

## 8.1.23 am

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Date: 08 January 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. Those who are visiting, we've got one or two. It's good to see you and if you're able to stay behind at the end of the service there's tea and coffee I think so please do so. The intimations are on the screen.

I'll just take a minute and flick through them. I don't have a paper copy in front of me. Connect leaders, the clubs, I think we're going to start the clubs again this coming week and if the Connect leaders could meet for a short meeting after the morning service that would be helpful. Evening service at 6, 6-7 tonight and be encouraged to come along to that. Ladies Fellowship on Monday at 8 and you've got details there. Little Fishers on Tuesday 10-12 and Road to Recovery 7 o'clock on Tuesday night and again keep praying for these ministries, these outreaches. It's great to see and to hear the wee ones and pray for many more of these wee ones in the village who don't go to any church on Sunday and it's good to see them coming in here on a Tuesday. Prayer meeting on Wednesday and this Wednesday the prayer meeting will be taken by Anthony Latham. I'm going to be away from tomorrow through till Friday at in-service training in Edinburgh so I'll be out of the area for the next few days.

So Anthony will take the prayer meeting on Wednesday night. Gaelic Mothers and Toddlers starts this Thursday again 10-11.30 and you've got the details there of that and the clubs, Jam Connect and Rooted back on this week. Services next Sunday. I'll be away in North Uist, next Sunday. Having been away all week in Edinburgh, I'm not going to get any prep time so I've taken my turn to go to North Uist next Sunday and the services will be taken in the morning by Stuart and in the evening by Farrecher. And the cleaning rota you have there 9th of January, Cresalda and Cami. I think these are probably all the notices so let's begin this time of worship.

Come in Maria, good to see you. And we're going to begin by singing to God's praise in Psalm 8. We'll sing the whole of this psalm. How excellent in all the earth, Lord, our Lord is thy name, who has thy glory far advanced above the starry frame. We'll sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

Who's standing to God's praise.

[ 3 : 04 ] God's praise. Have you sang to God's envisage ■ Per ■ mentioned score badass, how sauve, God's. Through you are all the appointed seven of the poisons would ■■ out the blood of the hunter and the former and clandest guard. Let me go trong and above therollee dawn solar ■■altzes, for you're going to come out. We shall give you the song to God's praise BETOouf naar God, I look up unto the hands which thine old fingers raised, unto the moon, unto the stars which were by thee ordained.

Then say I what is man that he remembered is by thee, or what the son of man that thou so kind to him should be.

For thou a little glory hast in that the angels made, with glory and with dignity the crown it has dispensed.

Of thy hands works the midst implore, all understated stay, all sheep and oxen, yea, and beast, that in the field do stray.

Vows of the air, fish of the sea, all that pass through the sea, how excellent in all the earth, Lord our Lord is thy name.

[ 5 : 24 ] Amen. Let's unite our hearts together in prayer. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you. We thank you that at the beginning of a new week and at the beginning of a new year, we can come together in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Saviour. We thank you that we can, with freedom and with hopefully desire in our hearts, unite our voices together to praise your name and to say to you and to each other how excellent in all the earth is

the name of the Lord.

Lord. And we thank you for who you are. We thank you that you are the God who has not hidden yourself from us, but you're the God who has revealed yourself to us.

And we thank you that as we look around and as we see the creation, the majesty of the landscapes that we are surrounded by, as we see the life in creation, in the animal kingdom and in each other, we thank you that all that speaks to us about the fact that you are a God who is majestic, who is creative, a God who is glorious.

[ 7 : 04 ] And we recognize, we proclaim that you are the one true God. All other so-called gods are idols.

They are nothings. But we bow before the one true God who has made us and who sustains us and who has made us to have a thirst in our hearts for you, for that relationship with you.

We recognize that the sin that's in us holds us back. The sin that is in us is a barrier between man and God.

But we thank you that Jesus, your son, was promised and he came and he lived and he died and he rose from the dead so that it was possible for sinners like us to be sought and saved.

We thank you that in Christ the curse of sin has been lifted. We thank you that in Christ the fellowship that was broken in the fall in the Garden of Eden has been restored.

