

## What do we do when we find Him?

What is your response when you meet a small child? Some people pick them up? Others will high five or fist bump them. Some of us just wave. Then there are those of us who give them treats. Maybe you are one who gives them Pokemon cards. Some people make faces, or suddenly talk in little kid talk. When we come in contact with a child, something in us causes us to pause and realize "I should approach this child a little differently than I do a normal adult."

On the flip side, how do you respond when you meet someone of high stature? A celebrity, a politician, royalty? People that the world esteems highly? What do you do differently or how does it change your behavior when you are in their presence or as a result of meeting them? If there is anything that will alter the way you and I act or carry ourselves it is usually in one of these two scenarios.

Welcome to the final week of our Christmas Series we have been calling SEEKING. Over the last couple of weeks we have been taking a look at the story of the Magi with the goal of trying to learn what it was that gave them the motivation to seek after Jesus the way they did. Our prayer is that we would all have hearts that are still seeking Him today. In Week 1 we learned from the Magi **What does it look like to SEEK Him?** For the Magi they were intentional in seeking to find Jesus. They were anticipating His arrival. And they were willing to go to great lengths to see Him when they learned about His birth. Last week we asked the question: **What do we bring Him?** What is an appropriate gift for the King of heaven? As we learned last week the Magi brought Jesus gifts that honored Jesus for who He is and we talked about how we can honor Jesus in the same ways by bringing Him our obedience to honor Him as our earthly King, bringing Him our hope and faith to honor Him as our heavenly King and living out a changed life in order to honor the death He experienced on our behalf. And today as we close out our series we want to discuss **What do we do when we find Him?** One thing is for sure. We cannot find Jesus and stay the same! It will change the way we live our lives.

You see Jesus was both a little child and divine royalty. But not just any child! He was and is the promised Messiah. The one the scriptures promised would be the savior of Israel. The seed of Abraham by which all the world would be blessed. And as the gifts the Magi brought Him indicated, He was a LORD over all and as a result of His life the world would be forever changed. You see, if we meet Jesus it must alter the way you and I live.

At the concept of meeting this child who was king of the universe we are going to look at 2 different responses, the response of the magi, and the response of King herod. So before we dive in **let's (PRAY).**

If you have your Bible's turn with me to Matthew 2 as we pick up where we left off last week and look at the Magi and their response to Jesus.

**Matthew 2:9-12 (NIV) 9** After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

**10** When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. **11** On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. **12** And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The Magi went through an incredible journey to get there, and they thought it was worth it to go a different route and change the way they left in order to protect Jesus. Their encounter with Jesus told them that whatever portions of their journey they had to shift or sacrifice, it was worth it having met Jesus and had the opportunity to worship Him.

### **Leaving different is a true indication that we've actually met Jesus**

God changed the direction of the Magi after meeting Jesus. The Lord does that with all of us as we truly meet Jesus as well. We see this with the first disciples when they were called to leave their old lives behind and be something completely different.

**Matthew 4:18-22 (NIV)** **18** As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. **19** "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." **20** At once they left their nets and followed him. **21** Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, **22** and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

It is important to note that this was not the first time these guys had encountered Jesus. Jesus had been developing a relationship with these guys for some time and as a result of this deepening relationship Jesus called them to something more where their lives were now going to change from living for themselves to now living for Him.

We see this with Paul where He was called to turn from his self righteousness as a religious leader and rather than persecute those who were following Jesus join with them in spreading the Gospel to the world.

**Acts 22:3-16 (NIV)** **3** "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. **4** I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, **5** as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished. **6** "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. **7** I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' **8** "'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. " 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. **9** My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. **10** "'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked.

Paul, who was already zealous for God, was on his way to persecute Christians by bringing about their deaths. While on his journey to do so He encountered Jesus in a drastic way and all it took was to hear one phrase from the voice of the Lord and his entire life changed.

“ ‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ **11** My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. **12** “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. **13** He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him. **14** “Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. **15** You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. **16** And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

I want you to consider the impact of what happens when God gets our attention and we hear what the Lord has to say to us. It has the power to change our lives. The Magi heard from God in a dream and they changed their planned route home. The disciples met Jesus and heard his call to follow Him and they gave their lives to doing. Paul met Jesus on the damascus road and did what He had instructed him and God used him to advance the church and the Gospel westward. Yet here we are with easy access to Bibles and some of us are a little hesitant to open them. As a result, we are living our lives however we want and we have hindered the opportunity we have to meet Jesus in the pages of scripture. Have you met Jesus? If you have then you should be living differently than you were before you met Him.

