

Sermon Outline - Sun, December 27th, 2020 – Stay on the Light – Overview
(Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12)

Overview – During this advent season we have been focusing on the story of the Three Wise Men who were willing to follow a star to find the Baby Jesus. And this year the light they may have been following (the alignment of Jupiter and Saturn) happened since its last appearance more than 400 years ago. They were searching for change, they looked beyond the political structure and they saw the power of small packages. Now in our fourth week of considering what we can learn from these guys, we reflect on the fact that they contributed their gifts to the transformational project.

Story Exegesis

- Quick reminder - The Three Wise Men, or the Magi as they are often called were probably Zoroastrian scholars in the king's court.
- The stars were an important part of their tradition so when the star appears and they see it they recognize it as a powerful sign, but it takes them some time to get there.
- They travel hundreds of miles, stop by to see King Herod and then make their way to Bethlehem
- Most likely by the time they get to Jesus he is somewhere between 8-12 months old
- Even though he is a little babe the scriptures say they worship him like a King and they brought three gifts
 - Gold = kingship
 - Frankincense = priestly incense = sweet perfume
 - Myrrh = anointing and embalming = also connected to sacrifice and suffering = in the Eastern world myrrh was also used for healing. Not necessarily contradictory

Key Points – They brought gifts that mattered and these are gifts we can also give God

1. Gift of making God king in our life – We begin by acknowledging God's glory and sovereignty as the wise men did. It also means truly letting go of control and surrendering to God's will in our lives and in the world
2. Gift of building real relationship with God and leaning into the sweetness of life – A relationship with God is also about intimacy and joy. Can we commit to creating space for the beauty and joy into our lives
3. Gift of sacrifice, necessary death and healing – Life will have struggles, but in the case of Jesus, death led to great abundance. Can we not avoid struggles but think about how we lean into them to learn what God is teaching us and grow.

Core Questions –

1. How have you allowed God more control in your life and where can you continue to let go?
2. How can you invite more sweet joy into your life in the coming year?
3. Where has struggle allowed you to grow in this year? What challenges do you need to lean into in the coming year?