[ 8 : 28 ] And we thank you that in Christ there is grace, there is the offer of salvation, eternal life and a satisfaction of life in time that we can find in no other place.

So we pray that this morning as we gather together that you would meet with us. We pray, Lord, that we would see more and more of your glory. We pray that we would hear with great clarity the call of God to come to Jesus and be saved.

And we pray that we would come. Those in the building, those who may listen at a distance, we ask, Lord, that you would be speaking to us, that you would be striving with us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We pray that you would show us our sin in a measure that we can bear and enable us to confess our sin, give to us that gift of repentance.

and we pray that we would know that cleansing from sin that comes through the blood of Jesus. We pray that we would know that peace with God that is not of this world.

[ 9 : 50 ] We pray that in a new year you would give to us that clear purpose that we are in this place to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

So be amongst us, Lord, we pray, as we seek to worship you. Bless us, we pray, as we come seeking your face and do our souls good, we ask.

We pray for those who are not with us, those who are struggling particularly. We think of those who are grieving. We think about Rachel McSween and Donald McLeod both having lost siblings in past days.

And we ask, Lord, that you would comfort them and that you would give them strength for the days ahead. And all those who feel the pangs of grief for loved ones lost in past weeks and months and years.

We bring them to you, Lord, and we ask that you would show to them your compassion and give to them your peace and remind each of us, we pray, of the hope of the gospel for all who are in Christ.

[ 11 : 08 ] We thank you that there is resurrection life. We pray for those who are sick, too many even for us to mention at this time. But we think of them, our minds go to them.

we pray especially for Marlene at this time as she struggles with her illness. And as we see that the acceleration of that, we pray, Lord, that you would minister to her, that she would know your constant presence, that she would know that you are God and that you are with her.

And we pray for Kirsty and for John and for all of the family, that you would bless them. We thank you that you are the God who is with us and your grace is sufficient to take us through life, the days that you have numbered for us, and through death into life that's everlasting.

We thank you that that is the hope of the gospel and we pray that each one of us would take hold of it. We pray on for those who battle with addictions as we think about Road to Recovery.

Do our work, Lord, we pray amongst that small group and we confess that all of us battle with addictions because the root cause in our heart that affects every one of us is sin.

[ 12 : 33 ] So, Lord, we pray that you would help us as we pray that you would help those who struggle with addictions and we pray on for the children as we've mentioned them. We ask, Lord,

that you would draw them all to your house.

We remember the words of Jesus to the disciples saying, let the little children come to me, don't hinder them. And we pray that we, as your people in this place, would give every encouragement to these wee ones to come to Jesus.

Whether babies and the little fishes on Tuesday or the younger ones and jam and connect and rooted. Draw them to yourself, Lord, we pray.

So hear our prayers. Minister to us in our need. Be at work, Lord, in this place, in this nation that is so much astray from you and in your world.

We pray that we would see more and more people coming to Jesus. And we thank you that we have that promise, that one day soon the same Jesus who came to seek and to save will return and take all those who have trusted him to be with him forever.

[ 13 : 48 ] We know that on that day it will be too late to come to Jesus. So we ask, Lord, that all of us, whilst there is time, that we would come and that we would know that salvation.

So hear our prayers. Go before us, we ask. We pray this in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. boys and girls, would you like to come out this morning?

There seems to be less of you today, but it's good to see those who are here. Come on, come a bit closer.

Ailey, I can't see you, so you come, you sneak round there a little bit. So are you well? All good? Did you have a good Christmas? Happy New Year because I haven't seen some of you yet. I should have said Happy New Year to everybody as well. Now, the last day I saw, I think, most of you was Christmas Day and you were showing me some of your presents.

[ 14 : 53 ] Can you still remember you got presents? Yep. Now, tell me some of the presents you got, just quickly again. just tell me one or two of them.

You all got probably five or six. Tell me some of the presents. Kyle? Yeah, you. Did you get nothing?

Oh, no. You got what, sorry? You got three footballs. Excellent. Did you get a new top? Are you wearing today?

