

COS Sermon Study
“Wise Men Still Seek Him”
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Epiphany Sunday - January 7, 2024

Prayer: Lord, guide us by your word. Give us your spirit today as we discuss this word of Scripture and we seek to know you and your wisdom alone. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Warm-Up: Who is someone you consider to be wise? What is it about them that makes you think that?

Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

1. Takeaway 1: What is Wisdom?

- a. Our ESV translation calls these visitors to Jesus “Wise Men.” Other common ways of referring to them include kings or magi. But, the phrase “wise men” might make us think about the concept of wisdom.
- b. Some definitions of wisdom from online include:
 - i. “Intelligence is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.”
 - ii. “Knowledge tells you it's raining. Wisdom tells you to find shelter.”
 - iii. “Knowledge is simply knowing something. Wisdom is knowing the best things to do with the knowledge that you have.
 - iv. “You cannot read a text or go through training and come out the other side as wise. You need experience. The notion of the wise old man in the monastery who had never been outside it always struck me as ridiculous. If the dude never left the monastery, how the heck would he have any clue about how the rest of the world functions?”

Q: What do you think of these definitions? What do they get right? What would you change or improve?

2. Takeaway 2: What is Royalty?

- a. The Wise Men follow the star to Israel but end up going to Jerusalem and Herod first. It’s clear that they’re looking for a king, so they go to the place where they expect to find a king. They end up being wrong.
- b. Herod hears word of a king and assumes that his hold to the throne is in jeopardy. Later in this chapter, we read that Herod killed all boys under the age of two in order to ensure that he would stay in power. But, Jesus wasn’t after an earthly throne. Herod’s idea of royalty, kingship, and power was also wrong.

Q: A Presidential Election is coming up, and we're bound to start thinking about a "throne" and power and authority. How do we fall into the same mistakes the Wise Men and Herod did? How can we avoid these mistakes?

3. Takeaway 3: Who is Jesus?

- a. Jesus doesn't really do much in this reading (He was a baby, after all), but Matthew still thought it was important enough to include this event as he wrote his account of Jesus' life and ministry.

Q: What does this reading tell us about Jesus? (Who he is, what matters to him and his ministry, what he came to accomplish, etc)

Reflection/Application:

1. Do you consider yourself wise? What do you do (or "can you do") in order to become wiser?
2. Do you consider the Church to be wise? (you can think narrowly about Christ Our Savior, or widely about the church in America or the people of God worldwide)
3. What might the Church look different if we cared about power and royalty like Jesus does? Are there things that we do already that reflect that we have a right understanding of power and royalty?

Suggestions for Further Study:

1. 1 Corinthians 1:17-31 — *Paul's words here should affect the way we talk about wisdom and foolishness.*
2. Joshua 2 (esp. Verses 8 thru 14) — *Epiphany reminds us that Jesus' mission is for all the world—even gentiles! Rahab is a great example of God's mission to the gentiles in the Old Testament.*

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, in your wisdom you announced Jesus' birth not to the greatest kings and high priests who might have "deserved it" but to people who were unexpected: shepherds and foreign magi. Help us to see Jesus, not because we deserve him, but because he came to save us. And hear us now as we pray for these things near and dear to us... [close with specific petitions as your group needs].