that 2018 can't be as bad as 2017. But above all, we need not be afraid as God has redeemed us and loves us as His children. God is not in the fake news business. When trouble comes in 2018, God will be there with us.

## KEY POINTS

- 1) **Point #1** Trouble will come. It's not a matter of "if", but "when". God does not shield us from risk and adversity, but helps us navigate and surmount them. Per our scripture, In every Jacob there is an Israel trying to get out.
- 2) **Point #2** Hidden within my past is an insight that can transform my future. The Wise Men went back to their country via another route. Pastor Hurmon used to play a computer-based game of chess with his daughter, and she would retroactively erase several bad moves when she had made mistakes. Yet there is no "undo" button in life. You cannot undo unfortunate choices or participation in awful experiences. But there are "redo" moments. You can't go back, but you can go forward and do things differently.
- 3) **Point #3** We often go in circles as we repeat the familiar patterns. We should choose the unfamiliar, the "road less traveled" as Robert Frost said. If a loved one tells you "You've said that before", you have probably said it a thousand times without truly meaning it. "I'll just spend one more hour at the office"; "I'll play one last poker game / video game"; "I'll close one more sale"; "I'll have just one more drink." We are overwhelmed and consumed by our habits. It's no surprise our scripture calls the blind to see, and the deaf to hear. In relationships, we often date the same person for years - not the same individual, but the same type of person based on looks, pedigree, and chemistry. It's better the find someone with potential who treats us well and respects us than finding a catch. Same for parenting: the more we give, the less our children become what we hope them to be. They become fragile and entitled. It's time to try something else: discipline, work...

## DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - What are you afraid of for 2018? What are your hopes? What are deeply ingrained patterns and habits you're hoping to recognize and change?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Try to identify new pathways to do important things in your life - to give them new meaning, impact, and better outcomes in the process.
- 3) **DO** - Pray over this, discuss with your Life Group, and get prepared for the new message series "Divine Direction" on January 7, 2018.