

Today's Message: "Searching For Christmas"

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.
(Matthew 2:1-11, ESV)

I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. (Proverbs 8:17, ESV)

God cares more about the passion in your heart than He does the knowledge in your head.

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. ⁴¹ I do not receive glory from people. ⁴² But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. ⁴³ I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.
(John 5:39-43, ESV)

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,
(Philippians 2:14-15 ESV)

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December 2 & 3, 2017

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Small Group or Personal Reflection Questions:

1. Do you embrace Christmas music and decorations before, or only after, Thanksgiving?
2. Read Matthew 2:1-11
 - In what ways do the Magi exhibit a passion to leave their comfort zones and find the Messiah?
 - Why do you think the chief priests, who had the same knowledge, didn't also look for Jesus?
 - In what ways do you, like Herod, struggle to give God control in your life?
3. What is your reaction to this statement? "God cares more about the passion in your heart than He does the knowledge in your head."
4. This season, how will you "go and search diligently for the child"?

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