

**Christmas 2022**

“They bowed down and worshiped him”

Matthew 2:1-12

**“they”**

“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” (Augustine of Hippo, 354–430)

That restlessness in all of us translates into a life of seeking \_\_\_\_\_, meaning, fulfillment, or satisfaction.

They are outsiders, yet they \_\_\_\_\_ the insiders in this story.

**“bowed down and worshiped”**

“In the day-to day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of god or spiritual-type thing to worship [...] is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly, and when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally plant you. On one level, we all know this stuff already.... The trick is keeping the truth up front in daily consciousness.” (David Foster Wallace)

When God calls us to worship him and no other, God has what's in our best \_\_\_\_\_ in mind.

### **"him"**

The ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ in this story is the "him" of the story, the one the Magi worshiped.

God the Son didn't pose as a man or pretend to be a man; he became truly human while remaining truly \_\_\_\_\_.

"The Son of God's first step in carrying out the plan of salvation was to move into human nature itself, the nature that makes all humans human. He took that nature into personal union with himself. ...By becoming incarnate, the Son made himself personally present to humanity in an unprecedentedly intimate way." (Fred Sanders)

Before Jesus dies for us, he comes \_\_\_\_\_ for us by becoming one of us so that he can be with us and we can find him.

### **Personal Reflection Questions**

- How would you compare your seeking to that of the Magi?
  
- How has your worship been marked by worshiping anything less than God? In answering this question, consider Tim Keller's reflections on our idolatry:
  - If you center your life and identity on your spouse or partner, you will be emotionally dependent, jealous, and controlling.  
...If you center your life and identity on your family and children, you will try to live your life through your children until they resent you or have no self of their own.
  - ...If you center your life and identity on pleasure, gratification, and comfort, you will find yourself getting addicted to something. You will become chained to the "escape strategies" by which you avoid the hardness of life.
  - ...If you center your life and identity on relationships and approval, you will be constantly overly hurt by criticism and thus always losing friends. You will fear confronting others and therefore will be a useless friend.
  - ...If you center your life and identity on a "noble cause," you will divide the world into "good" and "bad" and demonize your opponents. Ironically, you will be controlled by your enemies. Without them, you have no purpose.
  - ...If you center your life and identity on religion and morality, you will, if you are living up to your moral standards, be proud, self-righteous, and cruel. If you don't live up to your standards, your guilt will be utterly devastating.
  
- What difference does it make (or might it make) in your life that God is the ultimate seeker?