

In The Presence Of The King . . . Worship Him! Mt 2:1-12

Mt 2:1-12. This is the start of a 3 week mini-series called *In The Presence of the King*.

Referring of course, to Jesus. *King of kings and Lord of lords*. (Rev 19:16)

The idea being, that when you're in the presence of a king, especially *the King*, who rules and reigns over all, ignoring him is not an option. At least not a good one.

And the fact is, we're *always* in his presence.

King David said in Ps 139 – *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?* (7) Nowhere. God is *omni*-present. Present everywhere.

Which means we're in the presence of an all-powerful, all-knowing king, 24/7/365.

So once again, a cavalier attitude isn't an option. A cavalier life isn't wise.

The best response, the required response, is to worship him. Just like the wise men of old did. *They worshipped him*, and we should too. Let's see how. **V1. (Background)**

➤ [1] *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, [2] saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”*

Wise men from the east, or magi as they're sometimes called, refers to *experts in mysteries*. Most likely from Persia and Babylon; to the *east* of Jerusalem.

And the thing you need to know, is that they were scholars. Far from over-zealous wackos or simple fools acting on a whim, they *studied* these things.

So having heard no doubt, about the mysteries of Old *Testament* prophecy, maybe even Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24 . . .

That a *star shall come out of Jacob* – a ruler, a king from Israel . . .

Having studied that, they connected the dots and followed the *heavenly* star to its source. Most likely a supernatural phenomenon for just this purpose.

The bottom line being, they were serious, and they knew what they were doing.

[3] *When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; He was troubled because a new king threatened his rule; threatened to displace him. And the people were troubled because a new king usually meant social upheaval.*

[4] *and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.* He didn't know.

He didn't know that Jesus was *already* born. He hadn't paid attention. Leaving him on the outside looking in. Like so many in our day.

More importantly, Matthew equates the *King* with the *Christ* – the Messiah, the Savior. They're one and the same.

The wise men asked about a king, and Matthew called him the Christ. Implying, from the get-go, that Jesus is both Savior *and* Lord. Christ *and* King. It's there.

[5] *They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea [just 6 miles south], for so it is written by the prophet [the prophet Micah; 700+ years earlier; saying]: [6] “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah [you're not insignificant. Why?]; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”*

[7] *Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.* [He was already scheming; as we see later in the chapter.] [8] *And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”* [Right.]

[9] *After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was* [it was localized; over a house; hence the *supernatural* phenomenon instead of a naturally occurring one; a star or comet].

[10] *When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. [11] And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. [12] And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.*

Finding themselves in the presence of a king, *the king*, they worshipped. And they didn't even know he was the Son of God.

But they worshipped nonetheless, because that's what you *do* in the presence of a king. You express your adoration and reverence.

Worship is the expression of adoration and reverence to God.

Adoration, as in love and admiration. The exuberant expression of your *love* for God, and your heart-felt *admiration* for God. Oh come let us *adore* him – love and admire him.

Like music fans do when their favorite performer has just finished a curtain call.

They clap, wave, jump up and down, yell, whistle, hold up their phones, you name it – to say, “You're so awesome. We just love you.” It's adoration. Worship.

But it's *reverence* that seems to set that apart from what we do *here*.

Reverence, as in a deep-seated respect and honor. A feeling of awe. Like when you stand in front of a majestic mountain, in wonder.

A healthy fear. Because you're in the presence of overwhelming power. Unbearable glory. Stunning greatness.

Like the Apostle John in Revelation (19:10; 22:8). Who was so overcome with fear and awe at what Christ the King was *going* to do, he fell at the feet of his *angel*.

And the magi here in Matthew. Who fell down and worshipped Jesus *himself*.

So overcome, they stopped and dropped to express their reverence.

When you combine that with adoration, it's worship fit for a king.

Don't neglect that. Worship him.

And do so persistently.

Worship him persistently (v2,8a)

That's the first way we find the wise men worshipping. They were *dogged* in their pursuit and worship of Jesus. Resolute; tireless; undeterred.

They saw the star, and went after it. Went after *him*.

Enlisting the necessary companions, buying the food, loading the camels, and traveling some 800 miles if they came from Babylon. 30-60 *days* on the road.

Tirelessly pursuing the opportunity and responsibility to worship.

That's what it *is*. Worship is both an opportunity, and responsibility. Something we *get* to do, and something we *should* do.

Hence their persistence no matter what the cost, what the risk, or what the inconvenience.

And when they got to Jerusalem, they were *equally* persistent.

“Where is he?” (2). “We’re here. Where’s he?”

“Oh. He’s in Bethlehem. 6 miles south.”

That would be like showing up to our Christmas Eve service, finding out we had moved it, and having to *walk* 6 miles to LeClaire.

No wonder *they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy* when they got there. (10)

That’s what happens when you’re dead set on worshipping the Lord.

That’s what happens when you go to such lengths.

That’s what happens when you set your mind to it.

That’s what happens when you’re persistent.

You want joy in your life? Worship King Jesus persistently. Doggedly. Resolutely.

Draw a line in the sand and say, “I’m going to church every single week no matter what. I don’t care how *tired* I am, how *busy* I am, how *far* it is, or anything else.”

“We’re going. Period.” Because it’s an opportunity, and a responsibility.

Worship him persistently.

Second . . .

Worship him sincerely (v8b)

V8. After speaking with the wise men, Herod *sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”*

Except the rest of the story reveals that he *wasn’t* sincere. It was all a ruse. A con.

So that he could *kill* the newborn king, and remove the threat to his reign.

Not good. And not good for us either.

Insincere worship is akin to no worship. Going through the motions counts for nothing.

