



EPIPHANY SUNDAY JANUARY 7, 2024

## “A Case of Mistaken Identity”

### Daily Devotionals for January 8-13

#### Monday, January 8 Read Psalm 72:1-7;10-14

According to this psalm, what are some of the reasons given for praising and honoring God? As God’s representatives or ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20), how are we helping to fulfill this promise of God and thereby direct people towards God? How are you helping reveal God to the world around you?

#### Tuesday January 9 Read Isaiah 60:1-6

This passage of course foreshadows the arrival of the wise men, but it also reminds us that when the light-Jesus-comes, the world starts to become a different place. How has the presence of Christ made your life different? How does knowing Christ help give you direction and make sense of your life?

#### Wednesday, January 10 Read Ephesians 3:1-12

Remember that Paul is writing this to a gathering of believers (a church) not an individual. In what ways is he suggesting that our understanding of Christ and His mission for us as individuals is best understood and experienced through the church? Look closely at v. 10. What does this mean for you? For your church?

#### Thursday, January 11 Read Matthew 2:1-12

The presence of the wise men confirms that Christ came not just for Israel, but for the whole world. Their gifts of kingly gold, divine incense and sacrificial burial spices point to a change not just in earthly government but also in human-Divine relationships. story? In what ways do those motivations lurk within us as well?

#### Friday, January 12 Read Mark 1:4-11

His baptism marks the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Up until Jesus, prophets could only urge repentance and preparation. With Jesus, real change can be effected as the Holy Spirit begins working. Take a moment to reflect on your life and the ways the Spirit has been shaping you over the years. If there has not been change, why not? Discuss this with God in prayer.

#### Saturday, January 13 Read Psalm 29

Take some time, as you read and reflect on this psalm, to think about the times, places and circumstances where you strongly feel the need for God. How does this psalm offer peace, hope and confidence? In what ways does worship help fuel or confidence? Tell God thanks in prayer today!

#### Sermon Notes for 1-7-24

#### “A Case of Mistaken Identity”

*Matthew 2:1-12*

1. A life of **discipleship** is directed by knowing who **we** are and **Who** we **serve**.
2. Our **goals** and **priorities** are shaped by knowing that...

**A. Jesus is the One, eternal God.**

*“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” -  
John 14:9*

**B. Jesus determines what is **important**.**

*“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” -  
Matthew 16:24*

**C. Jesus’ love for us provides our **motivation**.**

*“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” -1 John 5:2-3*



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### Small Group Study & Discussion Guide

**1. Read Psalm 72:1-7;10-14 and discuss the following with your group.**

- According to this psalm, what are some of the reasons given for praising and honoring God?
- As God’s representatives or ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20), how are we helping to fulfill this promise of God and thereby direct people towards God?
- What are some of the ways we (as individuals and as the church) help to reveal God to the world around us?

**2. Look at Sermon Note #1 and discuss these questions:**

- Who are we in relation to God? How does understanding that (as best we can) affect how we respond to God and God’s call on our lives?
- What misconceptions about God and about ourselves leads to a weak or flawed discipleship? How can we counter these misconceptions?

**3. Read Matthew 2:1-12** Share: *“The presence of the wise men confirms that Christ came not just for Israel, but for the whole world. Their gifts of kingly gold, divine incense and sacrificial burial spices point to a change not just in earthly government but also in human-Divine relationships.”* Discuss the following:

- How does the Magi’s visit reshape the understanding of who the Messiah is and what His mission will be?
- What motivates Herod in this story? In what ways do those motivations lurk within us as well? Give some specific examples of these negative drives.

**4. If knowing who Jesus is and why He has come affects our priorities, discuss some of the specific ways knowing Him shapes you using the points below:**

**A. Jesus is the One, eternal God.**

- Is it important to your goals in life that Jesus is more than a teacher of good morals or a philosopher with good ideas? If He is indeed God, what happens when He calls you to something with which you are not comfortable?

**B. Jesus determines what is important.**

- We call Jesus “Lord” and “King.” As Americans those terms are somewhat alien to us, so what does this mean for you in daily, practical terms?

**C. Jesus’ love for us provides our motivation.**

- Guilt or fear are not really good motivators, so how does Jesus’ sacrifice and His freely shared grace motivate you to follow and trust him?