

November 28, 2010

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Monday

Matt. 2:1-2 For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

Luke 9:62 Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Faith in Christ has been termed "a long obedience in the same direction." The expression paints a picture, not of a one-time act of membership, but of the enduring results of a life decision. Following Jesus is not an opt-in, opt-out commitment. If there is any room left in your life to opt-out of Jesus, no matter the cost, the circumstances, the duration of time, if there is any room to opt-out then you have never really opted in. It is a long way from *the East* to the manger in Bethlehem. Smelly camels, hot days, cold nights, lonely times, sometimes opposition — no turning back.

Tuesday

Matt. 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

"Where were you when the lights went out?" I know where I was, in the dark! Sometimes the guiding star seems to disappear. We start in the direction of God's calling, sure of God's urging, then for days, sometimes weeks, maybe longer, all visible signs of direction are missing. What are we to do? Keep traveling in the same direction. There is little need for signage when the road to be traveled is straight ahead. Be sure that when the next turn is imminent there will be a sign, the star will appear. Remember, "a long obedience in the same direction."

Wednesday

Heb. 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

What is the goal of your journey? Certainly, like the Magi, you have determined to travel to the place of the Savior's presence and there to worship. But you do not have to go to the ends of your world. You may travel each week to a place of worship and find Jesus present among His people. The scriptures say that where the church is gathered to worship, He will abide. So make it your determination to travel each week to the sanctuary in the House of God. Lift up your voice in praise. Listen closely to His word. No camel's breath. No anguished travel. Aren't you thankful for that?

Thursday

Matt. 2:11 They ... worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Offerings to the Lord are not a new thing created by Baptist preachers (read humorous sarcasm here). Seriously, there seems to be no genuine worship without the offerings of our treasures. Check the Old Testament. Check the New Testament. What do you find? The people of God bringing their tithes and offerings to the Lord. Giving itself is worship. Giving itself is faith. Pray in this season concerning your faithfulness in your tithes and your commitment to offerings. Be as wise as the Wise men, who know to bring gifts to worship a King.

Friday

Matt. 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem...

God planted the seed of grace in the culture of the Magi hundreds of years before the Savior's birth. Working in ways unseen and unclear, even to those whom He was working through, God sent delegates of grace to Babylon in the guise of refugees from Israel's wars. Daniel, and other followers of God, introduced the Creator to gentile counselors of the kings. Decades went by, but the seeds of witness were not dead. When the time was ripe they sprouted and flourished. So too, your witness in odd places is planted and will bear fruit. Go, tell, trust!