

Sermon Outline - Sun, December 13th, 2020 – Stay on the Light – Week 2
(Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12)

Overview – Last week we launched a 5 week series – Stay on the Light. We are focusing on the The Three Wise Men and what they can teach us about the Christmas story and how to live in expectation of Jesus. Last week we focused on the idea that they were looking for change. First, they were looking for change. They looked up to the sky every night to discover the future. Second, in that process they developed strong night vision – the ability to find light in the midst of darkness. Finally, when the signs said go, they went even without all the answers about where they were going and what they would find.

Story Exegesis

- You may have heard the term the “Three Kings”. No evidence that any of them were actual kings, (no kingdoms where three people were kings) but probable they were part of the kings court.
- Before Islam became the dominant religion of the Middle East, Zorostrianism was the popular religion. It was started by the prophet Zoraster – it encouraged folks to worship one Ahura Mazda “Illuminating Wisdom” or “Wise Lord
- Magi is more correct – they were powerful in the royal court – known as “king makers”
- They go to Jerusalem to Herod/City Hall to get help with finding Jesus. They need to consult the local prophets but they are looking for something beyond the power structure

Key Points – They didn’t put their faith in the political or cultural structure

1. They struck out on the path of change even if others in their community didn’t follow.
2. They were clear that the transformation was at the margins, not the center - They engaged with the political structure at the center, but they pushed on to the margins in search of the transformative power they were seeking.
3. They put the power structure on notice that God was moving.

I am much more politically engaged than the average person. People in power know my name and know that I will call them in when it comes to working for justice. I am not telling you not to engage in politics, but just be clear where the transformative change is happening and know that it is rarely in the official halls of power. (ex. Police Reform – We are building across this state. It may reap benefits of legislation but the real power will be what we continue to do in our local communities and how we stand with and for each other.)

Core Questions –

1. What institutions, cultures or communities are you so tied to that you are afraid to strike out in search of the deeper transformation you/we need?
2. The Wise Men stopped by City Hall and then made their way to Bethlehem. Do you try to bypass the political space or get stuck focusing all your energy there?
3. What would it look like for you to live in such a way that puts the power structure on notice – “God is bringing something transformative to pass right now.” Can you think of an example where that has happened? If not, think of a cause that you care about and imagine what it would be like to live out that declaration.