

EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD
Matthew 2:1-12

Our Holy Gospel is full of lessons for us today. Today I'd like to break down just a few of the important things that it teaches us.

His own, who should have known the prophecies the best and recognized Him first did not bother greeting Him, in fact, some acted against Him. As those who have been baptized and instructed, we do well to take the warning. What a commentary it is on our weak faith when others who have never known the Lord before come to Him with a greater joy and diligence than we do, when we take Him for granted.

He was revealed by a star, a light in the sky, from which we get the custom of Christmas lights and stars on trees. He is the light of the world, and the heavens, from which He came to rescue those on earth, proclaim His birth.

These men come from the East. They are not Jews, but Gentiles. Christ has come to save all. No one should think they are beyond His reach or grace. He wants none to be lost, but all to come to a knowledge of His mercy. So also, we should never hesitate to share the message of His birth with others, wondering if they are the Christian type or not. There is no Christian type. There are sinners who need saving, among whom we are chief.

These men bring gifts. This infant Child is also a king, worthy of their best, and so they bring Him precious presents. They bring myrrh, burial ointment, for Him who will die for their sins. They bring gold for the King of the Universe. They bring frankincense for the greatest of the prophets, whose prayers, like incense, arise before the heavenly Father and intercede for us. So also, we do well to bring our Lord gifts worthy of His person and work. Namely, we do well to bring Him ourselves as living sacrifices to His glory and in His service, our hearts and minds, hands and feet, ears and mouths.

They worship Him. They bend the knee. They acknowledge Him as greater. So also we are to bend the knee in our lives, to acknowledge His will as best, His way as wisest, His Word as supreme. Bent knees can't kick against goads, and so we worship, not just for an hour here, but daily with our lives.

Notice also, they were not disturbed by His humble circumstances. They received Him as He chose to come to them, as a Jewish infant in the little town of Bethlehem. They might have pictured God differently in the past, and they might have expected something quite different from what they found, but when they encountered Christ, even if it was with Him lying in a manger, they rejoiced and welcomed Him. We are called to do the same, to receive Him as He comes, ever so simply, in Word and Sacrament, because He comes for our benefit, for the increase of our faith, and for our life everlasting.

The Epiphany, the twelfth day of Christmas, or the Gentile Christmas as many have called it, is a festival rich in meaning. Many of our Christmas celebrations actually have sprung from this day. As I mentioned, we light Christmas lights and put stars on trees as a reminder of the light of the star that these Magi followed. We also exchange gifts, a reminder that the Magi brought gifts to Christ, their King, who Himself was the greatest gift of all, God the Father's gift to mankind. Celebrate this gift of God and in gratitude to Him who has come wrapped in swaddling clothes to robe you in righteousness, let your daily lives be a gift of praise and worship for Him. Amen.

**Typed from a preaching outline. Please excuse typos.

