

When Christmas isn't what it's Cracked Up to Be

Matthew 2:1-12

So what is a Magi? They are the equivalent a Rhodes Scholar. They had superb knowledge of math, science, astronomy, history, agriculture and religion. Historians believed that you didn't become king of Persia without a mastery of scientific and religious disciplines of the Magi. So they were a big deal!!

These wise men were pursuing something that was sure not to disappoint them. This Christmas I hope you will pursue the things of Christmas that can't disappoint you.

Lets look at two things that we can do that can help us have the best Christmas we have ever had.

The first thing we can do is SEEK THE RIGHT THING. Let me ask you a question, what do you want out of Christmas? What would make it wonderful? Snow, family together, finding the perfect gift, or receiving the perfect gift?

We've all been disappointed by Christmas because it didn't deliver what we were looking for. Christmas wasn't the problem, it's our expectations. We're looking for the wrong things.

The wise men show us how to make this Christmas the best Christmas ever. Verse 2. The wise men were coming to Jerusalem looking for an opportunity to worship Jesus. They were also looking in the right place. Verse 5,6.

Friday I asked my boys what new tradition they wanted to add to what we do for Christmas and after talking with them we are going to take turns reading the Christmas story from the Bible.

If you want to keep Christ in Christmas then its got to be more than a yard sign or a bumper sticker that says "Let's keep Christ in Christmas."

If we are looking to family, friends, presents or even snow for that matter we can and will be disappointed every time. Christmas shouldn't be ruined by

circumstances rather Christmas should be forever written on our hearts through living pages of the Word of God.

Illustration: A woman posted her Christmas list on the refrigerator for her husband to read. Rather than listing specific items, she simply requested something that will make me feel beautiful and attractive. When Christmas rolled around she expected some fancy lingerie inside. To her surprise, he gave her an exercise bike instead.

Seek the right things in the right place and you will not be disappointed.

The second thing we can do to assure that we have the best Christmas we have ever had is GIVE THE RIGHT THINGS.

The Magi came to Jesus house with a bunch of gifts. Here's what they brought; Gold. Gold was gift for a king. Jesus is the King of Kings. The second gift was Frankincense. This was a gift for a priest. Jesus is our High Priest. And lastly they brought Myrrh. This was a gift for the dead. It was used to anoint the body just before burial. This is prophetic to the death and burial of Jesus.

Each gift had a purpose. See if our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need would have been technology, God would have sent a scientist. But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.

We ought to give an appropriate gift this Christmas. I'm not talking about material things. I'm talking about something that will last all past the holiday season. The gifts I'm talking about are showing love and kindness to our family, friends, the hurting, and extending forgiveness to those who have hurt you. Forgiveness doesn't fail if the recipient refuses to receive it. It fails when you refuse to give it.

- Giving these kinds of gifts results in a joyous meaningful Christmas with NO disappointments.

Illustration: To put a bow on what I am trying to say this morning, I would like to read to stories of two remarkable you boys who can teach us all about giving the right gifts.

Chad was a young, shy outcast. At the end of the school day when the kids would walk home together, Chad was left to himself. For this reason Chads mother was deeply concerned when Chad told her that he wanted to make Christmas cards for every student in his classroom. Nevertheless his mother gave him all the supplies that he needed to make all of the cards. Chad spent three weeks making 35 Christmas cards. On the morning of the class party, Chad was overflowing with excitement. He carefully gathered up all of the Christmas cards and headed out the door but his mother was not so enthusiastic. She knew that her son might not receive one card and she wasn't sure if he could handle that kind of pain. She decided to bake his favorite cookies and have them waiting when he got home. The evening silence was broken by the sound of kids walking down the street from school. As usual all of the other kids were laughing as they walked together and Chad was all by himself. She noticed his hands were empty and tears began to fill her eyes. When the door opened she choked back her tears and said, "Mommy has some warm cookies and milk." Chad barely heard a word. His face was glowing and his chest was about to burst with pride as he said, "Not a one... not a one. I didn't forget one single person."

The greatest joy in life is reserved for those who are more interested in giving than receiving.

I would like Dana to read the last one.