



The Magi: Preparing for Wonder
December 22, 2024
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Group Leader Notes

Welcome to the final message in our Advent series, *Prepare Him Room*. We have been looking at how different Biblical characters prepared for Jesus' birth to inform us how we can prepare our hearts to receive Jesus this Christmas season. From the prophets, we learned that repentance opens our hearts to God. From Mary, we learned that humility and faith are required for us to accept God's invitation. From Joseph, we learned what the heart of a servant truly looks like, lowering oneself to lift others up. Today, we are going to focus on the Magi and what it means to wonder.

Question:

What does wonder have to do with our own search for meaning and truth?

Bottom Line:

When we make room in our lives for wonder, anything is possible.

Memory Verse: Matthew 6:33

³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Take Home Message: Lessons from the Magi

1. Be willing to seek, to travel, to search, to be active participants in the quest for meaning, even if we don't fully understand what it is we are seeking.
2. If we come close to Jesus, we should expect our plans to change and our lives to be transformed.
3. Seeking isn't just for seekers but an integral part of every step of the faith journey.

Main Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem ²and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶"'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.'^[b]"

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Other Scripture References

Matthew 1:18, 24-25

Matthew 2:3-11

Numbers 24:17

Teaching Points:

- The Magi were a priestly caste in ancient Persia or Babylon. They were religious government officials whose job was to advise the rulers.
- The Magi were seekers of wisdom through what could be explained in the physical world but also for deeper truths beyond what was empirically verifiable.
- King Herod was appointed King of the Jews by the Roman Senate in 40 BC.

Group Discussion

Begin in prayer before reading and discussing the text.

1. Pastor Rachel said we are modern, rational people who believe in data and science. But do we not also long for deeper wisdom that can't be measured or recorded, proven or disproven, sold or bought? Which of us doesn't long for meaning, purpose, beauty, or truth?
2. In some mysterious way, we live better, kinder lives when we follow Jesus. Jesus changes our trajectory. Have you observed this in others' lives or perhaps even in yourself? Discuss with your group who it was and the specific change you noticed.
3. We often understand the word “seeker” to refer to those curious about faith but haven't yet made a commitment. But what if seeking is an integral part of every stage of the faith journey? Like the Magi, ask and seek and knock at Jesus' door. Offer him the gifts you have, and allow him to change your plans, maybe even the whole trajectory of your life.
 - Ask your small group if anyone would like to share any leanings of the Holy Spirit or a new invitation to serve.
4. Pastor Rachel closed by message by inviting us to make room for wonder. Discuss where and when you can steal a quiet moment this crazy Christmas week to look

around at the beauty of nature and invite Jesus into your heart again as if it were for the very first time.

Let's Pray: Matthew 7:7-8

⁷ "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.