Yeah. Yeah. Right now, I've got a top. A full strip and two Aberdeen tops. A full strip and two Aberdeen tops. I'm not going to say anything about the Aberdeen tops.

Good stuff. What about Miriam? What did you get? I got a couple of pens. A couple of pens. Is that all? Toast.

[ 15 : 53 ] Toast? Pardon? Pardon? You got a top? Good, good. Anything else? A boom mic.

You got a what? A boom mic. A what? A boom mic. A boom mic. Is that a big mic that makes you speak loudly? Oh, we've got a new entry to the children's talk this morning.

It's nice to see everyone making their way over. Now, here's the question, right? Are there some gifts that you were given and you still haven't used them? Yes.

What? PlayStation 5 because John's hogging it. PlayStation because John was hogging it. Okay. That's why I used it downstairs. Okay. What about anybody else?

Any gifts you got that you haven't used yet? A couple of board games. A couple of board games. Yeah. Yeah. Clothes. Clothes.

[ 16 : 52 ] Yeah. Boring. Yeah. Yeah. Socks. That kind of. What about the rest of you guys? Have you got any presents that you haven't used yet? Lois?

Miriam? Ailey? David? David? Yeah? What? Michael's turning it around to me. He says, what about you? Do you got any presents that you haven't used yet?

Well, it's funny you should ask that because I've got a couple of presents that I haven't used yet. I got given a hooded top for running.

But over the last couple of weeks, I've hardly been running. My belly's been getting a bit bigger and I haven't been running. So I do hope to use it, but I haven't used it yet. And I was given a check from my mum and dad at Christmas time and my mum was phoning yesterday saying, why have you not cashed that check?

We didn't send it to you so you couldn't use it. We sent it to you so you could use it. And so, I'm not telling you how much. what do you think the number one gift that never gets used is?

[ 18 : 14 ] What do you think? Anyone? Pardon? Duncan's getting very profound early on. No, I'm not going there yet. Michael just rebuked you.

He says, Duncan, everyone reads the Bible in here. So, the number one gift apparently that gets given to people that never gets used is exercise equipment.

So, like exercise bikes, running hooded tops, maybe trainers, that kind of thing. They get given to people and they don't always get used.

So, the thing about gifts is we should accept them, shouldn't we? And we should use them. Now, where are we going next?

So, who is the best gift ever? The best gift ever is Jesus. And so, what should we do with Jesus? We should pray to him, we should listen to him, we should follow him.

[ 19 : 25 ] We meet with Jesus in the Bible. Bible. That's why we're in our Bibles all the time. And we hear him speak to us in the Bible. That's why we read the Bible and we're listening to what he's saying and we come to him and we speak to him in prayer.

But Jesus is the greatest gift that was ever given. Remember we were doing this on Christmas Day. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift.

It's Jesus. And so, we thank God for Jesus. We thank God for sending his son into the world so that if we believe in him, we will not perish, we'll have everlasting life.

The best gift ever is Jesus so we should accept him, trust him and know him. But, a little bit more. Corrin's having her own children's talk over there.

Do you have gifts? Do we have gifts?

[ 20 : 27 ] What gifts do you have do you think? We all have gifts, don't we? We have good gifts.

Michael, you can make films. Miriam, you've always got a smile, just ready. Some of you are brilliant at being brave and speaking. Some of the babies are the best at speaking.

But we've all been given gifts by God and he wants us to use them and to use them in a way that makes him happy and tells other people about Jesus.

So, our gifts, whether it's a gift to make films, whether it's a gift to smile, whether it's a gift to tell your friends, about Jesus.

They shouldn't be like dusty old exercise bikes. They shouldn't be like hooded tops that are sitting on the top of the wardrobe. But we should be using our gifts for God's glory.

[ 21 : 33 ] So let's pray that God will help us to do that. Lord God, we thank you for today and we thank you for the greatest gift ever and that's the gift of Jesus.

Father, you sent your son to save us from our sin. And we pray that none of us would be ignoring Jesus.

