

Giving to God Like the Wisemen

A Life Wrapped with Worship

Matthew 2:1-12

Christmas was when the greatest event since Creation, took place in a sleepy little village just five miles south of Jerusalem. Sadly, the lives of most people surrounding Christ's birth were like the rooms of Bethlehem's Inn—too full to let Jesus in. But God's Word turns the spotlight onto five scenes where room was made for Jesus. Five settings where people's time and attention were given to Christ as a gift. Those who had room for Christ, and time to present their gifts will never be forgotten.

Christmas for us as believers is all about giving our personal offering of adoration and worship; and offering our worship to God is all about making room in our life for Him. To set the scene for our study of God's Word this morning, we start with perhaps the best known scene of the Christmas story: an inn with no vacancy, and a stable that became the birthplace for the King of the Universe. As we read Luke 2:1-7 the lesson we are seeking to learn is about how vital in our lives it is to:

Make Room For God

Please stand as we read Luke 2:1-7:

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. 6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NKJV)

Pray

Christmas was when no room was found for the Owner of the Universe, and he had to be welcomed in a borrowed stable. Like the Apostle John said, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"--they didn't have room for God.

But those who made room for Christ were given the greatest of all treasures—they were able to come before the Creator of the Universe in the form of baby Jesus, and offer themselves in worship to Him.

This Christmas is your life, your schedule, and your priorities like the Inn: with no room for Jesus? Or are you like those who welcomed Him, worshipped Him, and enjoyed His Presence because they made room in their lives for Him?

Who Made Room for Jesus?

This Christmas season we have looked at lives that were focused upon Christ at His birth. Each of these lives have been immortalized by God for what they did. Think of that. These individuals did something that **only God really saw**, and what only a few others barely witnessed as they watched. But what those did has become a part of what will last forever and ever.

1. **Giving room to God Like Mary: A Life of Consecration** (Luke 1:26-55). We can offer a treasured gift to God by: giving our attention to God, giving our independence to God, giving our body to God, giving our future to God, giving our schedule to God. That is giving a life of consecration to God like Mary.
2. **Giving room to God Like the Shepherds: A Life Wrapped with Humility** (Luke 2:8-20). We can offer a treasured gift to God by: coming to God like we are, listening to God when He speaks, responding to God immediately, going against the crowd, seeking Christ until we find Him, telling everyone the Good News.
3. **Giving room to God Like Simeon: A Life of Walking in the Spirit** (Luke 2:22-35). We can offer a treasured gift to God by: seeking each day to be emptied of self, filled with the Spirit, illumined by the Spirit, and led by the Spirit.
4. **Giving room to God Like Anna: A Life of Thanks** (Luke 2:36-38). We can offer a treasured gift to God by: giving our life to God; giving our words to God; giving our circumstances to God; giving our physical presence to God; giving our spiritual consciousness to God; giving our spiritual disciplines to God; giving our activities to God.

Now, we come to the Wisemen as we turn to Matthew 2. The Wisemen are placed as the final event of the Christmas story. They are after the birth, after the Shepherds, after the 8th day name-giving at Christ's circumcision, after the Temple visit and dedication event with Simeon and Anna. They are last.

It is fitting that God places them as the bookend, or the period to a very full paragraph in redemptive history. They reveal so much to us about what God treasures from our lives.

Giving to God Like the Wisemen: A Life Wrapped with Worship

(Matthew 2:1-12).

Here are some of the insights we can draw from these verses in Matthew 2:

God is in command of history, directing human events for His purposes.

Mt. 2:1a *“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king”.*

God raises up and puts down both kings and kingdoms. God sent Christ in the fulness of time, at the exact moment chosen by the Almighty. God is never late, rarely early, always on time. God has planned out the framework of history.

Lesson: **Trust your life into the Hands of the God of Eternity, who knows equally well the past, present, and future.** God has planned the place, the time, the setting for when our lives would be. He awaits what we will give Him, in the form of our worship-prompted gifts of time, talents, and treasures.

God is at work all throughout the world and all throughout history, using ordinary people to do things that will last forever.

Mt. 2:1b-2a *“behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying (present participle, saying over and over), “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?”*

This such a powerful example of Word-based worship. God promised the arrival of the Christ in the Scriptures. They came looking because they believed the Word of God. That is faith, and without faith in what God has said, it is “impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6). These Magi, were most likely related to the group that Daniel won for the Lord way back 600 years earlier in Babylon.

