

Matt 2 Magi came to worship Jesus. There were likely around 100 of them. It would have been a big affair. They brought chests of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Expensive gifts.

Within a day or two Joseph had a dream that they were to flee to Egypt. The gifts of the magi funded their trip and enabled Joseph, Mary and Jesus to escape death so that Jesus could fulfill his mission.

We don't know how long the money lasted. Was Jesus able to buy a house in Galilee with the money? Was part of the money used to support Mary and his younger siblings while Jesus was doing ministry?

Where did the Magi come from and why? Why bow down to the king of the Jews and not other kings of other nations? We have to go back almost exactly 600 years to a Jewish, teenager named Daniel.

Daniel lived through the destruction of his entire culture, country, religious system and temple. Many of his many and relatives were killed by an occupying force and he was taken as a slave to a foreign nation to serve their king.

You think you have problems? What an opportunity to become bitter, resentful, angry, subversive.

After being tested and trained for three years, Daniel rose among his peers. He served his foreign subjugators with honor, respect and without compromise.

Instead of living for himself, he lived to serve God. Instead of being their judge, he became for them an answer.

He served four kings- Nebuchadnezzar, Belshezzar, Darius the Mede and Cyrus. He counseled them, interpreted dreams and was very influential in convincing Cyrus to set the Jews free to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. He saw visions about when Messiah would come and establish His kingdom and he was put in charge of the wise men and astronomers, called the magi. They knew when The King would come and they were watching and waiting.

They visited Jerusalem, found the baby, the King of Kings, the savior of the whole world and they brought honor, worship and provision for His mission 540 or so after Daniel died.

What a legacy!

His determination to not be bitter but to serve. His dedication to live righteously and not compromise, His intimacy with God made him an answer for kings, a source of life for nations, provision for another young man who would live 600 years later- Jesus!

Read Dan 2:25-48 Daniel was put in charge of the magi.

We are not the life givers that we should be

We haven't seen Jesus as worth the price we need to pay to get to know him.

The pearl of great price.

Time, intimacy, priority, sacrifice- there is a cost.

You can do eastern religion without the heart. You can do Christianity without the heart, but you can't have relationship without the heart.

All relationship confronts our heart, it confronts identity.

We can get entertained without identity, we can bypass and actually ignore our hearts with games, youtube, Netflix, etc...

In order to get to know someone deeply it requires we bring our fears, insecurities and the possibility of rejection to the table and lay it all bare.

There is a cost to deep intimacy, a price to pay, a courageous path to travel down and many of us would rather have principles, rules, facts, analogy, funny and encouraging stories. None of those in and of themselves are bad, but none of them necessitate a deep dive into the heart of another, namely Jesus.

My pastor used to say "You have exactly as much of Jesus as you want."

It's true. We just don't think He is worth it.

Jesus' principles will save you from harm but it is heart to heart connection, a relational closeness that brings life and peace.

At one point in the apostle Paul's life he didn't know whether he would be set free from prison or get his head cut off. He didn't really care. Either way, "I have Jesus".

Prison shackles and prison walls couldn't steal intimacy, closeness with Jesus away.

Life comes from relational closeness with Jesus. Peace, comes from relational closeness with Jesus. Joy, comes from relational closeness with Jesus. Wisdom, comes from relational closeness with Jesus.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Apart from me you can do nothing."