**The Quartet of the Vulnerable, Sermon 2**

Eric Lintala

The Stranger

# Video: (2 minutes)

* Welcome - <https://vimeo.com/551677723>
* Happy World Refugee Sunday!
* What a beautiful video. Every time I watch it, it hits me at a soul level. I hope it does the same for you.
* This is what I believe God’s heart is for His church

# Recap: (1 minute)

* Goals of Series:
  + **To orient our eyes and hearts towards God’s heart for the hurt and suffering**
  + **To show how God works in and through the most vulnerable**
  + **To challenge and encourage us to emulate Christ in our lives**
* I introduced the Quartet of the vulnerable, and talked about the way they all interact in the story of Ruth.
  + Guiding Passage: **Zechariah 7:9-10 – “This is what the Lord Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.’**
  + We ended with the questions:
    - **“If Ruth came to America today, what would happen to her?... Would she be admitted at the border?” - Rabbi Arthur Waskow**
    - **What about her descendant Jesus when his family fled Bethlehem?**
* I said, “Most likely, they wouldn’t.”
  + I’m glad many of you showed up again this week 😉
* Today, we are focusing on the foreigner

# My Background: (4 minutes)

* **CCE Manager for World Relief Western NY**
  + **Mission: To empower the local church to serve the most vulnerable**
  + **My job is to help the church in WNY to follow Christ through loving and serving our new refugee and other immigrant neighbors who are in the most vulnerable situations**
* I could talk about his subject for 6 hours straight, and I have.
  + Don’t worry. That is not my plan for today.
* Give us space today to lean into a contentious issue today
  + Not to answer your policy questions, but to orient our eyes and hearts towards God’s

Do you know that “The story of Scripture is the story of displaced people?” Immigrants?– Sandra Maria Van Opstal (González, 14).

* A couple displaced from a Garden because of their sin
* A family displaced by a flood
* A couple who were hungry and called by God to enter a new land far from their home to begin a nation
* A female servant impregnated by her master’s husband who is forced to run away
* A boy sold to traders by his jealous brothers who becomes steward of a foreign nation
* A people enslaved in Egypt desperate to escape
* A foreign prostitute brought into the family of Israel for protecting spies
* A Moabite who would follow her mother-in-law to the grave
* A Shepherd anointed to be king, hiding in caves with his mighty men
* A Jewish girl who becomes the queen of a nation
* Four Israelite men loyal to God growing up under a pagan government who are thrown into a lion’s den and a furnace for following God’s word.
* A cupbearer of a foreign king who longs to rebuild his homeland
* A people who feel forgotten after not hearing from God for over 400 years

And that’s just some of the OT

* How about a young family forced to flee to Egypt to protect themselves from a deadly king
* A wild man living in the wilderness, proclaiming the good news of a promised Messiah, who is beheaded by a king
* An itinerant teacher and his mismatched group of fishermen and tax collectors traveling from town to town under an oppressive government
* A story of group of 70 people sent out in groups of two with only the clothes on their back
* A man unjustly imprisoned and crucified
* A former murderer shipwrecked on a small island and then imprisoned
* A group of men and women leaving their homes and going out to the known and unknown world to talk about Jesus

And we could continue through the NT and into Church History right up till today and the days to come

* **As we look at Scripture, it’s clear that one of the primary ways God moves through the world is in the hearts and souls of those who follow Him.**
* For more in depth analyses of many of these Biblical stories, what I am talking about today, and modern issues around displacement, immigration, welcoming the stranger, and the modern church, I recommend the following books:

Book Recommendations (1 minutes)

* *The God Who Sees* by Karen González
* *Jesus the Refugee* by D. Glenn Butner Jr.
* *Inalienable* by Daniel Yang, Eric Costanzo, and Matt Soerens
* *Welcoming the Stranger* by Matt Soerens and Jenny Yang

You can see some of my copies of them on the resource wall, or stop at the World Relief table after the service to pick up materials and ask me questions.

