

SRMBC Family Bible Study
All I Want For Christmas
Opening the Gifts of God's Grace
December 18, 2019
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Lesson 4: The Gift of a New Style of Living Matthew 2:1-18

To build a house we need a design and a blueprint from an architect. We want the design to be both beautiful and comfortable, a house that fulfills our dreams. To build a beautiful, satisfying marriage to fill that house we also need a wise designer's plan.

Group Discussion.

Describe something you once strongly desired (for example, a car, television, stereo or a relationship with a particular person). When you got it, did it fulfill your expectations? Explain why or why not.



Ralphie Parker when he was nine years old wanted only one thing for that Christmas: a Red Ryder Carbine Action 200-shot Range Model air rifle. Ralphie's desire is rejected with the warning: "You'll shoot your eye out."

After being disappointed at first, Robbie opens the last present and receives the Red Ryder Gun he wanted and takes it outside to shoot.

The nation of Israel waited for centuries for God's anointed king to be born. Jesus' birth, however, was not greeted with royal gladness by the nation and its leaders. Instead, there was intrigue and conflict. The political and religious establishment felt threatened by the coming of the Messiah. It was left to foreign leaders to welcome the newborn king.

Read Matthew 2:1-18.

1. Compare and contrast Jesus the heavenly king and Herod the earthly king in this chapter.

Jesus: The King of kings

- Willing to leave His throne too sacrifice and serve
- He is the Living Word and the fulfilment of the Prophecy of Scripture
- Came to save and give His life for the guilty of sin against God.
- Worthy of Worship and Praise from the lowly to the kings.

Questions

- How do you think Ralphie felt when he first received his Rifle and then after he used it? Why?
- Describe something you once strongly desired. When you got it, did it fulfill your expectations? Explain why or why not.
- Have you ever encountered people who seem to have everything yet still are unhappy?
- How does the Birth of Christ bring us unexpected Blessings that changes our lives?

Herod: The king of the Jews

- Would not leave his throne to seek or serve the King.
 - Rejected the Word and stood in opposition to the Will of God
 - Was motivated to steal, kill and destroy innocents to maintain power.
 - Wanting to selfishly retain power for earthly gain.
2. But drawing only from the information in this passage, what can we discover about them?
- **Foreigners** – They were Gentiles from the East looking to worship and present gifts the One born “King of the Jews:
 - **Financially Well off** – they were able to embark on a long trip to search of the Child and presented expensive gifts (Frankincense, Gold and Myrrh) to Him.
 - **Faithful** – They were determined to find the Child – no matter the cost or disappointments
 - **Feared God** – Once they received the message in a dream not to return to Herod, they returned “another way” – Fearing God more than King Herod

There is not a great deal of info on the Wise Men. What is important to note is that these foreigners are able to find out about his birth and come to celebrate him, thus establishing that Jesus’ birth has international significance.

3. How has knowing Jesus involved you in a search or journey that made a change in you—either initially or in your ongoing spiritual life?

Key Facts

- **Priorities** – In search of Jesus, the things that I once thought were so important – now pale in significance...
 - **Position** – My search for Jesus has led to have my Spiritual position has changed from Death to new life in Christ.
 - **Perspective** – Jesus changed my perspective on personal events in my life and the surrounding world events to a Christian Worldview.
 - **Prospects** – Despite what my present looks like I know that my prospects for the eternal future in Christ are bright and a joy to look forward to.
 - **Personality** – My daily search for Jesus in Prayer, Scripture and in Church has and is changing me more and more into the image of Him.
4. Compare and contrast the response of the religious leaders (vv. 4-6) to the response of the Magi (vv. 7-12).

The Religious Leaders

- They knew the Prophecy of where the King/Saviour would be.

- Although knowing where Jesus was and there was a search for Him – had no desire to see Him for themselves.
- They had a greater reverence for an evil/earthy king instead of the King of kings.

The Magi

- They were sincere in their search for the King/Messiah.
 - Once they were told where the Child would be they immediately set out find Him.
 - They rejoiced, saw and worshipped Christ.
 - They had more allegiance to Word from the Lord than to King Herod.
5. On hearing of Jesus' birth from the searching Magi, Herod also begins a search for the newborn Christ (vv. 13-16). How does his search compare with that of the Magi?

King Herod's Search

- Motivated By Pride, Fear, Anger and Greed.
- False pretense – seeking the King/Jesus with impure motives.
- Not even willing to leave his own throne to find the King.
- Willing to destroy and kill innocents rather than humility and worship.

The Magi's Search

- They were motivated by a desire to worship the King/Messiah.
 - They rejoiced when they saw the Star.
 - They were sincere in their search to find the King.
 - They were willing to sacrifice time, preference and resources to worship the King.
6. The responses of the Magi and Herod are typical of the ways people respond to Jesus today. Describe some different responses to Jesus you have witnessed?
- **Opposition** – Unbelief of who Jesus is and our responsibility we have to Him to deal with our guilt of sin before a Holy God – even to the point of aggressive opposition.
 - **Indifference** – hearing the truth about Jesus yet caring more about the things of this world rather than the world to come.
 - **Superficiality** – Giving lip-service to the claims of Christ but not having the heart or sincerity to carry it through to end.
 - **Faith/Trust** – Hearing the Word of Jesus and believing the message and giving wholehearted devotion and sacrifice to the Lord.

“But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.” – Mark 4:20 (NKJV)

7. God is the unseen actor throughout the chapter. In what ways can we see his behind-the-scenes actions (vv. 6, 15)?

Scriptures	God's Behind The Scenes Actions
<i>6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' "</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God moved the Roman Gov. to call for a census to get Jesus Bethlehem. • God moved the Wise men to seek Jesus. • Enlightened the Religious leaders to find the Prophecy in Mic 5:2 on the Messiah's Birth. • Sent the Star to guide the Magi to Jesus.
<i>15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God guided the Magi not to return to Herod. • God even allowed Herod to murder innocent Children to fulfill OT prophecy. • God speaks to Joseph to take Mary and the Child and Mary to Egypt and to return after Herod's Death.

Someone once said that "God is obvious by his absence and his silence is the loudest noise in the universe." In this passage God is active in every single thing that happens, but is seldom mentioned.

8. What activities or practices might help you to foster a season of Advent which is centered on the Christ child who has come to fulfill God's promises to us?

Here are 10 ways to keep Christ at the center of your Christmas celebration:

1. Read the Bible story with your family. (Matthew 1:18-2:23, Luke 2:1-20)
2. Walk through Old Testament prophecies about the birth of Christ.
3. Use an advent calendar with Scripture in it.
4. Watch a Christ-focused movie.
5. Call out wrong messages about Christmas.
6. Listen to Christ-exalting Christmas music.
7. Remember the dangers of materialism.
8. Give Christ-centered gifts.
9. Make the highlight of your Christmas serving others.
10. Share Christ with others.

Advent Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for these precious Christmas gifts of good news, a new understanding, a strong foundation, and a new way of living. Give us the grace to recognize these gifts and claim them for our own, not just at Christmas but throughout our lives. We know that we meet you in other people. Guide us and transform us as we pass on valuable gifts of time, kindness, encouragement, and appreciation to others. And above all, help us to remember always that the greatest gift is love.

Amen.