

The Glory of Christmas Christmas Day

This is where our celebration takes us, to Jesus, Messiah, King and savior.

The question is where do you go from here?

The two videos we saw demonstrate people who are very different. They came from different worlds. A wealthy, well connected Wise man, or Magi, and a simple, poor, carpenter from backwater Nazareth.

We could make a huge list of how they are different.

Here's how they were the same.

1. They listened to God's voice.
2. They followed obediently.

The wise men took a 900-mile trip from Babylon to Judea that took three months.

They were so convinced that there was a great king being born that God had put his hand on. **They prepared for the trip.** They knew about many "gods" and **they read many prophecies, watched the stars** for signs, and even **listened to the stories people told** about a great king coming from Judea, who would bless many.

Joseph took a trip from being a bachelor to being engaged to a young woman who was pregnant, not by him, but by the Holy Spirit. He took a **whirlwind trip from being single, to be betrothed, to being a husband and father to the promised Messiah.** That's quite a trip, not to mention the **90 miles walking beside a donkey, comforting his very pregnant fiancé.**

Both of these men listened and then obeyed. That's the **challenge of Christmas** for those of us who have come to this place or watched at home with their families. This would be the last thing on most people's minds.

If you are here, you are familiar with who Jesus is and what the day is all about. There are many in our culture who have no frame of reference for this day outside of Hallmark movies and sentimental songs.

If you know who he is and that he came because God wanted you to know him, not simply to fear him, then this simple message is for you.

Jesus made the longer trip than Joseph, or even the wise men coming from Babylon. He did, and continues to do, the heavy lifting for us. It is simply our part to listen and then, obediently, follow. That means we align our lives to this person, how he lived and loved and gave himself for others.

What trip do you need to make in 2023? Maybe it's something hard that you need to do. Maybe it's a new job or a new attitude at your present job. Maybe it's how to live like Jesus as a retired person. Maybe it's being single again, or married. Maybe it's actually a question of moving. Maybe it's being a couple to being three. Maybe there's sickness.

What is God saying to you? You don't know, well you never will, unless you choose to actively listen.

What is one thing you can do to start listening? Here's my promise to you: God is always speaking. He is always doing something and saying something; it's simply a question of whether or not we are putting any effort into listening for his voice. Not to his voice, but for his voice. For his voice is listening in anticipation, believing that God will speak. Listening to his voice is step two.

⁷ "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8

Let's be the kind of people, this Christmas day and beyond, who listen for his voice and then to his voice. Then we can obediently follow King Jesus.

¹⁵ "If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because **it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him**. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you... ²¹ Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them." ... ²³ Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. ²⁴ Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. ²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. John 14:15-14, 21, 23-26

This is not the sentimental Christmas love, but the very practical, trusting love that says, I'm yours, I'll do what you tell me. Because of the book **5 Love Languages, by Gary Chapman**, we now have a common language for how people receive or experience love from others. Some people receive it by **quality time spent**, that's how they know they are loved. Some receive or experience it through **acts of service**. Some receive love through **gifts given**. Some receive love by **physical touch**. Some receive love through **words of affirmation**. Jesus' love language is listening and following.

My promise to you is that if you will lean into what God wants to say to you **through his word, the teaching you will receive here and the people around you**, then you will not only **show your love** for Jesus, but **He will in turn, transform your life**.