# Transition

**In my role, I get the chance to talk with many Non-Christians and Christians about refugees and other immigrants. In these conversations, I am often asked three questions about welcoming strangers:**

# 3 Questions I am asked most often about Welcoming Strangers: (2 minutes)

* Who are they, and how did they get here?
* Are they taking our jobs?
* Are they dangerous?
* I could talk statistics with you and debate numbers saying
  + 108.4 million Forcibly Displaced people
  + 35.3 million Refugees
  + Less than 1% of refugees are ever resettled
  + Average stay in a refugee camp is 17 years
  + In the U.S. “immigrants or their children were responsible for founding 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies” (*Welcoming the Stranger*, 88).
  + Immigrants twice as likely to be entrepreneurs as native-born Americans
  + After 20 years in US, refugees give back $21,000 more in taxes at a Federal, State, and Local level than they ever received
  + US refugees found likelihood of being killed by a refugee turned terrorist was 1 in 3.64 *billion* per year.
  + “The chance of being murdered in a terrorist attack committed by an illegal immigrant is an astronomical 1 in 10.9 *billion* per year.”
  + “Immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes or be behind bars than the native-born, and high rates of immigration are associated with lower rates of violent crime and property crime. This holds true for both legal immigrants and the unauthorized, regardless of their country of origin or level of education.”
* These 3 questions are focused on politics, economics, and security, none of which were promised by Christ

# Transition (1 minute)

* While they are important questions to ask and be informed about, they are not the first questions we should ask as followers of Christ because they weren’t the questions Jesus cared about, and they don’t point us to God’s word.
* Not new questions. They are asked by every culture. In fact, they were probably asked by the people in Egypt when the most famous Asylum Seeker in the Bible arrived in town.

# Reading Jesus through these 3 Questions (9 minutes)

Passage**:** Matthew 2:13-15 (1 minute)

* We are picking up the story after Jesus has been born and the three Magi have just visited them and given Jesus gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**“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.” So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 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.”**

Let’s enter the mindset of a first Century Egyptian as they asked these three questions about Joseph, Mary, and Jesus

Who are they, and how did they get here?

* Poor couple from Bethlehem warned in a dream to flee a wrathful king
* Case for Asylum would most likely not be upheld in a court today because they don’t have hard evidence. They can’t prove that they were fleeing persecution based on their race, religion, nation of origin, political opinion, or membership in a particular group
  + **Refugees & Asylum Seekers – People fleeing persecution based on their: race, religion, nation of original, political opinion, or membership in a particular group**
  + This is the case of many Asylum Seekers and other immigrants today. They flee in the middle of the night, like Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, leave important documents behind, destroy others so they won’t be caught, thinking only of their survival
  + and they end up in a foreign country where they are asked to provide hard evidence that they are fleeing persecution. The same very hard evidence that if they had in the first place, they destroyed to protect themselves and their family. The burden of proof for many Asylum Seekers is on themselves.
  + Like current refugees and other immigrants**,** Mary and Joseph did not want to leave their home. From the voice of Karen González, an immigrant: **“when we leave, we leave pieces of ourselves behind. We leave our homes, our comforts, our heart languages, our extended or immediate families, and our sense of self. We have to start all over again, almost like children, in a new country”** (González, *The God Who* Sees, 69).

Are they taking our jobs?

* We don’t know what the royal family was up to in Egypt, but I wonder if Joseph was able to get a job as a carpenter, or if he had to scrape together odd jobs, getting paid under the table to provide for his wife and young child?
  + Not uncommon for our clients to work 2-3 part-time/full time jobs simultaneously Sunday-Saturday
* Did they have to use all the Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh they received just to survive?
  + Did they know where their next meal was coming from?

Are they dangerous?

* Genesis 43:32; 46:34 - Hebrews were detestable to Egyptians
  + “…Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians” – Gen. 43:32
  + “…for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians” – Gen. 46:34
* Peter Schafer - “…Egypt can be considered ‘the hothouse of the growth later labeled anti-Semitism’” (*Jesus the Refugee,* 97).
* “By the time of the first century, several texts written in Egypt had renarrated the Jewish exodus account to claim that Jews were evil and diseased and so had been expelled from Egypt due to their causing plagues. This narrative evolved to include accusations that Jews hated other peoples, destroyed their temples, and were afraid of foreigners” (*Jesus the Refugee*, 98).
* I wonder how Joseph, Jesus, and Mary were treated in Egypt. Were they treated like refugees are today?