Lesson: **What are you a part of today that will last for 600 years?** What are you doing today that will matter in 600 years? Who are you investing in today that God can use to pass on through the generations to come His perfect truths, plan, and will?

God is never limited by distance, nor is He limited by time.

Mt. 2:2b *“For we have seen His star in the East”.*

Probably from the other side of the Arabian deserts, from Babylon or nearby, came these focused seekers of the Christ. Worship, like salvation, is all about coming to the right person: the Almighty, living and true God.

This such a powerful example of Christ-based worship. They were looking for “Him”. These men had heard about the promised One, the Christ, spoken of throughout the Holy Scriptures. They studied God’s Word, believed His truth, and were led to look for the newborn King promised by God.

Lesson: They lived between 600 and 1,200 miles away (**God is not hindered by great distances**), and they were from pagan, non-Jewish peoples (**God is not limited by our circumstances**), and they had heard most likely from a 600 year old prophet’s words (**God is not limited by vast spans of time**).

God is looking for individuals who want to personally respond to Him, listen, obey, and follow Him through life.

Mt. 2:2c *“and have come to worship Him.”*

God can always get us to the right place if we will just “follow” Him. Do you see the lesson in the way these Wisemen offered their worship?

It was Personal Worship. They didn’t send their gifts of worship by another’s hand; they came and brought their worship personally to Jesus. The lesson of their pursuit is that you and I should: **Come and seek out Christ's presence ourself.**

God wants you, in person, to come to Him. Undaunted by the long and arduous journey, they must have been amazed to find a mere baby in a stable.

After the magnificence of King Herod’s palace and his overpowering presence, it is amazing that they fell down in worship before baby Jesus as they did. Choosing to disobey Herod’s demand that they reveal the location of Jesus indicates their faith. This choice could have cost them their lives. So in every way it was a personal coming to Jesus that marked their lives.

Lesson: **Have you come personally to Jesus in prayer, worship, and adoration today?** Have you given yourself to seeking and finding intimacy with Jesus this Christmas? That is the first gift. Remember how Paul commended the saints that “first gave themselves” (II Corinthians 8:5)?

From the two year calculation of Herod’s death warrant on the babies of the region (Mt. 2: 7) we can infer that it took many months for these Wisemen to travel to Jerusalem. Herod added some months on each end to cover any potential birth near that time.

It was Costly Worship: they took days, weeks, even months out of their lives to focus on the task of seeing Christ. They braved long days of travel, uncomfortable nights on the road, dangers, delays, and whatever else can happen when going to a far

away place. Even today this journey is very difficult and dangerous.

Lesson: What are we sacrificially giving to Jesus this Christmas that costs us something?

God is prepared to help His servants who always face opposition, danger, and obstacles to following Him.

Mt. 2:3-9a "When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" 7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." 9 When they heard the king, they departed;

The startling fact is--that though these religious professionals could recite the right answer, their hearts were indifferent to the truth of God's Word. They knew the Scriptures; they just did not believe them! But the Magi were willing to go anywhere in order to find the Promised King and Savior.

These three responses to Christ are still present today: Herod hated Him; the leaders ignored Him; but the Magi loved Him. The wrath of a paranoid king, the apathy of proud religious leaders and Bible scholars, and the singular focus of the Wisemen.

Lesson: Today we either hate Him, ignore Him, or love Him! There is no middle ground with Christ. Either we actively or passively oppose Him (hate & ignore) or we are actively seeking Him.

God wanted the Wisemen to keep following Him by faith so He could reward them.

Mt. 2:9b "and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was."

God is a rewarder of those who walk by faith, and diligently seek to follow Him (Heb. 11:6). We can here see that the star didn't lead them 24/7/365. They had to keep walking, following, and obeying even when things were not crystal clear. That is how God does it. That is part of the walk of faith.

Keep going the way God has directed, and when it is time for a turn, a redirection, He will make that clear. If we are set on following Him, He is set on leading, guiding, and helping us all we need. The star came and went, the star wasn't always visible.

Lesson: **Follow Jesus.** Life is the same for us today. God only gives us as much as we need, when we need it. That is grace for today: daily bread, a light for our path, the next step we should obediently take.

God always rewards those who walk by faith.

