

They Opened Their Treasures

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

Warming Up

Questions:

1. *What was your favorite memory from the Advent/Christmas season?*
2. *What do you hope our witness will be as a church heading into 2024?*

Digging In

Read **Matthew 2:1-6**.

Magi are often referred to as magicians, or possibly astrologers, or even kings in Christian songs and tradition. In historical tradition, the Magi were religious and political advisors to Persian kings, and sometimes their ambassadors. These were their primary roles according to ancient historical texts. Sometimes the Magi would show up to barter peace between the Parthian Empire and Roman Empire.

Questions:

1. *If the Magi were seen as political advisors and ambassadors of Persia, why might Herod be “disturbed”?*
2. *What do you think the Magi hoped to gain by coming to visit Jesus?*
3. *What do you think it means that Jesus’ initial coming into the world didn’t alleviate the conflicts that already existed in First Century Palestine?*

Read **Matthew 2:7-11**.

Questions:

1. *Who, exactly, shows up in this Matthew 2 story?*
2. *Which people/groups do you think were afraid, and what were the different fears you think they carried?*

Read **Matthew 2:12-18**.

In the text, both Herod and the Magi assert that they intend to worship Jesus. But Herod and the Magi act in very different ways. Our actions often reveal how and what we worship. So did theirs.

Questions:

1. *What action did Herod take in claiming to worship Jesus, and what did his actions reveal about how and what he worshipped?*
2. *What action did the Magi take in claiming to worship Jesus, and what did their actions reveal about how and what they worshipped?*

Sending Out

Romans 12 is an early Christian treatise on what it means and what it looks like to worship Jesus. They seem to be concerned that their worship could miss the mark, or that their worship could turn toward something or someone else. And so in Romans 12 they remind each other what true and proper worship aimed at Jesus should be like.

Read **Romans 12:1-21**.

Questions:

1. *What actions do we take that reveal our worship is aimed at our leaders or political figures?*
2. *What actions do we take that reveal our worship is aimed at ourselves?*
3. *What actions do we take that reveal our worship is aimed at Jesus the Christ?*

Closing

Take a moment in silence to come before God and ask the question, *“What word or phrase or idea or moment does God want me to remember from this morning and carry with me this week?”*

Close with prayer.