We pray that none of us would be refusing to accept Jesus into our hearts. We pray that every one of us would be believing and asking Jesus to be our saviour and to be our Lord.

Help us, Lord, we pray to trust you. We thank you for the gift of the Bible, that we can open the Bible and hear you speak to us and know what you are saying to us each day of our lives.

We thank you for the gift of prayer where we can speak to you and pour out our hearts to you, tell you when we're worried and tell you when we're anxious and tell you when we're needing help.

[ 22 : 37 ] We thank you that you hear our prayers and you answer our prayers. We thank you for the gifts that you've given to the children. We thank you for their voices and for the way that they're so often much braver than us big people are at telling others about Jesus.

Help them to use their voices to tell their friends about Jesus. We thank you for the smiles that you give them. We ask that you would help them and help us to be warm, to be loving to each other so that we will encourage each other.

We thank you for the skills that you give us, whether it's to read or whether it's to make films or whether it's to play football or whatever it is. We ask, Lord, that whatever we do, we would do it in a way that makes you happy and helps others to see that you are living in our lives, in our hearts.

So be with us, we pray. Help us to do all things for your glory, to lift up Jesus, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing a hymn that is new.

We've never sung this before, but you'll know the tune. I heard it last Sunday in Smithton Church when we were attending Smithton. And it's to the tune of Au Lang Syne and the lyrics of the hymn are All Glory Be to Christ.

[ 24 : 01 ] So, should nothing of our efforts stand, no legacy survive, unless the Lord does raise the house, in vain its builders strive. To you who boast tomorrow's gain, tell me what is your life, a mist that vanishes at dawn.

All glory be to Christ. All glory be to Christ our King. All glory be to Christ. His rule and reign will ever sing. All glory be to Christ.

So, we'll stand in a second to sing, and we sing to God's praise. añadir en its builder's strife.

To you post tomorrow's gate, tell me what is your love?

A mist that vanishes at all. All glory be to Christ. All glory be to Christ our King. All glory be to Christ.

[ 25 : 44 ] His true our reign will ever stay. All glory be to Christ.

His will be done, His kingdom come on earth as His above. Who is Himself our daily bread, raised in the Lord of love.

Let Him in water satisfy the thirsty with the Christ.

We'll take a cup of kindness yet. All glory be to Christ.

All glory be to Christ, our King. All glory be to Christ. His rule our reign will ever stay.

[ 26 : 55 ] All glory need to Christ. And on the day the great I am, the faithful I will true.

The love who walks for sinners' pain is making all things new. Be old, our God shall live with us, and be our steadfast light.

And we shall let His people be, all glory be to Christ.

All glory be to Christ again, all glory be to Christ.

His rule our reign will ever sing, all glory be to Christ.

[ 28 : 15 ] remember as they go out to pray for them.

We're going to read now from God's word and we'll read from Matthew chapter 2. Matthew chapter 2 and we'll read verses 1 to verse 12.

You might wonder what we're doing reading this after Christmas but as you can see in the beginning of the reading, the events that we're reading about here in this passage, they happen about two years after Jesus was born.

So we're looking at the visit of the Magi to the place where Jesus was. Matthew chapter 2 and at verse 1. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, where is the one who has been born King of the Jews?

we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him. When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him.

[ 29 : 54 ] When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. In Bethlehem in Judea, they replied, for this is what the prophet has written.

But you Bethlehem in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent him to Bethlehem and said, go and make a careful search for the child.

As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him. After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them, until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

[ 31 : 06 ] And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. Amen, and may God bless that reading of his word to us.

We're going to sing again now the first two stanzas verses of Psalm 121. Psalm 121, the first two verses in Gaelic, I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come mine aid, my safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth hath made.

Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will he slumber, that he keeps, behold, he that keeps Israel, he slumbers not, nor sleeps. These two verses of Psalm 121, we sing in Gaelic, we remain seated to sing in Gaelic.

Amen. Fon Terrell, whoabouw we sing with music together.

Thank you.

