

GOT PEACE?
"A GIFT WORTH GIVING"

Pastor Chuck Wysong
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Matthew 2:1-12

The wise men started it all. Their gifts were...

1. **PERSONALLY** given
2. **PROPERLY** given

Kinds of gifts we give at Christmastime:

1. The "**GIVE A GIFT TO GET A GIFT**" gift
2. The "**FAVOR**" gift
3. The "**GRACE**" gift

WHAT ARE GRACE GIFTS?

1. It is impossible to **MEASURE THE COST** of these gifts
2. These gifts are usually **NON-MATERIAL**
 - A. **TOGETHERNESS** gifts
 - B. **SERVICE** gifts
 - C. **ENCOURAGING WORDS** gifts

What the wise men teach about giving:

1. Give an **UNEXPECTED GIFT**

Someone I'll give to this year: _____

2. Give with **GENUINE JOY**

"Giving with a glad and generous heart has a way of rooting out the tough old miser within us. Even the poor need to know that they can give. Just the very act of letting go of money or some other treasure does something within us. That something is it destroys the demon, greed." - Richard Foster

3. Give something **THAT WILL LAST**

Gifts you can give that will last forever:

- A. **GOOD MEMORIES**
- B. **GODLY HERITAGE**

4. Give **THAT GIFT NOW**

"He who waits to do a great deal of good all at once will never do anything."
- Samuel Johnson

"They were going to be all they wanted to be, tomorrow.
None would be braver or kinder than they, tomorrow.
A friend who was troubled and wearied they knew,
Would be glad for a lift and needed it too,
And on him they would call and see what they could do, tomorrow.
Each morning they stacked up the letters they'd write, tomorrow.
And thought of the folks that they would fill with delight, tomorrow.
The greatest of people they just might have been.
The world would have opened its heart up to them.
But in fact, they passed on and faded from view,
And all they had left when their living was through,
Was a mountain of things they intended to do, tomorrow."

BIG IDEA: The wise men gave gifts out of response to the greatest gift ever given, God's Son Jesus Christ. John 3:16; 1 John 4:19

TIME WITH GOD

Memory Verse: “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.” Psalm 95:6 (NIV)

Monday

What do you want for Christmas? What desires do you still have? Write at least one thing down:

Look up Matthew 2:1-12. What did the Magi desire? What did Herod desire? Read Psalm 37:3-5. Now reflect on your desire(s) in light of this passage. How can you “delight yourself” in the Lord today?

Ask God to help you to delight in Him today. Offer your desires to Him as an act of worship and ask God to clarify or confirm them for you.

Tuesday

Look up Matthew 2:1-12 again. Why was Herod “disturbed”? (v. 3b)

Do you think the chief priests and the scribes were disturbed? Why, or why not?

What disturbs you? Write at least one thing down:

What does the thing, or things, that disturb you reveal about your desires? Should these things disturb you? Why or why not?

As an act of worship, talk to God about whatever it is that disturbs you. Ask God to give you a heart that is disturbed over the things that matter, and at ease over the things that don't.

Wednesday

Read Psalm 25:9, Isaiah 58:11 & Matthew 2:10. The Magi received direction from God in a unique way. How have you received God's direction in your life?

What do these verses teach you about how God guides and directs us?

What prevents you from seeking God's direction, or following it?

Thank God today for the guidance that He has given you over this past year.

Ask Him SPECIFICALLY to direct you today in your relationships, your future and your spiritual life.

Thursday

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Matthew 2:11 & Romans 12:1. What do these verses teach you about our response to God?

How would you describe your own response to God?

In what way or ways is it difficult for you to respond to God?

What are you tempted to hold back? Why?

Talk to God about the things you struggle to trust Him with. Ask God to give you the desire to offer your whole being — doubts, struggles, and all — to Him. On this first day of the year, you can worship God by offering yourself as a “living sacrifice.” Now ask for the grace necessary to do this!

Friday

Read Matthew 7:7-8 & Acts 17:24-28. There were a lot of things that the Magi didn't know about Jesus, but that didn't keep them from seeking and eventually finding Him.

What does the story of the Magi teach you about God's grace?

What does it teach you about God's desire for human beings?

How does this fact encourage you in your own spiritual journey?

Thank God that he wanted you to find Him! Pray to God and ask Him to direct you throughout this last day of 2011. As an act of worship, tell God that you are willing to follow Him wherever he leads you this year. Thank God for giving guidance to all who seek Him. Pray for one person you know who is still seeking God. As an act of worship, ask God to use you in this person's life to help point the way to Jesus Christ.

Saturday

Brush up on this week's memory verse (Psalm 95:6) and review any days you may have missed during the week. Please pray for this weekend's services and our upcoming Christmas Eve services. Thanks