Just singing the words, gets you nowhere.

It’s your heart. If your heart isn’t in your words, you just as well be quiet. You’re wasting your breath. In fact, you’re worshipping falsely; deceptively.

Better to get right and get real. That’s where sincere worship *starts*.

Getting *right* with God, and getting *real* with God.

Admitting your failures and coming clean. Pouring out your heart and asking forgiveness. Admitting your *lack* of adoration. Confessing your *lack* of reverence.

Get right and get real.

Preferably before you *start* worshipping. Which means getting here early enough to quiet your *heart*, clear your mind, and confess your sins.

Early enough to get your eyes off of things below, and on to things above.

Or doing so before you ever arrive.

If you’re going to worship him, you have to get right and get real.

➤ When I was in Nashville last week, I attended church with my brother and sister-in-law.

And after walking in about 30 seconds before worship started, I realized very quickly that I wasn’t ready. My heart wasn’t in it. I wasn’t sincere.

The cares of the past few days were front and center with my mom and all – thank you for your prayers and concern by the way . . .

And the words I was singing weren’t the genuine expression of my heart.

I hadn’t spent any time with the Lord that morning, my mind was elsewhere, and I was anything *but* sincere in my worship.

So I stopped. I just stopped singing and started praying. Right where I stood.

Asking God to forgive me for entering into his presence so flippantly, and to clear my mind and renew my focus.

It didn’t take long, but it was vital.

If that’s you on Sunday mornings, let me encourage you to change your habits and come earlier. Join us in prayer. Or come, already having prepared your heart at home.

Whatever the case, do what you have to do to get right and get real.

So that your words aren’t without heart, and you can worship Him sincerely.

Third, from the example of the wise men once again . . .

Worship him humbly (v11a)

V11 says – *going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.*

In addition to being a natural *response* in the presence of greatness, falling down before the Lord is an expression of *humility*.

Whether kneeling, bowing, or getting on your face.

And there are 3 reasons for it. First . . .

Because he deserves it.

Worship him humbly because he deserves it. After all, he’s the King. He rules. He reigns.

He’s the king and we’re the servants. He’s the creator and we’re the created. He’s the potter and we’re the clay. Worship him humbly because he deserves it.

Now, does that mean we have to *bow*? Fall down. Get on our knees every time?

No. But it sure does help sometimes.

Sometimes, we need to *physically* bow in worship, so that our heart will bow *spiritually*.

Conforming us inwardly, to the posture of our body, outwardly.

Sometimes it’s necessary. Just like reading your Bible is necessary to have the mind of Christ; to conform your *thoughts* to his.

Often times the inward follows the outward. And worship is no different.

Other times, bowing down in worship or prayer, is necessary to ensure that our *pride* is in check. That we’re not *ashamed* of worshipping God. Not ashamed before men.

So that questions like, “What will people think?” matter not one bit.

Who cares what people think? He’s King.

So once again, we don’t *have* to bend the knee like the wise men every time, but we sure do have to worship *humbly*. He deserves it.

Second, the second reason, is . . .

Because we fear him.

We need to worship him humbly because we fear him. Like I mentioned earlier.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom the Bible says (Prov 1:7). And wisdom leads to humility; especially in worship.

How can it be otherwise? How can you have a healthy respect for God’s wrath and discipline, and not get low?

How can you have a soul-saturated reverence for his sovereign authority, and not dispense with your arrogance?

How can you have an overwhelming awe of his power and glory, and a quiet submission to his will and way, and not worship him humbly?

That’s what it means to *fear the Lord*. (Pr 1:7)

And the only rational response, the only wise response, is humble worship.

Third, worship him humbly . . .

Because God requires it.

That’s the gist of **Ph 2:9-11**. Jesus humbled himself . . .

[9] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord [King], to the glory of God the Father.

Worship him humbly because God requires it. On your feet *or* your face. Standing *or* kneeling. (**Summary**)

And then last . . .

Worship him generously (v11b)

V11 – *they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*

Just like seeking him persistently and bowing in humility was an aspect of their worship, so too was giving him gifts. *Gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

All precious, and all generous. Gifts of worship.

Which is why we often say, “Let’s continue to *worship* by giving our tithes and offerings.” Because that’s what giving *is* – another form of worship.

Another expression of adoration and reverence.

Reverence because he *requires* a tithe, he requires 10% of our income; and adoration, because we love to *give* it. It exalts him and furthers his work.

And all the more so when we go above and beyond.

Worship him *generously* with your treasure. Once again, it’s both an opportunity, and a responsibility.

➤ But don’t *stop* there. Give of your time and talent as well. Generously worshipping the Lord by *serving* him.

You say, “How do you that? How do you serve somebody who’s not here?”

By serving his family; the church. Just like you serve a military man who’s deployed, by blessing his wife and kids. *He’s* not here, but you’re definitely serving him.

It could be teaching kids in Children’s Ministry, discipling students mid-week, or playing the guitar on weekends.

Whatever the case, when you use your talent, the *gifts* God has given you, and give of your *time*, it’s worship.

Especially when you give generously – time, talent, *and* treasure. (**Summary**)

➤ So let me end by saying this: the King is in the house.

“*Where two or three are gathered in my name* [he said], *there am I among them.*” (Mt 18:20) He’s in the house.

And the only thing to do, the only right thing, the only wise thing, is worship him.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, we worship you. We worship and adore you. Forgive us for failing at that. Forgive us for our complacency, our insincerity, our lack of humility, our stinginess. We’re so thankful for the grace represented by the bread and cup. So cleanse and purify our hearts now, and receive our worship anew.