

12/18/11

That Crazy Family of Yours #4 – Fixing Your Focus

- what a great a Christmas Hymn – reminding us of what the angels did on the first Christmas...
- and what an unusual phrase with which to end the song...
 - glory to the newborn King...
 - there's a lot of words that often come to mind when we think about newborns...but king isn't generally one of them...
 - we would not normally bow down to a crib, to a manger, to a newborn...
- but would you agree with me this morning...that who you bow down to is a powerful expression of the nature of your heart...
- if you pay attention to sports at all, you've been following the story of Tim Tebow...
- Tebow's parents are missionaries...and the doctors advised his mother to abort him because of the danger of the pregnancy...
- His mother chose to let her baby live and then homeschooled Tim with his four siblings in Florida.
- when a law was passed allowing homeschool children to participate in public school sports, Tim began playing quarterback for Neese High School...
- he distinguished himself quickly as a excellent athlete and team motivator even though his presence as a homeschool student created a fair amount of controversy...
- as it turns out...the words controversy and Tebow are frequently used in the same sentence...because he has not only been an outstanding football player—he has simultaneously been an outspoken follower of Christ...'
- He did missionary work in the Philippines...he characteristically begins his interviews by thanking Jesus Christ his Lord and Savior and then giving credit to his teammates for his success on the field...
- but throughout his stellar career at the University of Florida and now as the quarterback for the Denver Broncos...what has become the greatest focus has even received its own nickname...Tebowing...
- Goggling that word is fascinating...
- Tebowing – verb - to get down on a knee and start praying, even if everyone else around you is doing something completely different.
- An article was posted Tuesday on the FoxNews website that said..."The Global Language Monitor announced Monday that it acknowledges that the word "Tebowing" has officially entered the English language...
- I was reading a story a couple of weeks ago of a little boy who was going into surgery and assured everyone he was going to be OK because he had tebowed...
- pictures are coming in from literally around the world of people tebowing...some genuinely, some perhaps in mockery...
- but wouldn't you love it if your name was going to be associated with something, that it was associated with you bowing down to your God...and you did it so faithfully that it turned the world upside down...where everybody was talking about it...so much so that publishers would have to include the word in the next version of their dictionary?...

- that leads to a question, doesn't it?...who are you going to be bowing down to this Christmas?...not just literally, and probably not on the football field...but everywhere you find yourself in the next two weeks...
- with that in mind, please open your Bible to Matthew chapter 2...page 1 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you...
- I realize that this is about the time a poor fellow reaches over to his wife and whispers...Oh no Ethel, I think Pastor Viars forgot this was the day for the Christmas Musical...
- no, I didn't...Vern...but we want you to have something directly from God's Word that frames the great music and narration we're about to enjoy together...
- read Matthew 2:1-12
- This Christmas we're talking about That Crazy Family of Yours...
 - how do we handle the special challenges that come with this particular time of year when we're around people and situations that can be stressful to say the least...
 - one answer is by Fixing Your Focus...being sure that you're bowing down to the right thing...or in this case, to the right Person...
- think with me about this story of the wisemen for a moment and consider 3 lessons from men who bowed down wisely.

I. Be Sure the Object of Your Worship Deserves that Position.

- there is very little we actually know about these men...and most of what we read in Christmas cards is either speculative or downright wrong...
- for example, we don't know that there were only three – just that there were three kinds of gifts...
- we certainly don't know they rode camels...some believe Arabian horses is a better guess...
- we don't know their country of origin – “from the east” takes in quite a bit of territory in the ancient world...
- and even the biblical description “magi” or “wise men” leaves a lot of room for interpretation...
- but we do know this – they were intent on worshipping the One God identified to them through the sign of a star...
- they made a bee-line to find the place of His birth so they could bow down and worship Him...
- if you and I are going to handle the next 14 days well...we'll need to look for opportunities to do that very thing...
- in our hearts and minds...to Tebow...to come and bow down to Him...
- I've seen examples of that all over the place the last few days...
 - people calmly serving in CFE...they were tebowing....
 - a teenage girl greeting us warmly at the LN – out in the cold...Tebowing....
 - the leader of the LN walking around checking everything, one of the set directors whose wife just passed away a few weeks ago on location greeting guests in the midst of his sorrow...tebowing...

- See, every thought, every desire, every word, every action is an expression of worship...it reveals the identity of our functional god...
- I would encourage you as you listen to the music to ask yourself how you can bow down to Christ and worship Him in the way you respond to the challenges of the holidays with your family and everyone else...

- now please think of it from Herod's perspective...

II. Beware of the Tendency to Let Your Personal Agenda Crowd Out the Savior.

- this bowing thing has made many people very nervous...
- that happened the first Christmas, didn't it?...
- v. 3 – When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled...
- that word literally means agitated...like being inside a washing machine...
- and why was that?...because Herod already had a king...and it was himself...
- that's a surefire way to ruin Christmas with your family...believing the day, or the season, or the situation ought to revolve around you...
- see, Jesus is the rightful king...and He might be planning some challenges for you this Christmas, disappointments, occasions of being slighted or sinned against...just so that you'll have opportunities to show who your rightful king truly is...
- when your heart starts to be agitated the next two weeks – ask yourself, am I focused right now on my agenda, or Christ's agenda?...
 - and if you would say – well, how can I have the kind of relationship with Christ where He's really my king?...
 - or maybe you heard Tebow say the other day when people were giving him a hard time for Tebowing every chance he got – he said – my relationship with Christ is personal—like a marriage – you don't just tell your wife you love her on your wedding day...you do it every time you get a chance...exactly...
 - and if you do know Christ – please allow this music to help you recommit yourself to bowing down to His agenda each and every time you have the opportunity this season...

III. Let Fulfilled Prophecy Adjust Your Focus This Christmas.

- if you're a skeptic, you might say – but why should I bow down to a newborn?...
- lots of reasons...but one that comes screaming out of this text is that the precise details of His birth were prophesied hundreds of years before they occurred...
- as if maybe God had a plan...not that the Broncos would beat the Bears last Sunday night in a come from behind overtime victory that now puts them in sole possession of first place in the AFC West...
- as if the birth, life, and subsequent death and resurrection were all part of God's plan for the redemption of every person who would bow their knee to Christ in repentance and faith...
- so take your helmet off...get down on one knee...let's bow down.

[Following the Christmas musical]

- our choir has helped us make things crystal clear this morning, haven't they?...
- to whom are you bowing down?...who/what is your king?....
- I imagine that some who will be here today would say – I don't have the kind of relationship with Jesus Christ that we've been talking about today...

- when Tim Tebow talks about loving Jesus the way a husband would love his wife....that sounds like a foreign language...
- can I just tell you that if that's your condition this morning – we're so glad you're here...
 - but now it's time to consider taking a step...
 - maybe another Christmas metaphor will help all of understand what that looks like...
- John 1:11-12 - He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,
- a relationship with Jesus Christ begins by admitting your need, and then accepting the free gift of salvation available through His shed blood...
- you're trusting Him as your Lord and Savior...
- Christian friend – you're going to have all sorts of opportunities to Tebow while you're around that crazy family of yours...
 - not literally of course...but every bit as powerfully...
 - when you let that snide comment go by instead of feeling like you have to respond in kind...you're bowing down...
 - when you give in to your spouse's preference and do it the way they would like...you're bowing down to Christ...
 - when you care more about serving than being served...you're bowing down...