

Worship the King

Matthew 2:1-12

Pastor Darin

What Worship Looks Like

This passage shows us two reasons people look for Jesus.

- Herod was looking for Jesus *to protect his own reign*.
- The Wise men were looking for Jesus *to acknowledge his reign*.

Are you like the wise men – seeking Jesus to worship Him?

Or are you like King Herod? Are you threatened by Jesus? In your life, *are YOU the KING?* Do you make the rules and set the agenda? A lot of people are like that. They don't want a king like Jesus because THEY want to be king – they want to stay in control.

Since you're here today, you are more like the wise men! They discerned from the stars, from their situation and from the Scriptures that this newborn king would reign over all kingdoms and would be a shepherd for His people – a loving and compassionate king!

So the wise men show us three steps to worshipping Jesus. They show us *what worship looks like*.

First, seek the truth. God is always calling to people – He is always making Himself known. But people resist Him, they cover their ears and block their eyes from the truth right in front of them in creation, in their life circumstances and in the Scriptures.

So the first step to worship is to SEEK. The Wise men show us that *it is worth EVERY EFFORT to find the truth*. They watched the heavens and saw in the movement of a particular star something unusual. So they studied and discussed the meaning of this and determined that star signaled the birth of a new king who would be unlike any other king. They didn't know exactly where the baby was or what kind of king he would be. So they set out on a long journey to find out.

Are you a truth seeker like the wise men? Or do you RESIST the truth like Herod? During his ministry Jesus promised, *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."* The apostle James wrote *"Draw near to God and he will draw near to you"* (4:8).

It's ironic that King Herod – the truth resister – gave the wise men good advice! He said in v. 8 ***Go and search diligently for the child.*** That is exactly what all of us should do – and what the wise men did. But Herod did not follow his own advice. Why didn't he go with the wise men? Why didn't he search things out for himself?

Because he wasn't interested in the truth – he was interested in power. Control. He was the king and he wanted to remain the king. I think we can all relate to that sometimes. We like to be kings and

queens. We like to be in control. If you seek the truth about Jesus you will find that He will far surpass your expectations – that he is a much better king than you are.

Lee Strobel was a successful journalist and a vocal atheist. You may have heard his story in the excellent book and feature film, *The Case for Christ*.

Strobel only believed what could be researched and proven. He was all about the facts and would pour himself into a story to find the truth. But then his wife “got religion” and Lee thought she had gone crazy and that their marriage might be over. So he set out to determine what had happened to her and hopefully fix it. This led him to research Christianity.

He read books, he met with scholars. He even started going to church with his wife. The more he studied, the more he read, the more experts he talked to **the more he found that Christianity appeared to be true**. In his latest book, *The Case for Grace*, Strobel admits that what kept him from believing in Jesus had less to do with facts and philosophy and more to do with his anger against his dad. They had a fight when he was a teenager and Lee never forgave his father. Without knowing it, Strobel transferred his anger against his dad into anger against God. It became a helpful excuse to stay in control – to remain in charge of his own life.

But Strobel was good at researching a story and gradually he became convinced that it was all true. Then he not only committed his life to Christ, but devoted the last 25 years of his life to defending the faith he once attacked.

Seek the truth. Encourage your friends and family to read the New Testament. Study the life of Jesus. Look at the kind of man he was, the kind of leader he was. **Seek the truth and you will find Jesus IS THE TRUTH**. He is the answer to your questions!

The second step to worship is to **BOW BEFORE THE KING**. Because when you find Jesus you will realize, as the wise men did that Jesus was not just another baby boy. There was something utterly unique about Him. He was a normal baby but he was something more – there was something DIVINE; something supernatural about him. And we know the reason that the wise men could only wonder at – **the son of Mary was also the Son of God**.

Once you realize who Jesus is, the only appropriate response is to bow before Him as King.

The wise men were convinced by a remarkable star. For you God may have used a star, a situation, a person, a book or the Bible itself – maybe all of these. What he is showing you is the same thing he showed the wise men – that Jesus is a king unlike any other. He is the King of the whole universe – the creator and Lord of all! When you meet a king, you bow. When you meet the King of Kings, you fall on your face!

Verse 10 says, “When they saw the star” over the place where the child was **“they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.”** They had found the KING they were searching for!

They went into the house and when **“they saw the child with Mary his mother, they fell down and worshiped him”** (v. 11). To fall down before someone was to recognize their power over you, their superiority to you. The wise men served a king in their own country but they knew this baby had more

glory and power than their king – or any king. Falling down was a sign of **reverence and submission**. They were showing the utmost respect and honor for Jesus and pledging themselves to serve Him as their King.

Have you bowed to King Jesus? Have you recognized his authority and supremacy over you? If you refuse to bow – if you stand up straight – you are holding on to power and control over your life. Your neck won't bend. You will not acknowledge that JESUS IS LORD and therefore He is in charge. If you are STIFF-NECKED then you will not bow. You will resist the truth and reject the King.

Jesus was born to be our Savior. But He can only save you if you BOW before Him as LORD. Seek the truth and you'll see the love and glory of Jesus. Then bow in reverence and submission to Him as YOUR KING.

