

**PP The Season 4 Giving**

**Part 3-Matthew 2:1-12**

**12/18-19/2021**

Have you ever thought about why the wise men undertook the journey to go see Jesus?  
 It was a long, dangerous and uncomfortable trip with no luxury coach bus or 4 lane highway  
 At that time there were over 50,000 miles of roads in the Roman Empire, but the Parthians were  
 not the road builders that the Romans were  
 It was a taxing journey of great distance, so what motivated them to make this difficult trip?  
 We discover the answer in their question to Herod: ***“Where is He who has been born king of the  
 Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.” 2:2***  
 The star got their attention, but what got them moving was their desire ***‘to worship Him’***  
 They wanted to worship the one ***‘born the king of the Jews’***, not the one who *would become* the  
 king of the Jews...do you understand the difference?  
 Jesus was not just someone who someday would be king but rather One born the king, the King  
 eternal, whose birth was His introduction to the world, and the wise went to worship Him  
 But it is important that we go a little deeper into their incredible act of worship

**PP** When we think of ***‘worship’*** we need to associate with it the word *trembling*  
 But it is not trembling that comes from terror, afraid God is upset with you and will punish you  
 No, it's something else entirely and I'll explain it like this  
 My son Aaron's dog, a Belgian Malinois is the most highly trained out of control dog I know  
 Aaron will come home with a new toy for him, and make him sit, and while Asher will do it, his  
 body starts trembling with an excitement for that toy  
 He has a single-minded focus...all of his being yearns for that toy  
**PP** You see, worship is a single-minded desire that demands to be expressed toward God, and  
 until it is, that pent up desire can cause your entire being to tremble with excitement  
 Worship is the greatest experience possible for us, a desire to express our love and devotion to  
 the One for Whom we were made

The greatest desire you can have is to be with God...and Christian, He is yours to be with!

**PP** ***“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for  
 God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” Psalm 42:1-2***

The greatest freedom you can possess is to live in His love, and you have all of His love!  
 Your greatest delight is His smile toward you, and Christian, He is smiling on you!

But worship isn't just feelings-oriented...it is driven by truth and it affects the way we live life  
 The word **PP** ***‘worship’*** described a dog licking its master's hand, an all-consuming adoration

**PP** ***To worship Christ is to adore Him, to be utterly convinced of His greatness, and to respond  
 with our devotion, trembling with excitement and affection for Him***

Friends, the wise men were worshiping Jesus long before they reached Bethlehem  
 And it motivated them to make this long journey and offer the very best of what they had

***“And going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and  
 worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and  
 frankincense and myrrh.” 2:11***

One of the least noticed but important words in this verse is the word ***‘then’***

Look with me at verse 11, and let me read it differently: *‘opening their treasures, they offered*

*him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh, and they fell down and worshiped him.”*  
 Without the word ‘*then*’, the sequence is off and it distorts the way that worship works in us  
 The wise men fell down and worshiped, *then* they offered Him gifts  
 Their gift giving came from their hearts of trembling, adoring, excitement-filled worship  
**PP** Worship must precede giving to God, or it will become a distorted, selfish and joyless duty  
 Parents, we understand this because on Christmas morning, we experience that our affection and  
 love for our kids moved us to joyfully give them gifts  
 I never experienced this until I had children, but there were often times when they were young  
 that when I looked at them, a gut-deep yearning of love would pass through me  
 It could not be contained and I would either hug them, or tell them ‘I love you’, or usually both  
 Friends, worship is an internal spring of adoration that moves us to give our lives to God with  
 single-minded focus

It was a spring of adoration that dropped the wise men to their faces, demanding expression by  
 opening their ‘*treasures*’, caskets or boxes, and offering the Christ-King their gifts  
 It didn’t matter that each of the gifts were costly  
 Worship actually closes the calculator app in our minds, giving no thought to the cost  
 overwhelmed with the desire to give  
 Worship is occupied with, **PP** *What gifts can I give that are worthy of my King?*  
 They opened their treasures, and out came gold first, a gift worthy of a king  
 But not an earthly king destined to sit on an earthly throne, but one born the King of all kings,  
**PP** *“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every  
 name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and  
 under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God  
 the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11*

Then they opened the second gift, frankincense, an incense mixed with oil to anoint priests  
 This toddler’s throne was above all earthly thrones, and He was the Great High Priest, sent by  
 God to administer redemption to all who would believe  
 Let’s look at the third gift and ask ourselves, *How much do I know about Myrrh?*  
**PP** (Pic of tree) Myrrh, perhaps surprisingly, was harvested from the Commiphora tree that  
 grows primarily in Arabian peninsula and Africa  
 The tree farmers would slice the tree, a process called striping, which allowed the thick sap to  
 slowly ooze so it could be scraped off onto a board where it would harden into crystals  
 Myrrh was used to deodorize clothing, blankets, beds, as well as their own bodies  
 It was crushed and mixed with oil for its fragrance, and with wine to create a mild pain reliever  
 It was wine with myrrh that the soldiers offered to Jesus on the cross, but He refused it  
 But another use of myrrh factors most prominently into the gift of the wise men


Do you recall that Joseph from the OT was sold into slavery by his brothers, to a caravan of  
 merchants who were carrying products to sell in Egypt, one of which was myrrh  
 The Egyptians purchased large amounts of myrrh that they used in embalming their dead  
 The Jews embalmed by washing the dead body, then wrapping it in linen strips that were  
 soaked in myrrh and spices  
**PP** *“Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of  
 myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus*

*and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.”*

**John 19:39-40**


So why did the wise men offer myrrh as a gift that sprang from their worship?  
They likely did not fully understand, but myrrh was a symbol for His suffering and death

I do not like paintings of Jesus, for we do not know what He really looked like  
So it isn't for the depiction of Jesus that I show you a painting from the artist Holman Hunt  
called the *Shadow of Death*

 **(Pic)** He painted Jesus as having come out of His carpenter's workshop, stretching His tired  
body in the rays of the late afternoon sun

You can see the surprise and shock in Mary his mother, having been working on her knees, when  
she saw the shadow her son cast behind Him

You see, behind the entire life of Christ, was the reality that He was born to die  
The gift of myrrh given to the One who would die for us is the greatest demonstration of God's  
love we will ever see

 **PP** *“For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one  
would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still  
sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:7-8*

Jesus didn't die for those who had cleaned up their act, he died for us while we were still sinners,  
born rebels to the King of kings


Until a person recognizes that He died for him or her, then salvation is out of reach!


The gift of myrrh was the declaration of faith that Jesus the Son of God suffered and died the  
death we should have died, Who died to atone for our sins


And when we take all three gifts that came from the worship of the wise men, we have a  
beautiful picture of salvation faith

They gave gifts to their King, their Redeemer and their Savior

They didn't give these to purchase their salvation, but to worship the only One Who could save

 **PP** We come to Jesus believing that He is my King, my Lord


 **PP** We come to Jesus believing that He is my Great High Priest Who has redeemed me from my  
sins

 **PP** We come to Jesus believing that He is the Savior Who died for me that I could live

Our kids have given Denise and I so many coffee mugs bought at their school Christmas sales,  
and they all seem to crack and break, but I love to drink my coffee out of them

It's because they were given by the ones I love more than anyone

This is *The Season 4 Giving*, and though our gifts of worship are feeble, Jesus so loves them

So reflect on this question... **PP** *Have you fallen down before the Christ-Child in adoration?*

Has He so captured your affections that you have removed every obstacle to come to Him, your  
fear, your pride, the thoughts of others?

Let's pray