**“Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are not alone in facing hostility and resistance from a potential host country. In fact, one reason why refugees face such extreme militarized borders or wait indefinitely for resettlement is that the citizens of many potential host nations see refugees as a threat to national security or to the national economy. In both cases, the concern is over-blown, and neither national security nor the economy justifies the neglect and hostility that many refugees face” (*Jesus the Refugee*).**

# Transition (at 18 minutes)

* These questions highlight the plight of the Holy Family’s flight and the battles they likely had to fight. They also give us an idea for what current strangers face when they enter a new country, but they don’t point us to Christ.
* These questions highlight what human cultures care about, not what Christ cares about.
* As Christ followers, we need to ask what does Scripture say?
* I encourage the Christians I talk to, to ask these three questions instead:

# 3 Questions I Encourage Christians to Ask about Welcoming Strangers:

* **What Does Scripture Say About Welcoming Strangers?**
* **How Can We Live According to Scripture?**
* **What Happens When We Welcome Strangers?**
* These questions point us towards God’s heart for the hurt and suffering, show us how God works through the most vulnerable, and they encourage us to follow in Christ’s footsteps

What Does Scripture Say About Welcoming Strangers? (5 minutes)

Who is “the Stranger in Scripture?” (2 minutes)

* Hebrew term, **translated “ger” refers to “a person not native to the local area”** (*Welcoming the Stranger*, 86).
  + **Modern terms translated to: Foreigner, Alien, Stranger, Immigrant, or Migrant**
  + Used 92 times throughout OT
* It is an all-encompassing term:
  + Used for people without family or land
  + Used for Israelites living in Egypt & Non-Israelites living among the Israelites
* Means that, **as Christians, our response to the stranger in front of us should not depend on their culture, language, beliefs, and status, but on the Word of God**

**What Does Scripture Say About Welcoming the Strangers?**

* **Treat them as Image-bearers of God**

**Genesis 1:26-27** – “Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

* + People made in image of God, includes immigrants
  + Sinners just like us
* **Treat them like citizens**

**Leviticus 19:33-34** – “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

* + One of the most beautiful things about the book of Ruth is that it “…is one of the few places in the Bible where immigrants are treated just as God’s law commands…” (González, 23).
* **Grant them Sabbath**

**Deuteronomy 5:12-15** – “Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

* **Show no partiality and love them**

**Deuteronomy 10:17-19** – “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.”

* **Make Disciples**

**Matthew 28:18-20** – “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

* **Love them as Yourself**

**Mark 12:30-31** – “’Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

* **Empathize with Them**

**Ephesians 2:11-13** – “Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

* + As Gentiles, we went from foreigners, separated from Christ and citizenship, to citizens through the blood of Christ
  + As Citizens of Heaven, through Christ’s blood, we are now foreigners on earth

*Luke 1:33 - “… and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”*

*Philippians 3:20 – “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ…”*

*Hebrews 11:13 – “All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.”*

*1 Peter 2:11 – “Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.”*

# Transition

* We often forget, **“that** **when we talk about immigrants and immigration, we are always talking about people who matter deeply to God. We are talking about people made in the image of God… It’s easy in our current climate to allow immigrants to become nameless, faceless statistics lost in political and economic rhetoric”** (González, 82-83).

# How Can We Live According to Scripture? (4 minutes)

* **Experience more stories and welcome people into your family**
* Story: Welcoming Amadi family at airport
  + Carrying weight of the family
  + Eyes
* Afghan refugee telling volunteer, “this is the first time I have felt like a human being.”
* Pastor of a church in WNY praying over a Congolese family when they arrive at the airport after 36 hours in the air in a foreign land
* Congolese father praying with his family over their new home and for the volunteers who helped get it ready
* **Welcome the person in front of us as Christ welcomed us, regardless of their country of origin, language, or residency status.**

# What Happens When We Welcome Strangers? (5 minutes)

We Welcome our Brothers and Sisters:

* **86% of immigrants to U.S. are Christians or likely to become Christian – President of Asbury Theological Seminary**

We see God grow the church and bless the nations:

* Unreached People Groups meet Christ
  + Viewpoint of a Hmong Refugee Pastor in U.S. whose dad was the first Christian in his family : **“I’m starting to wonder if God sent some refugees like us to shake up American civil religion, and to reach Americans with the gospel”** (*Inalienable*, 12).
* Growing churches in the U.S. and Europe are primarily refugee and immigrant churches
  + What continent has the most Christians currently living on it?
  + Let’s join and celebrate the global church!
* Imagine what Judah, and all of Israel, would have lost out on if they said no to Ruth?

We Host Angels without knowing

**Hebrews 13:1-2** – “Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

We welcome Christ

**Matthew 25:34-36** – “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’”

# Transition

* Will you pray with me?

# Communion

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26 –** “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

# Next Week

* We are going to pick-up where we just left off in the parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25 and talk about how our savior opened up the quartet of the vulnerable to include the prisoner, the prostitute, the trafficked, the lame, the sick, and all those in positions of vulnerability.
* You won’t want to miss it. 😊

Please rise to receive the Benediction:

# Benediction

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;

May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;

May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;

May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

Amen. Go in peace.

