

Media and Graphics Notes

Sermon Starter Video?	Yes
Sermon Notes?	There are no graphics on screen.
Other Notes	

Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the wise men and how their story can connect with our story.

Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because the way that the wise men seek Christ and offer their gifts can be a model for our lives today.

What is the context of this sermon?

This sermon has been prepared with the help of Come to Worship sermon series at LifeChurch.tv which was December 2014. More information about this series can be found online at <http://j.mp/1v7H1Q2>.

What are the next action steps?

Bring your gifts as an act of worship.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that we worship God because God first loved us.



Metadata

Topic(s)

1. Grow
2. Worship

Sermon Books of the Bible

1. Matthew

1st Sunday after Christmas
A Season of Hope - Magi
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado
Text Online at <http://j.mp/1QlyByD>

December 27, 2015
Matthew 2:1-12
Preaching Target Word Count: 2,016
Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1QQ5EBE>

Tags

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Matthew 2:1-12, CEB

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote: You, Bethlehem, land of Judah, by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah, because from you will come one who governs, who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him."

When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy.

They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Introduction

Sermon Starter Video

[Play sermon starter video.](#)

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can

reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Opening

Story

[Text here]

Transition

[Text here]

Seek Christ

Wise men came from the east to Jerusalem to worship the one who has been born the king of the Jews. They have come to worship. They begin asking around about where the king is located.

Herod, who is the king of the region, starts to get afraid. I am the king. I don't know who these guys are looking for, but it can't be good for me. So he tells the wise men, when you find him, come back and let me know because I, also, want to come and worship.

Then they left the king and followed the star which they had seen until it rested over the place where the child was.

Difficult and Hard

They saw the star and they followed it. We read this one little verse and we don't really grasp the magnitude of what the wise men did.

It is likely that they traveled from what would have been known as Persia, which is modern day Iran, all the way to where Jesus was. This is a distance of about 900 miles.

They did not get their on the Turnpike or anything like it. This was a long and difficult journey which they made to worship the one who they thought might be the savior.

Self Reflection

What is difficult and hard for you?

What experience of your life? What challenge are you facing right now?

Is it hard for you to feel that Christmas really happened?

Overjoyed

Joy on joy

Verse 10 says, when they saw the star they were filled with joy. I want to pause a moment on this sentence to take a closer look at what they were experiencing. The english translation doesn't do a great job. There are actually four greek words that are translated into "they were filled with joy"

Another version of the Bible says this "they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy." The greek words literally mean, they rejoiced with a huge, incredible, overwhelming joy.

It is kind of like compounding joy – we are happy that we are happy that he is there. It is almost impossible to describe how full of life they were.

They have been waiting for centuries for someone that would be born who would save them from their sins. From the depths of their soul they are filled with an overwhelming sense of joy.

Underjoyed

Here is the problem with some followers of Christ today - they are under-joyed. We should be the most overjoyed people around and too many times we are under-joyed.

This is something that I have to remind myself about. If you are happy, if you are filled with joy – let your face know. Crack a smile once in a while.

Self Reflection

What brings you great joy?

Does your faith or following after God bring you great joy?

Worship

When they arrive, they worship by presenting to Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They were overjoyed to bow down and worship to give gifts to the one who would save them.

Example of Joy of Giving

[Text here]

Significance of gifts

It has been debated for centuries what these gifts actually meant or symbolized. The general thinking is that the gold represented Christ's kingship. The king of kings and lord of lords has been born.

Frankincense symbolized the divinity of the Christ

Myrrh was used in embalming – to prepare people for burial. Many believe that this was a foreshadowing that Jesus was actually born to die.

They worshiped him and they were overjoyed to bring their gifts as an act of worship. They opened up the best of what they had and offered it to Jesus.

Self Reflection

What do you bring to worship Christ?

Conclusion

Good News

The good news is that we worship God because God first loved us. We offer ourselves and our gifts to be used by God because God sought us out before we could understand it for ourselves. The magi were coming to worship a Christ who was already here. God came to earth to show God's love for us.

Call to Action

This Christmas, bring your gifts as an act of worship.

Invitation - Spiritual Growth

Over the next 4 days, I invite you to consider how you will start the new year with God.

- Being part of a group
- Reading the Bible
- Praying
- Taking the next step in our journey to worship grow, give, serve and share.

Like the wise men, seek Christ and worship with great joy.

Closing Prayer

[Text here]
Amen.