

**Arise, Shine**  
**Sermon January 7, 2018**

How do you look like when you “SHINE”? When you smile, your whole body language is telling that you are happy, relaxed, and you are enjoying your life.

How would you describe a sad person, who is disappointed, under a lot of physical or psychological pressure and pain?

Our God is a HAPPY GOD. We were created to SHINE, to be happy, to enjoy our lives. When we shine, we can focus much more on our duties and we get more strength to achieve our goals. When we are down in pain and sadness, we lose at least 50% of our energy and we cannot think or create effectively.

With eagerness in their hearts, the wise men left their country to follow their dreams and to find the King of Kings. God’s star led them day and night, showing the direction, but even then I can imagine how many difficulties they faced during their journey. First of all, I assume it was a challenge for a few people to come to the conclusion that the sign written in the sky was a sign from God, who created heaven and earth. Probably they invited others to journey with them, but some people thought it was a bad idea. When they prepared their gifts for the new born King, they decided what kind of gift and how much they should give.

After the wise men made the decision to start their journey, I am sure, their faces were shining. We should learn that, sometimes, it is very difficult to make a decision. But after we make it, we will feel empowered to accomplish our goals. We will invest all our energy in our goals, and we will shine, focusing on our final destination.

Since they were traveling more than 2,000 kilometers, they had many new challenges which made them make new decisions. They were challenged to provide their own daily food. They were challenged to find their new resting place every night. They were challenged by deadly animals, sickness and who knows how many other unexpected things. It could have happened that some of them became very tired during the long trip, not even knowing where they were going. Maybe one of them was making negative comments about their trip, like a downer, saying things like:

- Why are we really doing this?
- And for how long will we do this?
- Is there a reason to meet the King of Kings?

- And what if there is no King of Kings?

As they journeyed around Israel and then around the capital city of Jerusalem, they made a decision to visit Herod, who was the King of Israel at that time. Even though the star did not lead them to the palaces of Herod, they stopped there for a visit to get more advice and direction. These wise men did not know how jealous Herod was as a king. Herod was paranoid - thinking that people around him wanted to replace him on his throne. For this reason, he beheaded his wife, his mother, and his two oldest sons.

When Herod heard that “the King of Israel was born” he became extremely jealous and angry, but he hid his anger for a while. The priests provided the Biblical prophecy to the wise men and to Herod that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. At that point, he wanted to trick the wise men, asking them to continue their journey and, if they find the newborn King, they should return to him with their information.

After the wise men journeyed for more than 2,000 kilometres, they realized that, even though Bethlehem was only 8 kilometres from Jerusalem, none of the priests nor Herod wanted to travel the 8 kilometers with them to pay their respects to Jesus.

What a disappointment! Do you think that, at that point, the wise men’s faces were shining? I don’t think so. On the contrary, I think they were disappointed or maybe angry. I am so glad we did not read in this story that the wise men made a decision to return to their country because they were upset and mad.

What kind of decisions do we make when we are angry or upset? We make bad decisions.

- Did you make quick decisions when you were angry and upset with somebody or something?
- Did you have sleepless nights when you were thinking about what kind of decision you should make in a frustrating situation?
- Did you come to a decision about something, but in the morning when you re-visited your decisions, you realized it was as bad decision?

Why is recommended to not make a decision with anger? Why should we avoid making decisions when we are angry?

Some decisions are easier than others. Some decisions are causing us stress and we have to provide more time and much thought before the final decision. We have to

know that decisions made in anger are impulsive and, most of the time, will not have good outcomes. When we make a decision, we have to see our options with a clear mind. We all have to learn to think before we act. We have to learn how to react thoughtfully rather than with anger.

Often, angry people have a short fuse and cannot think and behave as it would be expected. They are, also, quick to blame other individuals for problems, rather than the aspects of a situation.

If you noticed that you had anger issues, did you try to work effectively around your issue? Or did you blame others, being ineffective and mad? Do you know how anger can change you and how you can change your anger? All your decisions will be evaluated by others.

We all are accountable for our feelings and actions. We should be careful to pay attention on our decision making progress and not only on a quick outcome.

[11:56 AM] When we make decisions we have to know what our values are.

I read a very sharp quote from a Canadian novelist, short story writer Doug Coupland. I was hesitating to use it today in my sermon, but I think we all can learn from it, including me.

He says: *“Only losers make decisions when things are bad. The time to rejig your life is the time when it's seemingly smooth.”*

We have to learn not to make decisions when we are angry. Not during the night, when we are tired and more sensitive, because often in those situations we lose all rational.

Please, never reply to a text message or an email when you are angry. Never make a decision when you are sad.

When you have to make a decision, then **MAKE A DECISION** and not excuses. Stop being angry and start to count your blessings, not your troubles. Let go of the things that are bothering you.

Also, please never make a decision when you're feeling lonely. Desperate actions lead to regret.

You should never make permanent decisions based on temporary feelings. Never make a decision influenced by another upset or angry person.

*“Never cut a tree down in the wintertime. Never make a negative decision in the low time. Never make your most important decisions when you are in your worst moods. Wait. Be patient. The storm will pass. The spring will come.”* (Robert H Schuller, American minister and motivational speaker)

Do not make a decision without asking God and listening to His advice. God never fails. Even when things seem to be impossible, God can take it and make it possible.

If you are facing problems and obstacles, try to find out what God wants to teach you through those. If you cannot calm down, ask for help.

Remember: God NEVER fails. Just when you're about to break, He shows up BIG TIME, EVERY TIME.

The wise men did not make a decision based on their disappointment or anger. They decided to follow the Star of God. For this, they found Jesus. With Jesus in their hearts, they were SHINING again and made a wise decision to go home in a different way.

Please ask God NOW to help you to go home as a different person. Amen.