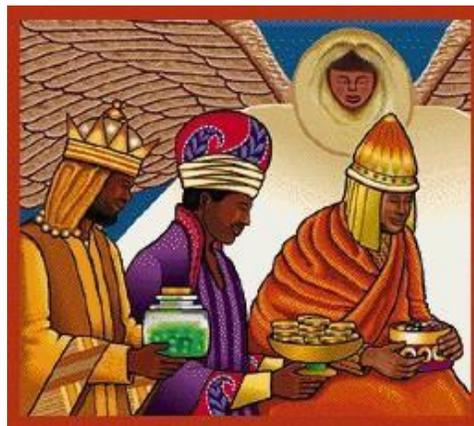


CHRISTMAS SERIES

Gifts For Jesus

A Bible Study Series of The Mt. Zion Church

Pastor Ken Patterson, Ph.D.



December 17, 2025

Introduction: We often linger over the story of the Magi—those wise men from the east who arrived bearing gifts fit for a king. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:11) sparkle with meaning and value, and rightly so. They were extravagant, costly, and intentional. If we are honest, most of us would be thrilled to receive gifts like that—gifts with weight, worth, and a little wow-factor. Yet when we turn our gaze from the gifts Jesus received to the life He lived, we discover something surprising: Jesus was never impressed by riches. What He truly desires is far more valuable—He wants you and me.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus made this abundantly clear. He had every opportunity to pursue wealth, influence, and comfort, yet He chose people instead. He paused to speak with a Samaritan woman drawing water at a well, offering her living water and restored hope (John 4:7–26). He welcomed crowds on hillsides, feeding both their hunger and their hearts with truth (Matthew 5–7). He even called a wealthy, curious tax collector named Zacchaeus down from a tree and into a transformed life (Luke 19:1–10). In each moment, Jesus revealed His heart: restoring broken relationships between God and humanity mattered more than gold in a treasury.

Jesus Himself said, “The Son of Man has no place to lay His head” (Luke 9:58), not because He lacked power, but because His mission was never about possessions—it was about redemption. And that truth is wonderfully freeing. Whether this lesson finds you in the glow of Christmas lights or under the warmth of summer sun, the invitation is the same. You can give Jesus exactly what He desires, any day of the year. Lay down your heart, your life, your yes. The greatest gift Jesus longs to receive is you.



Key Verses: Luke 2: 8-15

I. The Gift of Presence—Luke 2:15

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

Luke 2:8–15 tells us that on the very night Jesus was born, heaven broke its silence with an announcement—but not to kings, priests, or political leaders. Instead, God chose shepherds. Ordinary, overlooked, night-shift workers. The kind of people most of society barely noticed. If a king were born today, the news would travel through press conferences, headlines, and

social media feeds. Yet when the King of Kings arrived, the message was delivered personally, lovingly, and unexpectedly to a handful of shepherds watching sheep under the stars.



This choice reveals something beautiful about God’s heart. He delights in meeting people exactly where they are. These shepherds became the first witnesses of God’s provision of salvation—not because of their status, but because they were willing to listen and respond. The angel’s announcement was a gift, but it required action. The shepherds could not experience Jesus by staying on the hillsides. They could not encounter Him by continuing business as usual. Scripture tells us they said, “*Let us go now to Bethlehem*” (Luke 2:15). And they went.

What did they bring to Jesus? Not gold. Not offerings. Not impressive credentials. They brought themselves. Their presence was the gift. And in bringing themselves into the presence of Jesus, they received something far greater than they expected—joy, wonder, and a firsthand encounter with God’s saving grace.

The blessing came not from merely hearing about Jesus, but from moving toward Him. When our presence meets His presence, God opens our eyes to see what He has been longing to show us all along.

Deeper Thinking Questions

1. What “hillsides” might be keeping you busy or comfortable enough that they prevent you from intentionally moving into the presence of Jesus?
2. The shepherds brought nothing but themselves—what does that teach us about how God measures readiness, worth, and availability when He invites us to experience Him?