[ 33 : 01 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 35 : 13 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

close to us we pray bring your word to us in in power help us to recognize your voice that this is not the the word of a man but the word of God that comes through the verses of scripture and we pray Lord that you would be moving not just here but in other places as well we pray for Gordon as he prepares to preach in Leverborough and Stuart as he prepares to preach and scalp we ask Lord that you would use them as they open your word and that in all these services Christ would be lifted up and many would be drawn to him we pray for Ian Murdo in the Church of Scotland we thank you for his recovery we ask that you would continue to increase his strength and we pray for Bruce Jordan as well in the Free Presbyterian Church and we ask Lord that you would be ministering that you would be working in all of these places and all the places in the surrounding areas in the island and across the nation and across all nations wherever the word of God is is opened whatever Christ crucified is preached we pray Lord that you would be working in a way that brings glory to your name and salvation to the souls of people so hear our prayers and help us we ask in Jesus name amen at the beginning of a new year and it's still quite close to the beginning of a new year we tend to get visitors when the clock strikes 12 on the the end of the last year in the beginning of the new year it used to be that there would be a stream of visits all through the night into the early hours of the morning I don't think that happens quite so much anymore but in the first few weeks of the new year we do tend to make visits to people that we that we care for that we that we want to spend time with we're knocking at their doors and we're hearing people knocking at our doors wishing us a happy new year and Matthew chapter 2 it begins with a knock on the door and it's in Jerusalem it begins with some unexpected visitors and that's the first point for today unexpected visitors and you can see that in verses 1 and verse 2 after Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea during the time of King Herod magi wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked where is the one who has been born King of the Jews we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him these are unexpected visitors who are knocking on the door in Jerusalem and their desire their expression is that they want to worship Jesus and sometimes it's the people that you least expect that are the first to come and worship Jesus

[ 39 : 13 ] I can think of that even in terms of experience in ministry although my ministry has been fairly short I remember the first time we ran Christianity Explored in Loch Caron and it was a fairly new video and course so lots of invitations went out and they were posted through the doors of houses and we spoke to people that we knew and encouraged them to come along and attend Christianity Explored lots of invitations went out but I'll never forget the first person to walk in the door of the church was a man called Bob Monroe he's no longer he's no longer with us he died a few years back but he was a he was a fencer he's a big burly character he was the coach of the Shinty team he was known to be a hard hard man you wouldn't cross him but he was a a hard man who had a soft heart and unbeknown to everyone else in the place for a long time he was being drawn to Jesus he didn't speak to anybody about it he didn't tell anybody that but he was digging out wee tracts he'd find an old Bible and he was in it because he was he was seeking Jesus because Jesus was seeking him and very quickly Bob Monroe he came to trust and to worship Jesus he was the last man that anybody expected to walk in the door but he walked in the door he kept on walking in the door and very quickly he bowed his knee and he worshipped Jesus and that was the situation in Matthew 2 these are unexpected visitors who came to worship Jesus

Magi from the east we don't know a whole lot about these Magi the commentators think they likely were from Persia which is modern day Iraq it's possible they might have been from Babylon remember the wise men in the story of Babylon the story of Daniel who tried to interpret their dreams but they couldn't so there was wise men in that location some of the commentators think they could have come from as far away as China truth is we don't really know they were from the far east and so these wise men these Magi they would have no real knowledge of the Bible they had no Bible background and yet they're the ones who are seeking Jesus they're the ones who are looking for Jesus there are biblical scholars in Jerusalem who've devoted their whole lives to an academic study of the Old Testament text and they're not looking for Jesus but these far eastern Magi they're knocking at the door they're saying we've come where will we find the one who's been born king of the Jews we've come to worship him Weerspeed the commentator says we must

confess that we know little about these men the word translated Magi wise men refers to a group of scholars who studied the stars they were astrologers their title connects them with magic a sinister thing but they were probably more like astrologers says Weerspeed but the point I want to take from that is that these are not the kind of people we expect to be looking for Jesus stargazers folks who are dabbling with dark magic and yet

