

Journey in a Different Direction

Sermon January 9, 2022

Scripture reading: Isaiah 60:1–6 & Matthew 2:1–12

Golden verse: *“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”* Jeremiah 29:11

At the beginning of a new year, we might ask: How should I know that I am in the right place where God wants to see me? How should I know if I am doing the right things? How should I know which one is the right way on a crossroad?

The wise men’s journey 2,000 years ago was like the Christians’ journey in 2022.

God showed them a sign that, outside of our world, there is a place called eternity. There is a God above the sky, who cares for humanity. Beside their material values, there are more important eternal values. The wise men understood that a person came from heaven to the earth to reconnect the earthly with the eternal, the created people to their Creator, humans with God.

These wise men financially were wealthy, but their wealth was not enough to connect them with the eternal God. This is why they started their journey towards the unknown with their deep desire to meet the Ambassador. This newborn King could transform their lives and help them to find everlasting values on earth which, at the end of their earthly lives, would take them to God, where they could continue their everlasting lives.

These wise men, first of all, had a desire to find the newborn King, who could connect them with God. May the Holy Spirit raise in all our hearts, at the beginning of this New Year, that we all may have this sacred desire to meet the Child of Bethlehem, who came to us to reconnect us with God.

These wise men were challenged many ways on their journey. Many circumstances placed pressure on them to change their minds and to give up searching for Christ the King. However, their hearts’ desire was much bigger than the obstacles they experienced.

God cared for them, showing them the way, and encouraging them through the light of a new star, the star of Bethlehem. This type of encouragement was so powerful that not even Herod’s hatred and the priests’ neglectful and unconcerned behaviour was able to stop them on their journey. They had a deep desire and commitment to continue their search, no matter what, until they found the eternal

King, who was born as a human. Because they did not give up their hearts' desire, God led them to Christ.

Their meeting and their personal connection with Christ Jesus changed their whole lives. The Bible does not tell us exactly what kind of spiritual changes they made in their lives, but there is simple information which is telling us that they continued to live as those who met Christ Jesus, embracing the spiritual gifts THEY RECEIVED from Jesus, and they stayed reconnected with the Eternal God, who from heaven was showing them the way to Bethlehem.

It is interesting that we did not read, that the star was leading them from Bethlehem back to their country from which they came. But we read that God talked to them in their dreams, they understood God's message and they chose a DIFFERENT direction for themselves.

This DIFFERENT DIRECTION can be understood as a spiritual direction as well.

When an airplane is flying in a direction, the airplane and the pilots are constantly connected to the tower of their destination. This is how we have to be constantly connected to our God through the signals we receive from the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is our tower who helps us to adjust everything to Him.

These wise men were born again by meeting Jesus, adoring Him, and including Him into their hearts. They were born into God's family. From that day, they started to grow into God and become mature in Christ. Growing in God implies steady development and increasing wisdom.

If we would like to grow spiritually in Christ, we have to commit ourselves to walk in God's way, to listen to His truth, and we will live in Him on this earth and in His eternity.

The rules God will give us again must be observed for good spiritual health.

1. Read your Bible daily. Take His words seriously, and you will see that His words will guide you amongst your daily challenges. His Words will comfort you, will guide you, will correct you, and will encourage you. In God's words, you will find EVERYTHING you need for every particular day.
2. Continue to pray regularly – always. Prayer is communicating. You will see that every prayer that you pray will be answered. Sometimes that answer

may be “Yes” and sometimes “No,” and sometimes it is “Wait,” but nevertheless it will be answered.

3. Listen constantly to the Holy Spirit and be open so God’s Spirit might guide your steps. And if the Holy Spirit will ask you to take another road, then do not ask God why, but do what the Holy Spirit will tell you. Take the first step by accepting God’s message and He will guide you. Let the Holy Spirit take over all the choices and decisions of your life.
4. Please come and worship regularly. The Church is not only an organization but Christ’s body. We Christians need one another. We need to gather together to worship God, and nothing can take the place of church attendance. Although we have to gather these days on Zoom, we have to attend these services to stay strong and secured.
5. Be a witnessing Christian. I am sure the wise men spread the news about everything they saw, what they heard and how God changed their direction. Today we have to witness in two special ways: by word and by living.
6. Let unconditional love rule everything in our lives. Jesus said to those who followed Him, *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (John 13:35). Let us demonstrate the fact that we are Christians, that we love one another and Christ loves us.
7. Obey Christ with your whole mind, soul and spirit. Be an obedient Christian. Let us allow Christ to have first place in all of our choices.
8. Let us learn how to deal with temptations. Since the devil is everywhere, I am sure the wise men had some temptation not to listen to God to find another way home, but they did not listen to the tempter. They said to themselves and to each other: We don’t know why we cannot go through Jerusalem, since that would be the shortest way for us, taking the familiar roads, but since God said we should not take those, we won’t.
9. May our lives attract non-Christians to listen to Christ. We have to become Christ for them. May people see from our lives who Christ Jesus is. May our words and actions commend the Gospel and make it attractive to others.

May God help us to live above our circumstances. Let us not allow our bad circumstances to get us down. May we experience constantly that the Lord is

with us, and may we follow Him faithfully day by day, until we get to our final destination. Amen