# Additional Ideas:

* Our goal is **not** to make other people look like us and our western world. Our goal **is** to look more like Jesus individually and societally
* Christians who live in America, **not** American Christians
  + What Kingdom takes priority in your heart?
    - The Kingdom of God or America?
    - Philippians 3:20 – “our citizenship is in heaven”
* Coptic Christians built churches where Jesus lived in Egypt with his family as a refugee
  + <https://www.keepcalmandwander.com/jesus-coptic-cairo-saints-sergius-and-bacchus-church/>
* *“It’s uncomfortable, and maybe even frightening, for many of us to consider having porous borders, especially in a time when terrorism abounds around the globe. Yet Christians are not called to value the false sense of security created by closed borders and walls. We are called to trust in God and to love our neighbors, particularly our neighbors in need. Closed borders in North America are not directed toward an existing threat of invasion by a foreign army but toward poor economic immigrants seeking opportunities and toward refugees fleeing for their very lives. Hardened borders are designed to prevent the movement of the world’s poor – a people whom God says Christians should care for and not harm” (González, 156-157).*
* Story: Los Posadas & La Posada sin Fronteras – Catholic Christian Advent tradition of knocking on doors to find housing and similarly walking along border in US and Mexico to take down the wall (González, 157-162)
* Acts 17:28 (González, 162-163) - Our passport color does not define our identity. Jesus does.
* Possible Story: Francisco Barrera deported (González, 49-50).
* Takeaways:
  + Listen to the stories of immigrants
  + Pray for our new neighbors
  + Use your voice to welcome others and challenge others to think according to God’s call for his people, not anyone else’s.
* Challenges:
  + Time: U.S. is more time conscious than practically any other society
  + Community: U.S. is more individual-centric than practically any other society
  + Culture: Humility not Competency
  + Thriving: Integration not assimilation
* As promised, those questions are where we are starting this week. They are not where we are ending. **I want to end us in the head and heart space of the video we just watched because I believe that is God’s clear heart for the church when it comes to welcoming the stranger.**
* What do most Christians think of when they think of immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers/migrants?
  + Not of Biblical mandates and examples
  + Not of trafficked people and the vulnerable
  + People taking Americans’ jobs (Economic)
  + Criminals hurting and killing Americans (Safety)
  + Those others (Politics)

Who are they, and how did they get here?(5 minutes)

* Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Immigrants, Economic Migrants, Forcibly Displaced, Stateless, Humanitarian Parolees, Special Immigrant Visa holders…
* **Refugee** – someone fleeing persecution based on their: race, religion, nation of original, political opinion, or membership in a particular group.
  + Crossed a border
  + Started process at a refugee camp
* **Asylum Seeker** – someone fleeing persecution based on their: race, religion, nation of original, political opinion, or membership in a particular group.
  + **Started process at the U**.S-Mexico border or somewhere in US
* “… the explicit expectation in refugee policy is that many will cross a border without documents, which is legally permitted by international refugee law and the national law of many states” (*Jesus the Refugee*, 71).
* **108.4 million Forcibly Displaced people** 
  + 43.3 million displaced persons are children.
* **35.3 million Refugees**
  + 76% are hosted by low- and middle-income countries.
  + 52% of refugees come from Syrian, Ukraine, and Afghanistan.
  + **Between 2018-2022, 1.9 million children born as refugees**
  + 114,300 were resettled anywhere in the world in 2022
  + 339,300 returned home
  + **Less than 1% of refugees are ever resettled**
  + **Average stay in a refugee camp is 17 years**
  + Typical US processing time of a refugee is 2-3 years
* 5.4 million Asylum Seekers
* <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>
* Forced out of their homes. Don’t want to leave
* **Ruth does not count as: refugee, asylum seeker, diversity visa lottery, nor family-based migration (González, 33-34).**
* Not fleeing persecution
* Not educated enough
* Not close enough family-ties
* **Maybe** temporary work visa. Even if so, it would be temporary
* Check out *The God Who Sees* by Karen González for a more in-depth analysis

They did not want to leave Bethlehem, but we know God had a plan for them.