God is seeking them and they're being drawn to Jesus and they've spent considerable time travelling they'd studied they'd journeyed they were looking for Jesus unexpected visitors J.C. Ryle says the Lord Jesus has many hidden ones like these wise men and that should encourage us should challenge us actually if we're believers if we're Christians that should challenge us it should encourage us it should embolden us because the truth that comes from this in terms of application is there are hidden people everywhere and God is working in their hearts there are people who we may expect there's nothing happening spiritually and yet God is doing a work in their hearts there are hidden people in Harris even though we might not yet see it so pray for the unexpected ones take a moment think about some of the people that you're in contact with and they're the last people that you think would ever have any interest in Jesus think about them picture them get them in your your minds put a name to them and pray for them you might see barriers they might be mixed up in a whole lot of things dark things like these magi likely were but God often is seeking the ones that we least expect remember what Jesus said in John chapter 10 in verse 16 he said to the disciples I have other sheep that are not of this fold I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice and if you're a believer if you're a Christian here today then your commission and mine is to reach out to these other sheep pray for reach out to the unexpected ones because they may very well be searching for Jesus you know even when I think back over is it eight years this is year eight now is it year some of the people that I met very early on who I thought were so close to coming to faith who had such a good Bible knowledge are not an inch further forward today the ones who've come to faith are the ones

[ 46 : 56 ] I least expected and often who knew least in terms of Bible and religion unexpected visitors knocking at the door seeking Jesus the second point is an unidentified star because what the Magi say when they knock on the door in Jerusalem is we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him and so already we've noted the fact that the Magi they were they were experts they were experts in astrology they were also those who were experts in in philosophy ancient times in well at that time philosophy and astrology were disciplines that went together and so these Magi they were experts in the stars and in philosophy they had big questions they thought deeply about life and I suppose you know the stars they have that effect on us when we look up to the stars on a clear night when we see the vastness of the cosmos when we just see these these millions of stars sparkling in the sky when we see the glory of the heavenly frame as we sang in Psalm 8 when we see these things we tend to think seriously about about deeper things we start to think about who's behind the stars how they got there what's going on how small I am how big this is the stars instill within us a sense of awe and they provoke within us questions of who's behind the stars you know looking down at our phones tends to distract us from God but looking up to the stars lifting our eyes to the hills as we sang looking at the glory and the power and the intricacy of creation causes us to look to God and these magi back at that time these astrologers they spotted a star in the sky that they were so familiar with and this was an out of the ordinary star they couldn't identify it it puzzled them they couldn't explain it and this particular star caused them to ask questions and it set them off on a journey that would ultimately lead them to Jesus one commentator said the entire universe is at God's disposal in sharing the gospel

Spurgeon came across a reading this morning Spurgeon said that a star is sent on behalf of all the stars as if it were the envoy of all worlds to represent them before their king this star was put into commission to await the Lord to be his herald to men far away and to usher and to be God's usher to conduct these wise men into Christ's presence so there's this unidentified star that causes the wise men the magi to ask questions to set off on a journey that leads them to Jesus and I think there's a lesson there for us just as we as we think about the application of that sometimes in our experience in providence in the way that God orders our lives there are things that happen and we didn't see them coming just like these wise men didn't see the star coming we can't identify the purpose behind them we can't explain them like these magi looking up at the sky and they can't explain this star there are things that come into our lives come into our vision and we can't explain them we can't identify the purpose behind them it can be a medical diagnosis that crashes into our

world and it changes everything in a second it can be a death or it can be a birth it can be a new friendship or it can be a broken relationship you know it's not just the stars that God uses but it can be strange and impossible to explain situations that God allows to come into our lives and they cause us to look to God they cause us to look for God you know the creation itself including the stars and providence the way God allows our lives to be ordered these things can be used to lead us to Jesus these things could be can be used to to lead us into worship of Jesus reading this morning in my reading notes some of you probably use the same ones about about Naaman the commander and Naaman is a powerful man who is well respected and he has great status and gravitas in his world but medically he's he's afflicted with leprosy no cure his life is virtually over and there's a wee girl like the wee ones that sit down beside me here who's been taken from her parents and captured and trafficked into Syria and she sees that her her master is sick and she just says a wee word that points the master

