

Hurst Green
29th Dec 19
Following God
Matt 2:1-17

Christmas is over – just the recycling to do and work out what to do with Great Aunt Agatha’s present, or perhaps work out what it is.

And today we have that very familiar reading about the three kings. So let’s look at what we know:

- There were three
- They were kings – We Three Kings of Orient are
- We know their names – we just sang them
- They arrived on Dec 25th
- At the same time as the shepherds – look at any nativity
- The star was over the stable
- Jesus has been born in the stable.

We don’t really know any of those things – they are a lot of rumours and traditions with no factual backing. We only know what the bible tells us:

- They were wise men (whatever that may mean)
- They came from the East – which could go as far as India or even what we call the far East.
- They followed a star (v9)
- They started at the royal palace.
- The chief priests and teachers of the law knew all about Jesus
- They visited Jesus in a house (v11)
- They went back to their country by a different route (this implies that they all came from the same country)

They came to fulfil some of the other prophecies that the Old Testament contains about the coming of Jesus such as

Isaiah 60:1 (ANIV)

¹ *“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.*

And of course in our reading the teachers of the law quote Micah.

So a nice story but what is in it for us today and we survey the aftermath of our Christmas?

Well think about these Wise Men:

- Firstly they were wise
- They looked around for what God is doing
- When they saw it they were prepared to go.
- When they started they did not know the final destination (remember they had to ask)
- They did not worry about the price.
- They prepared themselves for the journey – they did not just launch out or they would not have made it.
- They were prepared to seek advice along the way – they discerned the right advice
- They listened to God when he changed their plans in a dream.

Now not many are called to go off on such a great adventure into the unknown – but some are!!

BUT we are all called to take part in our adventure – we all have a personal adventure and as a Church we have a Church adventure.

Now our problem with our adventures is twofold.

We all want a star! We all want a sign to show us the way.

We like the idea of a pillar of fire to follow.

Bad Luck! God does not always work like that and give us a great physical sign to follow.

But he does always give us a sign which we can follow or we can ignore.

What is that sign? Well it will be different for each one of us.

It may be a desire for something, a concern over a situation or anyone of a number of things.

But you have one – if you think you don't then you have not been looking for the sign.

And secondly we want to see the destination and the route to it.

How very human of us!!

Unfortunately for us Gods ways are different from ours!

Isaiah 55:8-9 (ANIV)

⁸ *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.* ⁹
“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

And any time you want encouragement read and think on that chapter – there is some great stuff in it.

So in our great adventures, both personally and as a Church, we don't get a star to follow, we are not shown the route and often we do not know the destination!

But what we do know is that God has given us an unconditional promise that he will be with us.

So some words to help you on your great adventure based on the wise men. We could have used any one of the other people in the bible that had learnt to depend on God.

Wisdom

By definition the wise men were wise and to follow God's great adventure for us we need to be wise as well.

Now that is where we get put off. None of us see ourselves fitting the description as a wise man but what does it take to get God's wisdom?

Firstly realising that God's wisdom and the world's wisdom are not the same.

Proverbs 1:7 (ANIV)

⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

God wants you to understand his ways so that you can understand his wisdom.

Secondly it is available for everyone because God has no favourites to whom he gives special blessings

Thirdly God gives wisdom to all who ask

James 1:5 (ANIV)

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Fourthly God's word is full of his wisdom. This is why I always encourage you to read your bibles, check up on what I am saying.

Read your bibles and meditate on it. This opens up the opportunity for God to speak to you. He may even give you your great adventure through studying his word but even if he doesn't you will know your God better and that has to be good.

Fifthly know that the enemy will try and distract you

The enemy doesn't want you doing this and so will set up anything and everything to get your attention away from God's wisdom.

Be diligent and push on through. Only you can do this.

Look around

Why should God put it on a plate in your lap? God wants you to see what he is doing and he is doing a great deal in this country as well as in faraway places.

If you do not look around you are not going to see anything. You can be parochial and just stare at your toes or you can raise your eyes and see the glory of your God. Your choice but one is far more rewarding than the other.

Be Prepared

When God puts something on your heart go and do it. That is one we would all say yes to but that is way the look around is important.

The wise men could have kept their heads down in their books and then would never have seen the star and missed their great adventure.

When God shows you something do not ignore it but be prepared.

Don't demand the detail

God does not lay his full plan before us probably because we would not then depend on him. When he leads then follow.

The most amazing things I have been involved in started as ideas and only became reality when we were on the road.

The price.

God has deep pockets but the price always worries us. And that is not just money but time and emotions.

If we demanded that God resourced everything before we started then we, again, would not be depending on God. But I have never seen God not resource his plan fully and in some cases the cup runneth over so that we can praise him and do even more!

Preparation

You do not have everything you need for your adventure but you will have some of it. God has given you some of it.

Prepare with what you have and look to God to provide the rest.

Learn as you go

Even as you don't have all the resources you need when you start you also will not have all the wisdom.

As you go stay humble and be prepared to learn from God and from those around you.

Listen to God

You do not fully know the destination and God may be shielding things from you because you could not cope with the big picture.

As you walk your big adventure that stay listening to your God as he refines the idea and opens up new fields for you.

15 years ago things looked dire for this Church as it had shrunk and closure was certainly an option. But six people remained faithful.

13 years ago when we arrived we didn't know where God would take this church and so the leadership team have listened to God and moved forward. Look where we are now and we have a great future ahead of us.

So the wise men have guidance for us even today. Look it up; listen to God and walk into your great adventure with the Lord your God.