

Epiphany—Celebrating the King of the World

Jesus Came as the King of Kings

January 6th is traditionally celebrated as the date that the magi came to worship Jesus as the long-promised King of Israel who came to bless all nations and bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Is 49:5-7). What does it mean for us to be so blessed? How are we extending that blessing to others?

APPLYING GOD’S WORD

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you:

Praise Jesus as King! What are the ways that you are demonstrating your allegiance to Christ as King today? How will you praise Him?

Serve in His Kingdom! Intentionally obey Christ as King in all the different aspects and arenas of your life.

Tell Others About This Great King! Ask the Lord to give us boldness to give testimony of His works of grace in our lives. Ask others to pray for boldness, too.

Ezra-Nehemiah—Series Overview

A Community Restored for Worship

The book of Ezra-Nehemiah was written to encourage God’s people returning after exile to believe the covenant promises and restore the temple in Jerusalem. God’s people were being restored in the place of promise as a worshipping community. The restoration of purpose was far greater than their real estate. The place always has to do with what God promised would happen there.

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional
First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
January 6th, 2019

Morning Service:

Isaiah 49: 5 – 7, Matthew 2: 1 – 11

A Gentile Christmas—Epiphany

1. The Wise Men Came to Worship Jesus as King.
2. Those Blessed by God Are to Bless Others.
3. All That Blessing Brings Glory to God.

Jesus was born King of Israel, but His Kingdom is not limited to that Nation. He was born as the Promised King of Kings, the Son of David, who would rule over all Nations and all Creation. The magi came to worship Him as the True King. How will you (and we) serve Him today?

Evening Service:

Nehemiah 7: 1 – 73

Repopulating God’s City

1. We Need to Understand the Crisis They Faced.
2. God’s Promises Always Involve Children & Families Particularly.
3. We Are Also Called to Raise Up Heirs of the Covenant.

God calls us to fill the land with His disciples. Just as it was vital for those returning to Jerusalem from captivity (and their descendants) to understand God’s mandate regarding our family planning, so too we need to see children and grandchildren in God’s ways and not the world’s ways. There are both physical and spiritual ways we are called to multiply and we need to be engaged in both.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

The truth of who Christ is as King affects every aspect of our lives. It is not *just* about bringing Him offerings in the worship service, but serving Him with all that we are. Spend time each day this week, talking with our King, reading from His Word, and seeking His direction in how we are to follow Him faithfully.

Ask Christ to teach us how we may walk in His ways to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday AM

READ **Matthew 2:1-11**. What is the significance of gentiles coming to worship Christ? DISCUSS how Christ's rule over all the nations has affected your life. PRAY for God to make us faithful in serving our rightful King and to no longer live as refugees with no King.

Sunday PM

READ today's passage: **Nehemiah 7:1-73**. What were God's people to do to repopulate Jerusalem? DISCUSS how this relates to you (us) physically and spiritually. PRAISE God for His promises to multiply His people. REPENT of ways we don't trust Him with our family and evangelism/discipleship.

Monday

READ **Matthew 2:1-2; Jeremiah 23:5-6**. Why was there a need for God to raise up a new King? What is the connection with David? PRACTICE—Obey our King in how He commands us to live. What does it mean for you (and us) to do justice? How do we demonstrate we are depending on Christ's righteousness? PRAY for your neighbors, peers, friends & family to know the true King. EXTEND His grace to someone today by telling them the truth about Christ.

Tuesday

READ **Matthew 2:3-8; 13-18**. Herod looked to the Word and seemed to be doing right, but he used the knowledge to advance his own agenda with horrifying consequences. DISCUSS How is this a picture of ALL sin? Does sin always lead to death? PRAY, "Father God, we ask that You would use Your Word to soften us to Your truth. Conform our lives to Christ's image, our older brother and King."

Wednesday

READ **Matthew 2:1-11; Hebrews 10:23-25**. The magi came together. How can we stimulate one another to love and good deeds? PRACTICE—Put off unwholesome talk and put on encouraging speech. REJOICE if you have been adopted through Christ's sacrifice. PRAY, "Lord, thank You how You love us. We praise You for doing what only You could do in making us Your people. Help us proclaim and live out the reality of Your Kingdom together."

Thursday

READ **Matthew 2:9-11; 1John 5:20-21**. DISCUSS—What does it mean to worship Christ? What is idolatry? PRACTICE—Put off false worship and put on true worship of the Living King. PRAY, "Jesus, You have conquered death and the grave. You have put to death our sinful way of life and enabled us to live in new life in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Embolden us to be done with false worship and to offer ourselves to You. Amen."

Friday

READ **Matthew 2:1-11**. Make a list of areas of your life. In which ones are you most clearly serving Christ as King? In what areas are you mostly ignoring Him? What would it look like for you to obey Christ in those areas? How can brothers and sisters at FCCW help? PRAY, "Lord, You alone are the true King. Forgive me for the ways I ignore You and try to rule my own life. Teach me (us) what it means to truly serve You as King and give You all praise, honor, and glory in every aspect of our lives.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow. READ **Genesis 1-2**. COME to worship tomorrow expecting to hear from God and to learn more about Christ and being God's dearly loved children. PRAY for God's glory to be more and more manifested in the Woodstock area. Pray that He will use us to extend His grace as we celebrate it together. INVITE someone you know to come with you for Sunday School and the worship service tomorrow.