**Has Jesus truly changed you, or have you just changed how you act in front of others?** In other words have you experienced true **LIFE TRANSFORMATION** or just **BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION**. Here is a little heart diagnostic you can do to examine where you are.

- 1) Do you act one way when you are in the church building and another when we are outside of it in the world? If you do, you are probably experiencing behavior modification instead of life transformation.
- 2) Do you view obedience to God as a means of gaining salvation or do you see it as a reasonable response to living as a result of the salvation you have been offered? If you see it as a means to gaining salvation you are most likely engaged in behavior modification.

Jesus came to transform our lives. To call us to a new way of living. If you have met Jesus you will leave differently than you were before you came to Him! Are you acting like you met baby Jesus or has your life been drastically changed because you have met King Jesus? Has your encounter changed you for the moment or is it changing you for the rest of your life? Is your encounter a one time event or is it a lifelong relationship? You see, when the Magi met Jesus they not only left a different way physically but they left with a changed heart!

However, when we encounter Herod we see a different heart posture and response to the opportunity to meet Jesus. Herod said he wanted to worship. He even made a big display of it as if he wanted his life to be significantly impacted by Jesus.

**Matthew 2:8** He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

But I want you to notice that Herod **stayed** in his throne room. He **stood** there while others were truly seeking after Jesus. If Herod was actually seeking Jesus and really serious about worshipping Him as he said he was, shouldn't he have gone with the Magi? In fact, if he was truly sincere would he have not been looking for His arrival like they were? After all, Jesus was only 6 miles away. The Magi have been traveling for over 800 miles up to this point. I mean how serious is he really about worshipping the newborn KING?

**We say we want to be closer to God, but in reality we want God to fit in where we are without upsetting our current life flow.**

Jesus often encountered people like the Pharisees and teachers of the law that would ask questions, or be present in His life and ministry, but they weren't actually there for the purpose of meeting God.

**Matthew 22:34-46 (NIV)** **34** Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. **35** One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: **36** “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” **37** Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ **40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” **41** While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, **42** “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?” “The son of David,” they replied. **43** He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, **44** “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”’ **45** If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” **46** No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

You see, the religious leaders during Jesus's ministry were more focused on themselves and wanted to put a stop to anything that would mess with what they had going on personally. They really didn't care for what Jesus had to say; they just wanted to make sure Jesus and His presence wasn't going to inconvenience their existence. We see this when Jesus was arrested and taken before Pilate prior to his crucifixion.

**Matthew 27:15-20 (ESV)** **15** Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. **16** And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. **17** So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” **18** For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. **19** Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much

because of him today in a dream.” **20** Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

This mindset was also true of Herod. He had a good thing going as a puppet king of the Roman Empire and He didn't want the talk of a new king being born to mess up his sweet situation. As a result, Herod made it look like he was interested but in all reality he just wanted to make sure this king would not be a problem.

**Matthew 2:12-16 (NIV)** **12** And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” **14** So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, **15** where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” **16** When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

What Herod did by saying he wanted to worship Jesus, was really a front to try and kill Jesus. What Herod did was just as dishonest as the Pharisees. Herod and the religious leaders tried to use the sword to kill Jesus and hinder the Gospel. But if we are not careful we, just like Herod and the Pharisee can use our superficial relationship to kill others' and their access to Jesus. In fact that is the warning Jesus gave to the Pharisees in Matthew 22

**Matthew 22:13-15 (NIV)** **13** “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. **15** “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

Jesus makes it clear that there is no real value in a superficial relationship with Jesus. In fact, it only serves to hinder others from being able to come to Jesus. But a genuine relationship is one that can inspire others and draw them into a relationship with Jesus.

**Acts 17:26-27 (NIV)** **26** From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. **27** God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.”

Herod wanted to give the impression of seeking Jesus, but wasn't willing to do whatever it took to submit to Him. Instead, he was willing to take the lives of hundreds or thousands of Children in a horrible display of fear and self preservation.

**We say we want to get close to Jesus but we're quick to kill any opportunity or situation that allows us to actually do so**

## **Worship Team Comes Back Up**

Ultimately Herod wasn't seeking Jesus because He was too focused on His own thing. The Magi invested their life's work in seeking for this promised Messiah and when the sign of His appearing took place they didn't miss it. Which one describes you?

### **Invitation:**

What are you seeking?

Is life getting in the way?

What will be your legacy based on your response to Jesus?