Naaman to the god that the prophet would speak of and through that situation is led to the lord strange providences difficult hard to fathom things the illness that Naaman suffers the captivity this wee girl is in and yet god is in it he can take what the devil designs for evil even and turn it around and use it for good for salvation for glory so unexpected visitors come looking for Jesus they're following an unidentified star the third thing that we see here is the response of Herod because as far as Herod is concerned this this child this one that's been born is an unwelcome king think about it again just the situation that they were in back on that day these wise men these magi they come into Jerusalem now we have in our minds eye three of them but the bible doesn't say that there were three of them some of the scholars think there might have been 14 some of the scholars think there might have been an entourage of even up to 100 or 200 we're not sure but even when two or three people come into a community we notice you know we're curious there's new faces there's there's people that we don't recognize and they're now they're now in this place and these magi from the east people noticed when they arrived in

Jerusalem likely they looked different to the people of Jerusalem their dress would have been different and when they come and they start asking questions about the one who has been born king of the Jews and you can imagine how the rumors began and traveled at pace around Jerusalem and Herod very quickly gets to hear about these characters that have just come into Jerusalem and about the questions they're asking and he doesn't like the sound of this because he's the king so Herod calls for them verse 3 when Herod heard this he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him and so what we see here is that Jesus causes a disturbance and that was true back then and that's still true today

Jesus causes a disturbance Jesus is king Jesus is king of kings and lord of lords he is the ultimate ruler he is the one who stands in in ultimate authority over our lives so when we begin to see him and hear about him and if we're understanding properly we should be disturbed and Herod is disturbed he doesn't like the sound of this because he wants to be king and the objection that Herod had is an objection that's held still today by many there are many many people who would be very quick to say

[ 57 : 23 ] I like the sound of Jesus the savior I like the sound of somebody who can cleanse me from sin and take away all the bad things I've done I like the sound of somebody who can give me the assurance that when I die I've got a ticket that takes me into heaven that kind of Jesus I want but I don't want a lord I don't want a king ruling over my life you know the spirit of Herod is still very much present and active even in this room today Herod says I don't want a king I want to be king I don't want somebody coming in and telling me what I can and can't do I don't want to bow I want to be the master of my life

I want to govern how I will use my time I want to decide how far I will use my talents I want to decide how to use my money I don't want anyone telling me what to do that's the spirit of Herod verse 4 when he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law he asked them where the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem in Judea they replied for this is what the prophet has written and there's a quote from Micah 5 but you Bethlehem in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rulers of Judah for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel so Herod goes to the scholars the biblical scholars and he says tell me about the place where this king of the Jews is to be born he's directed back to Micah and they're given the coordinates of where to find the child not Jerusalem but Bethlehem and you know if we hit pause just at this point for a moment there's both instruction here that we can

take on board and there's tragedy in these verses you know there's instruction about how we will find Jesus how did the magi know where to find Jesus well it was through God's word they come asking questions Micah 5 is opened and they're led to the place where they'll find Jesus and the same principles that applies if we want to see Jesus we don't need to go and climb some far eastern mountain we don't need to look into some crystal stones we don't need to do some kind of new agey hocus pocus if we want to see Jesus if we want to come to know

Jesus yes there are signposts in the stars and we can be prompted along the way in terms of providence the way our lives are ordered but if we want to really see and hear and meet with Jesus we need the word of God it's in the word of God it's in the Bible that we see Jesus and we hear Jesus and we meet with Jesus so there's instruction here for us for anybody who's searching for anybody perhaps today who is a Christian but you're far from God you're wondering how do I get back to Jesus Bible for somebody who's backslidden who's trying to figure out where am I and how do I get back to where I should be the likelihood is for some weeks or months your Bible has been closed we need to open the Bible to get the instruction that we need to come back to

Christ so there's instruction in this section but there's also tragedy here because the tragedy that we see in these verses is that it's possible to know the word of God it's possible to have a PhD in some part of the word of God it's possible to know the Bible headwise inside out and yet refuse to come to Jesus J.C.

