

“The *Humble* Wisemen?”

A sermon by *The Skit Guys* organization

as part of their series, **The Glory of Christmas**.

Their sermon modified by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden
for FUMC Grand Junction, Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020

(***Yancey**: *Skit Guys* “Wiseman” video clip, 0:14 to the end*)

C.S. Lewis once said, “The only thing that can dwell in the presence of God is humility.” With all the things that Tony the “Wiseman” may or may not know as depicted in the video, it seems the one thing he did know was his place in the story. Knowing one’s place in the Christmas story is another aspect worth considering when it comes to **the glory of Christmas**.

The central character in the story of Christmas is named within the season that is cherished by so many: Christ. Jesus Christ is the centerpiece that the entire story is about and revolves around based upon what we read in the gospels. Christmas is not about the Wiseman, nor is it about you or me. Like the title of the book by Rev. Mike Slaughter asserts, *Christmas is Not Your Birthday!*

While so many times we may inadvertently, or perhaps intentionally, live as if the story of life revolves around us as the main character, **the glory of Christmas** is that we are given an annual opportunity to reframe what and Who truly is central to the story of life: Jesus, who was born as the Savior of the world.

God chose to become incarnate in the form of a fully human child and “moved into the neighborhood of

planet earth” – or as John’s Gospel says, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” [John 1:14] – to show and to be the way back to a right relationship with God.

Wisdom is knowing enough to know that we are not meant to be center stage in the story of Christmas. The centerpiece of every Nativity scene is the Christ-child in the manger. Mary, Joseph, Shepherds and Wiseman...even livestock, camels, and perhaps a hovering angel at times, all find themselves surrounding what and who is in the center.

Nobody has a Nativity scene displayed where the Wisemen take the focal point. That is because the glory of the story is who is at the center, rather than who is on the periphery. All the people and pieces surround Jesus, including the wisemen. And wise people understand this dynamic. Only a fool would think **the glory of Christmas** is about someone other than Christ. Christmas is not about Santa or Scrooge or what the Grinch tried to steal. Those stories may be fun to enjoy throughout the season. But, Christmas always has first and foremost been about Jesus, from first to last.

The Wisemen demonstrate a glorious move that we would be well-served to remember concerning their place, and ours, in the story of Christmas. Matthew’s gospel reminds us in the second chapter, as Kyra (TerLouw) just read to us.

The Wisemen stopped what they were doing in their everyday lives. They prioritized their time, energy, and efforts to move from what they were concentrated on

to focusing their lives on Jesus. They moved toward worshipping Jesus and offering Him gifts in the process.

The Wisemen are recorded as bowing down before Jesus in worship and giving Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The story of Christmas is about Jesus being honored, recognized, and worshiped with gifts...really good gifts! The Wisemen did not regift some cheap white elephant throwaway-party-prize that came home with them from last week's office party. No, they brought their best to the newborn King because they knew their place...and His...in the story.

Sure, the Wisemen likely had all kinds of head knowledge and were highly esteemed for their mastery of a variety of subjects in their day and time. Our "Wiseman" named Tony in the video was known to have all kinds of such knowledge, as well. Joel called it "useless bits of information". However, at the end of the day, Tony, just the like the actual wisemen in the story, knew his place was one where serving Jesus rather than *being* served was more in line with the true **glory of Christmas**.

This seems pretty obvious at Christmas time, but sometimes we get that out of order in our lives throughout the rest of the year:

- We think we deserve to be served.
- We get frustrated when things do not go our way.
- We become impatient and even feel entitled to better service or more focus on our needs, whatever the situation or scenario might be.

But, Christmas helps us stop and remember that to have the same approach and attitude to the story of our life as Jesus does in His is to see others as more important than ourselves in a genuinely humble manner – from Sacramento to Grand Junction to Washington, DC.

The Apostle Paul would later write about this in the letter he wrote to the small Christian community he founded in the city of Philippi:

“³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 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, to the glory of God the Father.” [Philippians 2:3-11]

It is a beautiful thing to remember that the Wisemen did at the start of Jesus' life as a newborn what Paul says all people will do in time: bow before Him. No matter what we believe about Jesus right now or where we think we should be situated in the story of our life,

in time every person will find himself or herself on their knees, facedown, worshiping before Jesus. When we realize the wise thing to do is what the Wisemen did that first Christmas – bow early and often as a way to recognize who is at the center of this story – we become whole, now and for eternity.

As we make our way through this Christmas season, may we, like “Tony”, look for opportunities to humble ourselves and move off center stage and onto the side or background while helping others get closer to see the One at the center of the story.

- May we serve Jesus by serving others.
- May we find ourselves on our knees and offering gifts rather than desiring others to bow their lives, desires, and time to serve us and offer us things we really do not need.

Yes, part of **the glory of Christmas** is that it helps us remember our place in the story.

May we remember that God “gave his only Son”. It is a glorious thing when we realize that *we* were never intended to be God’s gift to the world. It takes all the pressure off to perform or try to be someone we were never intended to be in God’s eyes.

So, let’s relax and choose to be in the background where we were meant to be in this story from the start. Consequently,

- May we enjoy the glory of Christmas as we find ourselves to the side and not the center.

→ May we find ourselves on bended knee before the King as we offer gifts of worship and lives of service to Him.

→ May we be people who consistently seek Jesus and do our best to point others to Him as we serve and share what we do know: Jesus is the center of the story.

Let us live that out for His glory as we tell His story this Christmas.

Let’s pray...