

SCRIPTURE READING: Hebrews 4:14-16; Matthew 2:13-23 (selected verses below)

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”

DISCUSSION PROMPTS FOR SMALL GROUPS, FRIEND GROUPS & HOUSEHOLDS:

1. What are some places you see Jesus "trading places" with someone (whether in the Bible or in your own life)?
2. What false expectations have you wrapped around Jesus? How might God want to disentangle those from the real Jesus?
3. Giving up our fairy-tale expectations is painful, but there are a lot of reasons Jesus is worth it. Why, right now, is he worth it to you?
4. What difference does it make that in Jesus, God knows all of the hardships of being human?
5. God doesn't always give us *reasons*, but he does produce *results*. In what ways have your shattered plans been a gift or produced fruit? In what areas are you still waiting for fruit to grow from your disappointments and hurts?