

Crossway Life Group, Week of December 9

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

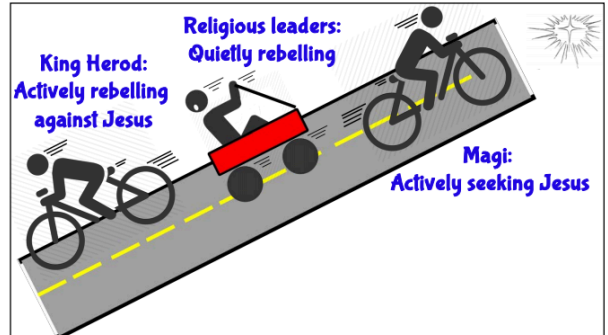
Community

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12 Sermon: "Rebellion in Disguise"

Reading & Discussing the passage

- Rebellion is described as the action or process of resisting authority or control.
 - What are some examples of active rebellion? What are examples of passive rebellion?
 - What might active and passive rebellion against God look like?
- **Read Matthew 2:1-12.** Compare the main characters in the story: **Magi, religious leaders, Herod.** What seems to be their motivation for seeking Jesus?
- The story invites us to think about the relationship between knowledge and worship....the religious leaders know better than they worshipped. The Magi worshipped better than they knew. The Magi are presented as an example to follow. What does their example teach us about knowledge and worship?
- Not to seek Jesus looks neutral, but it is not. How does the picture help illustrate what Matthew is subtly showing in the story of chapter 2:1-12? Later in Matthew's gospel the passivity of the religious leaders takes much more active forms against Jesus: see Matthew 12:30, 20:18, and 26:3. What are ways that people 'quietly' rebel against God? Why is this dangerous?
- God can use all sorts of things to help seekers find Jesus. In Matthew 2, what did God use to help the wise men find Jesus? What and whom has God used in your life to you encounter Jesus?



The Big Idea

**The joy of knowing God
is for those who seek Jesus to worship Him**

This idea applied to our lives today...

***Not to seek Jesus in order to worship Him
is rebellion in disguise***

Reflection Questions

1. "Sometimes we substitute knowledge or action for love and worship." In what ways can this be true for you?
2. What changes might you make with regard to your knowledge and action to ensure that love and worship of God takes priority?
3. The Magi expressed their worship with their bodies. In particular, they physically went to where Jesus was, and they physically bowed down before this newborn king. What practices have you tried, or do you regularly do, to express your worship bodily? Since our bodies are a part of who we are, is there a physical expression of worship that you might try as a part of worshiping God with your whole being?
4. The Magi offered objects of great value from their treasures to Jesus. What objects of great value do you, or might you, offer as an expression of worship to Him?

Serving beyond ourselves

[This information is repeated from last week since they are weighty issues that can take time to process.]

God calls His people to care for the hungry and the wanderer (see Isaiah 58:5-9). Some suggested applications include giving money to a food bank or immigranthope.org, educating ourselves about public policy related to poverty and immigration, or serving among the poor.

Given this call of God, how might your group spur each other on to love and good deeds, and perhaps even serve together?

Growing in Cultural Understandings

Showing honor to those in authority over us is central to Christian teaching. In 1 Peter 2:13-14 and 17, we read “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors.... Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.” In the story of the Magi worshiping Jesus, what did they do to show Jesus honor?

In your own cultural background, what do people do to show honor? What expresses dishonor? How might these perspectives shape your demonstration of honor toward human authorities and toward God?

Matthew 2:1-12 - New International Version

The Magi visit the Messiah

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.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.