

GIFTS OF *Christmas*

Gold: A King is Born Today

Week 2 | Dec 3, 2023

The following is a guide to help structure your time as a group together. Community Groups exist first and foremost to help us know and follow Jesus together.

Our groups organize their shared life together around four essential practices - Studying the Scriptures, Care and Prayer, Family Hangouts, and Missional Hospitality. Our hope is that our presence together, as a people of practice and patience will aid in our spiritual formation over time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lessons & Carols Christmas Service

Friday, December 22 | 6pm-7pm

Matthews Community Playhouse

On Friday, December 22nd, we will be gathering at the Matthews Playhouse with other local churches across our city to celebrate the birth of King Jesus together. This will be a traditional Lessons & Carols service, where we will sing traditional Christmas worship songs, hear the story of the birth of Jesus read through various passages of Scripture, and take intentional time to reflect on the meaning of this season.

Childcare will be provided for ages 6 weeks - 2 years old. The service will be family-friendly, and should last about 45 minutes.

This is a small part of a citywide collaboration of like-minded churches in the Harbor Network, seeking to partner together to launch, lead, and multiply thriving churches.

Holiday Gathering Schedule

At the end of December, our schedule will change just slightly. Please note the following schedule updates:

- December 22 - Lessons and Carols - 6pm @ Matthews Playhouse
- December 24 - No Gathering
- December 31 - Prayer and Worship - 9:30am @ Dowd
- January 7 - Citizens 3rd Birthday! - 9:30am @ Dowd

REVIEW THE MISSION

Take some time to review who various people are building relationships with and seeking to share the gospel with.

Pray for these individuals - that God would open their eyes to the good news of the gospel.

PRAYER + SCRIPTURE

Open with a brief word of prayer: “God, we thank you for this time together. We open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us. Come Holy Spirit.”

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Read Matthew 2:10-11 + Micah 5:1-5

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:10-11

1 Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. 2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. 3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. 4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. 5 And he shall be their peace.

Micah 5:1-5

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Close with this short prayer: “Lord, we pray for hearts of anticipation, thankfulness, and joy in this advent season. Help us to celebrate the coming of our Messiah and King this Advent season and prepare to worship and glorify Him in our daily lives. Amen.”

As you reflect on Matthew 2:10-11 + Micah 5:1-5, what is the Holy Spirit showing or teaching you?

SERMON DISCUSSION

THE PROPHESED KING

In the sermon, we said that Matthew is using the quote of the magi (Matt 2:6) to point his audience back to the story of Micah (Micah 5). In that story, 700 years prior to the birth of Jesus, the Israelites were under oppression, suffering, and torment at the hands of an enemy nation, the Assyrians.

Take some time to reflect on how your life in 2023 might reflect the circumstances of the Israelites in 700 BC. How do you see the enemies of satan, sin, and death pressing on you over the past year?

DELIVERANCE AND SHALOM

Although Israel is suffering, God will not leave them alone. He promises to send a shepherd-king born in Bethlehem to deliver his people from their enemy and bring them to himself.

This promise is what is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus in Matthew 2. Jesus is the true shepherd-king who has come to free God's people from slavery and bring them into God's flourishing presence forever.

In this way, advent is not a cute and cozy bedtime story, but rather a declaration of war from King Jesus against the powers of darkness.

How is this view of advent (“a declaration of war from King Jesus against the powers of darkness”) good news for you this Christmas season? How can it bring you hope and peace in the chaos of your life and soul?

WORSHIP KING JESUS

Our response to the arrival of the shepherd-king is one of hope and worship.

Take some time to discuss how Jesus as King leads you to worship Him this Advent, and ways you can step into worship in the coming weeks.