The third step is to **GIVE JESUS EVERYTHING**. The wise men *“fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.”* Worship involves both reverence and DEVOTION. Yes, God wants our respect and honor. But He also wants our LOVE. He wants our HEARTS. Bow before Him in reverence. But go beyond that to give him your life- ***present all you have to the Lord for His use.***

We don't know what became of these wise men. They went back to their own country but did they bring Christianity back with them? Did they continue to worship and serve Jesus? Or was this journey just an interesting exercise – like a research project?

For lots of people learning about Jesus is just that – **an academic exercise**. They may read the Bible a little and come to church sometimes, read a book here and there; but they have not made a real, personal commitment to Christ.

The wise men presented Jesus with expensive gifts – gold and spices. But what Jesus really wants from all of us is not our money or or things – He wants our HEARTS. He wants YOU. He wants ME.

Have you given everything to Jesus? Have you given Him your heart and life – or do you just give Jesus a few dollars and a few minutes here and there? What is holding you back from giving Jesus EVERYTHING?

- The wise men travelled hundreds, maybe thousands of miles in search of the truth. Have you gone to those lengths to learn about Jesus?
- The wise men fell down before Jesus in reverence. Have you come to recognize the glory and power and sovereignty of Jesus? Have you bowed before Him as Your King?
- And have you given everything to Him? Have you surrendered? Or are you still holding out – still like King Herod – resisting the truth?

I learned about Jesus as a young child. But I didn't give Him everything until I was a teenager. And it's been an ongoing process even since then ***to give more and more of myself to Jesus, my King.*** The more you learn about His love and goodness and grace the more He calls you to surrender yourself to His rule.

Brother, sister, friend – ***Jesus is a much better king than you are!*** He is a much better King than I am. Don't hold on to the power and control over your life. That will keep you from knowing Jesus as YOUR KING. Bow to Him! Surrender everything to Him. *"If you hold onto your life you will lose it. If you lose your life for Jesus and the gospel you will save it!"*

Then you will know the JOY the wise men experienced. **Then you will know the safety** they experienced – when God warned them in a dream to avoid Herod on their way back home. **Then you will know the PEACE** of being forgiven, accepted and loved by God.

Imagine you are a child at the edge of a pool – and your dad is calling you to jump to him. You've never been in a pool before so you are scared. But you hear your father calling. You cannot know what the water is like until you jump. You might say you trust your dad but the sign of trust is that your feet leave the side and you let go of control – trusting your father to catch you.

For some of you that may be exactly what is happening right now spiritually. God, your Father, is calling you to jump to Him. You are scared. You don't want to give up control. But you cannot know the peace, security and joy of the Lord until you ***take that leap of faith***. Trust Jesus to catch you. He doesn't want your stuff – He just wants YOU. Give yourself completely to Him!

For some of us this means ***surrendering control AGAIN***. You know God's voice – you love and trust Jesus. But you are scared. You're going through something difficult and you're struggling to trust God completely. He is calling you to jump into His arms – to trust him with all of your heart. Give yourself completely to Jesus – trust Him to catch you – to hold on to you!

Let's close with a little exercise. There are three movements in worship – seek the truth, bow to the king and give Jesus everything. I'm going to lead us in these three movements right now.

1. Since you came today, you are seeking the truth. So **LET'S ALL STAND UP NOW AS A SIGN OF OUR DESIRE TO BE TRUTH SEEKERS**. Let's be like the wise men who took a long journey at great expense and great risk to get to know this miracle baby. You may be like Lee Strobel and have lots of questions. God is not afraid of your questions – and neither are we. You are welcome at either Oakwood or Bahia Vida JUST AS YOU ARE. Come with your questions and ideas – come to learn. Let's open the Bible together next year so we can learn more about Jesus and grow closer to Him!
2. Second – **BOW YOUR HEAD AND CLOSE YOUR EYES AS A SIGN OF YOUR REVERENCE FOR JESUS**. Let's all bow before Him as the One True King. That little baby who was born 2,000 years ago - the Son of Mary was also the Son of God! We believe that Jesus Christ is LORD – the King of Kings, the ruler over all things. And we bow before Him to honor Him.
3. Third – with every head bowed and every eye closed – if you are ready and only if you really mean this personally... if you want to **GIVE EVERYTHING TO JESUS RIGHT NOW, PLEASE RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND**. No one is looking, no one is counting, no one is taking names. This is just between you and the Lord. But if you want to devote yourself fully to Jesus, reach your hand up high.
 - a. Maybe it's your first time calling on Jesus to forgive your sins and save you – reach your hand up to Him!

- b. Maybe you've been following Jesus for a long time but you want to give Him more – you want to love and trust and serve Him more – with all you are – lift up your hand.
- c. Some of you can't help it and want to lift both hands – go ahead – lift your hands.

Lord Jesus – we are here to worship you. We bow before you as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We thank you for coming to be born as a baby. When we were running from you, you came to us. When we were resisting the truth, you came to seek and save the lost. Help us now to seek after you. Help us to submit to you. Help us to give everything we are to you – for your glory and your kingdom!