Let’s dive into the second question I get asked:

Are they taking American jobs?(3 minute)

* **Statistics:**
  + In the U.S. “immigrants or their children were responsible for founding 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies” (*Welcoming the Stranger*, 88).
  + Immigrants twice as likely to be entrepreneurs as native born Americans
  + After 20 years in US, refugees give back $21,000 more in taxes at a Federal, State, and Local level than they ever received
  + According to Bureau of Labor statistics, over 10 million open jobs in U.S.
  + Immigrants decrease average age of aging nations
* **Ruth:**
  + Last week we read in Deuteronomy 24 that Boaz was following the law in Deuteronomy by allowing Ruth, a fatherless, **foreigner**, woman to harvest sheaves of grain behind his workers.
  + A few verses earlier, that verse says this: Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin. (Deuteronomy 24:14-15)
  + Ruth shows the same diligence and work ethic that so many asylum seekers, refugees, and other immigrants show currently in our culture
* **Jesus, Joseph, and Mary:**

Are they dangerous?(5 minute)

* **Statistics**:
  + 2017 survey “found that ’44 percent of Americans believe that illegal immigration increased the level of serious crime in the United States” (*Jesus the Refugee*, 99-100, *Welcoming the Stranger,* 115).
    - Most antagonistic results toward immigrants and crime rates is that “immigrants and refugees are no more likely to commit crimes than native-born citizens” (*Jesus the Refugee*, 100).
  + 41 year study from 1/1/75-12/31/15 of all incoming immigrants
    - US refugees found likelihood of being killed by a refugee turned terrorist was 1 : 3.64 billion
    - “The chance of being murdered in a terrorist attack committed by an **illegal immigrant** is an astronomical 1 in 10.9 *billion* per year.”
    - “By contrast, the chance of being murdered by a tourist on a B visa, the most common tourist visa, is 1 in 3.9 million per year.”
    - <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/terrorism-immigration-risk-analysis#the-attacks>
  + “**Immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes or be behind bars than the native-born, and high rates of immigration are associated with lower rates of violent crime and property crime. This holds true for both legal immigrants and the unauthorized, regardless of their country of origin or level of education.** In other words, the overwhelming majority of immigrants are not “criminals” by any commonly accepted definition of the term. For this reason, harsh immigration policies are not effective in fighting crime. Unfortunately, immigration policy is frequently shaped more by fear and stereotype than by empirical evidence” (“[The Criminalization of Immigration in the United States](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/criminalization-immigration-united-states)”)
    - <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/criminalization-immigration-united-states>
    - **“…there was a statistically significant correlation between increased immigration rates and a decline in violent crimes” (*Jesus the Refugee*, 103).**
    - “no correlation was found between strict immigration enforcement and a reduction in crime” (*Jesus the Refugee*, 107).
* **Ruth**
  + Remember, Ruth was a Moabite, but instead of fear and animosity, *“…* we see a picture of the immigrant and the citizen working together, side by side, for the flourishing of their communities. The concern isn’t just for their own security or economic interest. Nobody looks out just for their own country or ethnic group. Nobody considers themselves superior or subjugates the powerless. In the story of Ruth, human beings become their best selves, as a result, everyone thrives, not just survives…” (González, 34-35).
* **Jesus, Joseph, and Mary**

# and hostility that many refugees face” (*Jesus the Refugee*, 99).

* **God is doing the same thing today that he has been doing since the beginning. He is taking our world and shaking it like a snow globe saying, I am going to scatter my people like glory-soaked snowflakes throughout the world to make disciples of all nations, so that there will be people of every tribe, tongue, and people worshipping before my thrown in Heaven!**
* *2018 Pew Survey – “68% of evangelicals “surveyed believed the United States should no longer be seen as responsible to accept refugees, even though a plurality of refugees resettled in the United States in recent years have been persecuted Christians” (Inalienable, 143-144)… Simultaneously, many American Christians are leading the way in welcoming and serving our new refugee and immigrant neighbors.*

God’s Word is fulfilled

* Joseph, Mary, and Jesus did not want to leave Bethlehem, but we know God had a plan for them then and after Herod died **Matthew 2:15, 23:** “…and so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’…. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.”
* Let’s hear what happens when we welcome strangers from the voice of one of our new Afghan neighbors Ebrahim’s Story: <https://vimeo.com/761964719/a43bfa463b>
* **One of the beauties of “reading the Bible through the lens of the outsider” is that we see God continually welcoming strangers into God’s family** (González, 82-83).
* How about once Herod died and Jesus and his parents returned to Nazareth? (vss 19-23)
  + Even when they returned to Nazareth in the Roman empire, Jesus was not a Roman citizen. **Howard Thurman** says it this way**: “He was not protected by the normal guarantees of citizenship – that quiet sense of security which comes from knowing that you belong and the general climate of confidence which it inspires. If a Roman soldier pushed Jesus into a ditch, he could not appeal to Caesar; he would just be another Jew in the ditch”** (*Inalienable*, 140).