Sermon Summary for 20-Jan-2008
Matthew 2:2-15 / "Come As You Are (or Don't Come at All)"

From the Bible>>

>> 2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." 7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.' 11 Truly, I sayto you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Notes>>

When we face up to the things and people that we decide are of high rank or there is a lot at stake. Think of how you talk or dress when you go to a job interview or meet the parents of a romantic interest. When we have these types of encounters, all of us act in ways that are little nicer, cleaner, and polite than we really are. In the same way, when we encounter Jesus, we start to see how we pretend to be different than who we really are. We must come to Jesus knowing that we can't hide our façade. There are some common pretenses that we must abandon when we encounter Jesus.

1. Abandon the illusion of wealth: There is little doubt that Jesus teaches us that the poor are in a position to understand and see things more easily than someone with wealth. The gospel means "good news." The poor have the good news preached to them (see vs. 5). The poor get it. We have to admit that our wealth can cause us to feel self-sufficient, entitled, and stifle our dependency on God. So as we are confronted with the gospel, we are compelled to see our real poverty and approach God as the poor.

2. Abandon the illusion of safety and comfort: see vs. 12. This is a difficult passage to translate. The kingdom both receives violence and produces violence. We cannot have the illusion that we are safe and insulated from pain when we embrace the gospel. Jesus is saying to Christians, "This is really going to hurt. But it's the only way that healing from sin can take place." The prophet of Jeremiah tells us that a new city can only be built if the old is torn down.

3. Abandon the illusion of status: We abandon how highly we think of ourselves. See vs. 11. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest of the world. We come to Jesus without any illusion of our pedigree. Freedom from this illusion can fill us with wonder about being received by Him—who are we to deserve such riches and grace? We recognize that we are poor, naked beggars without status, and completely vulnerable.

Questions for Discussion>>

- What do you trust as your wealth? Where in your life do you practically think and live as you if you don't have to rely on Jesus? In what areas of your life do you feel entitled—where you would be offended to have to give it up?
- So how does it sit with you that you are called to submit to a Lord who does not promise earthly safety and security? What does that kind of submission look like in your life on a daily

basis?

- In what ways or in what areas of your life do you tend to (intentionally) underestimate your messiness so as to avoid depending on Christ? Have there been times when your mess has been exposed but resulted in a greater wonder and awe of God’s grace?