Mt. 2:10 *"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy".*

Real joy is a fruit of the Spirit of God. Joy is when we are detached from our circumstances, and attached to God's plans. The wisemen experienced a dose of the measureless ("exceedingly great") joy that God offers. Nothing on Earth can compare to the joy that God offers.

When the God whom the Wisemen followed, gave them direction, and showed them more of the Christ they came looking for, they paused to raise this offering of joy to God.

Lesson: **As we follow God, each time we get a fresh sighting of Christ in His Word, we need to pause, lift our hearts and offer worship to Him.**

Finding Christ is our greatest pursuit, passion, and delight.

Mt. 2:11 *And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down (notice the immediate response to the Divinity of Christ, they dropped down flat before Him just like everywhere else in the Bible that people got in front of God) and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him (worship always involves giving—giving gifts of praise and adoration, as well as gifts of time and treasure): gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

The Wisemen brought prophetic gifts that pictured what Christ's earthly work was all about. They brought what they had in their lives as wealthy rulers. And that is what God wanted, that is why He chose them.

Lesson: **Present what you have To Worship Him**

When God chose you it was not to bring their gifts but yours. Remember how the Lord accents the gifts of each individual. None are the same; all are precious to Him. Think through the people and gifts that God uses in His Word.

- Remember the little boy's lunch that fed thousands?

- Then there was the borrowing of an unbroken colt to carry the King of Kings as He rode to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.
- And who can ever forget the un-requested flask of perfume broken and spilled out just for love of Jesus.
- How about an anonymous person's upper room that witnessed the Last Supper, the appearances of the Risen Christ, and the prayer meeting of Pentecost?

Present what you have to Him this morning.

Give Him your mind—let Him fill it.

Give Him your hands—let Him guide and use them.

Give Him your future—let Him plan and direct your life.

Give Him your treasures—He can store them and invest them in safe places that bring everlasting rewards.

Worship is Making Room for Jesus

God's Word presents to us a question this Christmas is, "How much room is there in our lives for Jesus?" We need to examine whether we give Him room in our desires, our thinking, our planning, and our talking.

- Do we talk more about Him than *to Him*?
- Do we do more for Him than *with Him*?
- Are we content with knowing more about Him than *from Him*?

The greatest moment of all was when at last these patient Wisemen saw the One they had sought for so long. Before they rushed in with their gifts, before they poured out their treasures, they just wanted to adore Him—they came, they bowed, and they fell down and worshipped Him!

Worship is a rare and easily lost atmosphere of devotion, adoration, sacrifice, and communion. Those Wisemen were overwhelmed at the sight of the One they came so far to see; the One they had waited so long to honor; the One they had paid so much to sacrifice their gifts upon—and when at last they saw Him they fell down and worshipped Him.

What Hinders Our Worship of Jesus?

Someone once defined idolatry as worshipping what we are supposed to use and using what we are supposed to worship. Have you checked lately, how you are doing in the worship department of your life? We can uncover those things that we worship in life by doing a few diagnostic tests:

- First, try the test of sacrifice—“What things will we make sacrifices for, in order to get them?” True worship involves sacrifice.
- Second, try the test of seeking—“What is it that we are really pursuing in life?” True worship involves seeking.

What you and I seek out and sacrifice for can become something we worship, if we persist seeking and sacrificing to get whatever it is. Many things were designed by God for our use: food, money, time, pleasures, possessions, and so on. In their right place each is a powerful tool. Wrongly placed in our lives as the goal of our desires, they become idols that we worship in place of God.

One of my favorite hymns that challenges me each Christmas is that old hymn that affirms over and over, ‘there’s room in my heart for Thee’. Turn there with me in your hymnbooks to # 127.

Make Room for Jesus Every Day

The hymn “Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne” was written by Emily E. S. Elliott (1836–1897) for the children of her father’s church, in Brighton, England. Using simple wording, she presents a clear challenge to all of us, during the Christmas season and also throughout the entire year.

1. Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown when Thou camest to earth for me; but in Bethlehem’s home was there found no room for Thy holy nativity.
Refrain: O come to my heart, Lord Jesus— there is room in my heart for Thee!
2. Heaven’s arches rang when the angels sang, proclaiming Thy royal degree; but of lowly birth didst Thou come to earth, and in great humility.
3. When the heav’ns shall ring and the angels sing at Thy coming to victory, let Thy voice call me home, saying, “Yet there is room—there is room at My side for thee,” My heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus, when thou comest and callest for me!