

Epiphany Sunday ~ Sunday, January 8, 2017

“Lessons in Seeking Jesus”

Matthew 2:1-12

Epiphany =

Although it first referred to the revelation of the Christ Child to the _____, it has come to mean any revelation that points to the _____ of God in our midst.

TRADITIONS AROUND THE 3 WISE MEN

Timing:

Number:

Title:

Magi = *magoi* =

Names & Nationalities:

Transportation:

3 LESSONS WE CAN LEARN ABOUT OUR OWN FAITH JOURNEY

Lesson #1: A diligent search for God always leads to _____.

From what Matthew tells us, we can surmise that the magi were from the region to the _____ of Israel located near modern day _____ and _____. They had been travelling for a long time, following a strange _____ in the western sky.

Theories about the star often ignore a key point that Scripture tells: the star _____.

“And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.” (Matthew 2:9)

The star was _____ the magi, and _____ them on to their destination. This was no ordinary star, but a customized _____ light.

As amazing as this supernatural phenomena might be, we need to understand that the magi didn't go all that way, just to _____ a star. They weren't just astrologers or scientists following a star—they were _____ for something—or rather _____—they were looking for a _____.

Many commentators believe they had read the ancient writings of _____.

In Daniel chapter 9, Daniel predicted from the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the birth, life, and death of the Messiah (ie. The King of the Jews) exactly _____ years would elapse.

They knew when, they just didn't know _____. The answer was found in _____ prophecy.

“But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.” (Micah 5:2)

Magi's question to Herod—although a simple one, is extremely _____. It is the first recorded words spoken by a _____ in the entire New Testament.

The first question found in Old Testament—is in Genesis 3:9, when God asked Adam: _____?

We live in a world marked by an increase in spiritual _____—people are looking for answers—they're looking for God—for something beyond themselves to not only give _____ and purpose to their lives, but also _____ and the promise of something beyond this short, fragile human existence.

The Good news is, when it comes to God, we don't search in _____—we don't call out into the _____ or void, only to hear the echo of our own voice. God promises that when we seek Him, we will _____ Him.

“When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord...” (Jeremiah 29:13)

If we are honestly and seriously seeking to find God, we'll always be led to _____.

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ...” (1 Timothy 2:5)

“He is the image of the invisible God...for God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things.” (Colossians 1:15, 29)

Jesus is the exact and perfect _____ of God. If we want to know what God is like, we need only to look to _____.

Do you need to be a little more diligent in your search for God this new year?

Lesson #2: If you are wise, you will give God your _____.
Matthew tells us that when the wise men found Jesus, they _____ Him.

“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:11)

Bowing low signals one’s _____ to another, as having _____ over you.

Not only did they bow low, they also worshipped by offering gifts worthy of Jesus’ _____.

GIVING JESUS OUR MOST VALUABLE GIFTS

• **Give Jesus your _____.** Give Him our _____ and our _____.
When we make Jesus the _____ of our lives, it means that He is our _____ and He’s deserving of our gold—of our _____ fruits.

Although this involves much more than _____ giving, the amount of money we give to the Lord can reveal whether He’s our _____ or not.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21)

God deserves our first and our best—not our _____ at the end of the month.

“Honour the Lord with your wealth and with the first and best part of all your income.” (Proverbs 3:9)

Do you give Jesus your first and your best?

• **Give Jesus your _____.** Give Him your joyful _____.
Incense was used in the _____ by priests as part of the daily ceremony and ritual. It speaks of the _____ of worship.

The problem with worship in our contemporary context is that we can come to Church Sunday after Sunday and never _____ worship.

Worship is _____ focussed, not _____ focussed; worship is all about _____ and not _____.

Is your experience of worship all about you and what you like and don’t like, or is it all about God and your offering to him?

• **Give Jesus your _____.** Give Him your _____ and _____.

Myrrh was a spice used to _____ dead bodies.

Myrrh reminds us of the need to offer Jesus our _____ because He was willing to give up His for us.

It reminds us that we’re called to _____ to self and the things of this world and to live for _____. It reminds us that Jesus is _____ and not us; that He sits on the _____ of our lives and that we need to _____ and surrender ourselves to Him.

Who is Lord of your life—Jesus or you? Who are you living your life for?

The gifts of the Magi—were _____ and given at great _____. They symbolized the magi’s desire to _____ to Jesus and worship Him.

What do you have to lay at the feet of Jesus this morning?

Lesson #3: Once we’ve encountered Jesus, we can’t go home the _____ way we came.

“And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.” (Matthew 2:12)

Not only did the wise men return by a different _____, they also returned back home as _____ men.

When we truly encounter Jesus and recognize Who He is, we will never be the _____ again.

God is a god of new _____ and fresh starts—He’s all about change and _____.

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Will you go home a different person, having encountered Jesus this morning in Word and sacrament?



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN THIS NEW YEAR

In what ways did God appear to me this past year?

Where can I see the light of His presence?

How have I grown or not grown in my faith?

Where do I see God leading me in 2017?

Having worshipped at the manger, the wise men carried the _____ of Christ out into the world with them, as they returned to their homes. We too are called to rise from our worship at the manger and move steadily into the world, brining the light of Christ into the places where we _____, work, study, and play.