

The Glory of Christmas



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 3: December 24–30, 2016

Day 1

December 26



Pray / Thank God for the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ.

IN AMERICAN CULTURE, the story of the Magi, or wise men, is often depicted as a very peaceful picture of three kingly looking men following a star, walking with camels, carrying gifts, and surrounding a newborn baby Jesus. On Christmas cards and in nativity scenes, we don't see the whole story—a story of a band of men traveling very far and over years, seeking to worship and celebrate the long-awaited Messiah, and an evil king who was willing to kill young boys out of fear of losing his power over the Jews, and a father who was obedient and faithful to God, doing what he needed to do to protect his son.



Read / Matthew 2:1–2



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

The wise men were willing to travel far and long to worship Jesus. How often do you go the extra mile to show gratitude and worship Jesus?

Reflect on your current relationship with Jesus. Are you coming close to him and finding him, or are you in the dark, seeking him and wondering where he is?

Many people do not yet worship and recognize Jesus as their king and are not filled with joy when hearing about him. Think of someone you know that does not know Jesus as their king and savior. How can you take an opportunity this week to share the story and reason of Jesus' birth with him or her?

Day 2

December 27



Pray / Ask God to help you share your joy for Jesus with others.

HAVE YOU EVER waited with anticipation for something, only to find that when it came, it was not what you wanted at all?

The nation of Israel waited for centuries for God's anointed king to be born. The birth of Jesus should have been a wonderful and happy time, but instead there was conflict, and many, including political leaders, felt threatened by Jesus' birth. Herod was deeply disturbed by the news that this child had the birthright of being king. He did not want to lose his power over the Jews.



Read / Matthew 2:3–8



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

King Herod went to great lengths to try and find Jesus, the Messiah the prophets had predicted. How have you been diligently searching for Jesus?

The advent season should be filled with hope, peace, and joy. Are you feeling peaceful and hopeful as you await the celebration of Christ's birth?

Herod was unhappy and dreaded the arrival of Jesus. Like Herod, many people dread the Christmas season, don't know or understand who Jesus is, and become consumed in the craziness and consumerism of the holiday. How can you be sure that you are focusing on the true spirit of Christmas and sharing the love and joy that Jesus brings?

Day 3

December 28



Pray / Ask God to turn your heart to worship only him.

“WHEN THEY SAW the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.” Jesus is our one true king and is worthy of all of our worship. The Bible does not tell us how many wise men actually traveled to worship Jesus, although three Magi are often depicted in Christmas stories because of their three gifts of, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The wise men brought these valuable gifts to show appreciation and to worship Jesus, the one true king.

We need to be willing to give up what is valuable to us, for God, all of the time. He is, after all, our creator, forever loving us, forgiving us, and providing for us unconditionally.



Read / Matthew 2:9-15



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

The Magi were filled with joy when they finally reached Jesus. What fills you with joy during this Christmas season?

After finding Jesus and worshiping him, the wise men were warned by God not to return through Jerusalem as they had intended. Seeking and following Jesus might mean that you need to take your life in another direction. In what ways has seeking Jesus affected change in your life?

The wise men were seeking Jesus, just as so many of us are today. Are you fully committed to Jesus? Spend a few minutes in prayer, asking for God to guide you toward him, to help you open your heart and give your life fully to him.

Day 4
December 29



Pray / Pray for someone who does not know Jesus.

GREAT WORLDLY POWER brings neither peace nor security. No one can prevent God's plan from being carried out, not even the highest earthly rulers. Herod, the king of the Jews, by human appointment was not part of the bloodline of David. He was ruthless and was afraid that Jesus would one day take his throne, not understanding the reason for Christ's coming. God's plan was not for Jesus to take Herod's throne, but to be the king and savior of Herod's life, to give Herod and all of us eternal life.



Read / Matthew 2:16–18



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Herod's actions of killing the boys under the age of two was motivated by selfishness. He wanted to remain king of the Jews. When have your actions been motivated by selfishness, what were the consequences, and did your actions hurt others?

Your knowledge of who Jesus is directly affects how you react to him. We can criticize Herod for his evil actions, but sometimes our reaction toward Jesus is similar. Do you recognize Jesus as your true king and savior, or do you minimize his role in your life?

Today people often think that God doesn't care about the chaos and evil happening in our lives when, in reality, he loves us and wants us to experience peace and joy. How has God been present in the chaos of your life recently? How can you be a reflection of his love during times of hardship and chaos?

Day 5

December 30



Pray / Ask God to make you a faithful servant to him.

AN ANGEL OF the Lord had visited Joseph multiple times in his dreams, guiding him. This one last time Joseph is told to flee with Mary and Jesus for protection. God gave Joseph the task to be the guardian and protector of Mary and of Jesus, and he did just that. Joseph was a man of faithful obedience and willingness to serve God. God has a plan for each and every one of us, and we need to be ready and willing to put all of our trust in him and follow his direction, even if it means giving up our comfort and security.



Read / Matthew 2:19–23



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

God provided the direction, and Joseph was obedient to follow it, even though it meant giving up his comfort and security and not fully knowing what challenges were ahead. Do you trust God for his plan for your life, are you willing to sacrifice your own plans for God's plan, even though you don't see the whole plan clearly?

Reflect on your faithfulness this past year. How much of your life have you tried to control, and how much have you put your trust in God?

Consider your life and the broken world you live in. How has Jesus fixed your brokenness, and how can he use you to help fix the problems you see around you every day?

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