II. The Giving of Gifts—Matthew 1:1-2

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

At some later point—likely anywhere from several days to a couple of months after Jesus’ birth—men from the East known as the Magi arrived to seek the newborn King. These Magi were scholars and astronomers, men who carefully studied the stars and the movement of the heavens based on the scientific understanding of their time. As they observed the skies, they noticed something extraordinary: a star unlike any they had seen before, one that did not follow the normal patterns of movement. Interpreting this sign through both observation and prophecy, they concluded that this star was announcing the birth of the King of the Jews. Their response was simple yet profound—they set out to worship Him (Matthew 2:1–2).

We should not underestimate the significance of these men or their journey. While tradition and artwork often portray three Magi, Scripture never specifies a number. Given the realities of ancient travel, it is far more likely that a large caravan made the journey together. Transporting valuable gifts such as gold, along with supplies for a long journey, would have required many people. This was no casual trip—it was a costly, intentional pursuit. Their purpose was clear: to find Jesus and to worship Him.

Unlike many people later in Jesus' ministry who sought miracles, signs, or clever teaching, the Magi came with hearts already bowed. They were not spectators; they were worshipers. When they finally reached Jesus, they demonstrated their reverence by offering gifts worthy of a King—gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:11). Their gifts reflected both who Jesus was and the posture of their hearts. They remind us that true worship always involves offering our best to the One who is truly worthy.

Deeper Thinking Questions

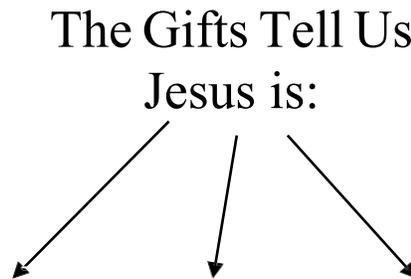
1. The Magi were willing to travel great distances, endure uncertainty, and invest significant resources to worship Jesus. What comforts or routines might God be asking you to step away from in order to truly seek Him?
2. The Magi recognized Jesus as King before most of the world did. How does recognizing Jesus for who He truly is change the way we approach worship, obedience, and the “gifts” we offer Him today?

What three gifts do they bring?

1. _____ This gift is appropriate for the King due to its precious nature and value. This was a common gift given to kings. This also represents us giving to Jesus what is precious and valuable to us. He deserves the most valuable items we have. (See Psalms 51 and Romans 12:1)

2. _____ This gift is appropriate for the King because it is a precious ointment and perfume. This also represents the incense or perfume used in worship. Frankincense has also been found to have healing properties. This gift also represents to us the idea that Jesus is to be worshipped as God. He is not just a baby or a prophet. He is God with us, Immanuel (Exodus 30: 34-36 and Leviticus 2: 1-2).

3. _____ This gift is appropriate for the King because it is another precious ointment. While Matthew does not introduce death or crucifixion in this part of his writing, it is appropriate to infer that myrrh connects with funeral rites. As an embalming agent, myrrh points us to the death of Jesus. Also, myrrh was used to make the tent of meeting a consecrated place. Anyone who accepts the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus becomes a consecrated (usable and holy) instrument for the Lord. (See Exodus 30:22-29)



King (Gold), God (Frankincense), Savior (Myrrh)

Conclusion: Giving Back to the Greatest Giver

Throughout these lessons, we've seen a beautiful pattern: God is the ultimate gift-giver, and Jesus is the perfect gift. From the shepherds who brought their presence, to the Magi who brought costly treasures, to every person who has ever looked to Jesus and lived—God has always been giving long before we ever thought to respond. And the truth is, He is still giving today. He gives grace when we fail, mercy when we fall short, guidance when we feel lost, and hope when the world feels heavy. Most of all, He gives us Himself.

So the question becomes simple, yet deeply challenging: what are we willing to give to Jesus in return? He doesn't need our gold, our schedules, or our perfect behavior—but He does want our hearts, our trust, and our willingness to seek Him. Like the shepherds, we must move toward Him. Like the Magi, we must worship Him with intention and humility.

- How will you intentionally seek Jesus moving forward, not just during the holidays but every day?
- What does genuine worship look like in your life right now, and what might need to change for it to reflect who Jesus truly is?

The greatest gift has been given. Now, let's decide how we will live in response.