[ 62 : 24 ] Ryle says these verses teach us that there may be knowledge of scripture in the head while there is no grace in the heart Mark says Ryle how King Herod sends to inquire of the priests and elders where Christ would be born Mark what a ready answer they return him and what an acquaintance with the letter of scripture they show but they the scholars never went to Bethlehem to seek for the coming saviour but the magi with a menacing push in the back from Herod they go to Bethlehem to seek out Jesus because they want to worship him in verses 7 and 8 we see that Herod puts on this show that he wants to worship Jesus as well but we know that he has no intention of worshipping

Jesus he is determined to destroy Jesus and you can see how determined he was towards the end of chapter 3 but we're not going there today so we see Herod's response to Jesus Jesus as far as he's concerned is an unwelcome king he doesn't want him we see how the wise men are led to Jesus through this unidentified star they're unexpected visitors who come and who are saying that they want to worship Christ and the final thing today is that they give unreserved worship verse 9 after they had heard the king they went on their way and the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was when they saw the star they were overjoyed on coming to the house they saw the child with his mother

Mary and they bowed down and worshipped him they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh so the magi they follow the star they follow the word of God and they are led to the place in Bethlehem where Jesus was and they worship him likely he's two years old now a toddler and the wise men they gather around this wee child and they they worship him and we're told in Isaiah there was nothing nothing remarkable about the way that Jesus looked there's nothing of great wonder in terms of his humanity that would mark him out as different to anyone else it's just a baby but they worship him and we're given a picture here of what worship looks like and my time's gone but let me just give you three headings you can go and think about them yourself what should our worship be like according to the wise men our worship should be joyful they're overjoyed verse 10 because they have found

Jesus it's Billy Sunday who said if you have no joy in your religion there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere worship should be joyful it doesn't mean that we should be raising our heads and you know grinning madly but there should be a deep joy and it should transmit to our faces in some measure it should also cause us to open our mouths and sing and we'll get to that this evening worship should be joyful worship should be reverent because in verse 11 they bowed down just a baby but around the cradle they bowed down because they recognised that this baby was God so there was a reverence in their worship that I think often we lack and the final thing here is that their worship was generous so our worship should be generous they bring gifts verse 11 expensive gifts costly gifts gold which spoke about the fact that Jesus is king incense which spoke about the fact that Jesus is God and myrrh which pointed forward to the reason that Jesus came he came to die they were generous in their gifts because they were thankful that they had found

[ 68 : 17 ] Jesus have we found Jesus are we thankful that we found Jesus are we generous in our worship of Jesus not just for the hour here but with our lives are we generous in our worship of Jesus this child who was born but born to die is our worship unreserved is our worship worship have we come to Christ the king let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your word we thank you for your son we thank you for the salvation that is offered in him and we pray that we would take these lessons from the journey and the response of the wise men the magi who sought

Jesus with all their hearts and who found him we thank you that that promise is given to us that those who seek the Lord with all their hearts will find him we pray that you would help us to examine ourselves to see if there is anything of the spirit of Herod in us where we shake our fists and say I don't want a king I don't want a Lord telling me what to do if that's within us Lord we pray that you would help us to repent and to bow before Christ and we pray that you would enable us even in our final singing but in every breath that we are given help us to worship Jesus help us to sing with sincerity my heart is filled with thankfulness for him the one to whom we caused pain on Calvary the one who plumbed the depths of the disgrace of our sin so that we could be saved help us we pray to receive that salvation to accept that grace and to respond with unreserved worship that we would give our lives our hearts our all to love and to follow Christ and we pray this in

Jesus name Amen we'll sing to conclude mission praise 1209 my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who bore my name who my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who bore my name who loved the depths of my disgrace and gave me life again who crushed my curse all sin for and clothed me with his light and wrote his all of righteousness with power upon my heart my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who was his right who floods my weakness with strength and and caused his fears to fly whose every promise is enough for every step

I take sustaining me with arms of love and crowning me with grace my heart my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who reigns above whose wisdom is my perfect peace whose every thought is done for every day I am honored is given by the king so I will give my life my all to love and fall in and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more

Amen Amen