

Prepare The Way
The Magi
12/21/19
Newport News Campus

Opening

- Jolene meme winner...
- Persnickety Crane Café...

Introduction

-Matthew 3:1-3

-Jesus is our King, traveling from Heaven to be with us, to rescue us, to save us! And John the Baptist is reminding us that the work of preparing our hearts for His arrival is no small task!

(he compares it to mountains, valleys, crooked and rough roads...changing the geography of the heart!)

-Matthew 3:2 is how we Prepare The Way...

- Repent of your sins... (last week)
- Turn to God... (28th)
- The Kingdom of Heaven is near... (tonight)

-The 3 remarkable/epic journeys...

- **Escape to Egypt - repent of your sins**
- **The Maigi - the Kingdom of Heaven is near**
- **Return to Nazareth - turn to God**

-This series is about preparing the way for Jesus to have authority over area of our lives! And when we prepare a way, we make a way...pointing the world to Him!

Kingdom of Heaven (what is it?)

-First, that Heaven is **a very real place** that is only promised to those who make a vow of devotion to Christ. We then become citizens of Heaven, but arriving there only after death.

-Second, this phrase is used to speak to **a way of life**. If I am a citizen of Heaven then I should embrace the culture of Heaven. The culture of the Kingdom of Heaven is understood through the character of Christ. (next week)

-Third, the Kingdom of Heaven is always near because the literal Heaven that awaits us is on the other side of the brevity of life. **The Kingdom of Heaven is also near because the character of Christ is never distant, only arduous.**

It's not far away, but those few steps to get there sometimes feel impossible (like the remote control being just out of reach!) ...and I believe the journey of The Magi illustrate this for us more than any of the other epic journeys we see in the Christmas narrative.

The difference between the character Christ being near in my life and present in my life is sacrifice. (connect sacrifice & arduous)

Sacrifice of Time (being graded)

-There are lots of theories on the country of origin for the Magi...two prevailing ones are Persia (modern day Iran) or Sheba (modern day Yemen)...regardless, both are incredible journeys and when we look at the time line of visit of the Magi, it very likely took them two years.

-How much of your time is spent working to be more like Jesus? **What if a number appeared** on the screen for each of you by God for the following? Meaning were there intentional things you built into your yesterday for the purpose of building the character of Christ in you?

- **Yesterday?**
- **Last week?**
- **Last month?**
- **This past year?**
- **My lifetime?**

-Are you preparing the way?

Sacrifice of Purpose (forsaking your choice for His choice)

-What were Magi? (from Faith, Work, and Economics)

*The group of Magi in question came "from the East." ...They probably served as court advisors, making forecasts and predictions for their royal patrons based on their study of the stars, about which they were quite knowledgeable. **Magi often wandered from court to court, and it was not unusual for them to cover great distances in order to attend the birth or crowning of a king, paying their respects and offering gifts.** It is not surprising, therefore, that Matthew would mention them as validation of Jesus' kingship, or that Herod would regard their arrival as a very serious matter.*

-Daniel

- taken into captivity in 605 BC
- he lived in captivity of 70 years...
- Daniel 5:11 (he was the head Magi!!!)
- His sacred purpose!!!!

Both Daniel and others like Jeremiah carried with them the belief that God would one day send to the world a Savior...here we are in the story 500 years later and the Magi are stars of the story!!!

-This is the lie...I can't have a Godly purpose until I become a Godly person. I'm telling you tonight that you can't be a Godly person until you embrace a Godly purpose.

-Are you preparing the way?

Sacrifice of Treasure (making room for others at the cross)

-the three gifts (Matthew 2:11)

- Gold ...His dignity (royalty) -- King
- Frankincense...His divinity (fully God) -- Priest
- Myrrh...His destiny (explain how odd) -- Savior

-Are you willing to give up things that are treasures to you for the sake of people who are different than you?

-Arabs (Magi) and Jews (Joseph and Mary) coming together through Jesus...and harmony will always cost you something!!! (this picture is not about all religions being equal under Jesus...on the contrary, it means you must forsake your religion for Jesus but make room for one another's ethnic cultural norms)

-Acts 1:8

- Bishop Claude Alexander
- This isn't geographic...
- Jerusalem – start where you are
- Judea – to those who look down on you
- Samaria – to those on whom you look down
- Ends of the earth – THEN you have credibility!!!!

-Are you preparing the way?

Band

-2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:1 (verse two is Paul quoting Isaiah 49:8)

-Fantastic play on words here in verse 1 (NASB)

- “receive” is “de-cho-mai” which means to take into your hands
- “in vain” is “ken-os” which means to be empty handed

Close

-Matthew 12:21