

## Christmas Day Sermon 12/25/18 John 1:14

Dear Worshipers at the manger of the Christchild:

Imagine a beautiful and ornamental Persian palace.

- It is night and the golden decorations sparkle in the candlelight
- We see a woman wearing a beautiful, decorated robe
- She storms down the hall of the palace and rushes into one of the rooms
- Her angry words cut the air: “Caspar, you fool!”
  - Where are you going?
  - Out into the desert?
  - Gone for weeks!
  - Following what? An illusion? A dream?
  - Caspar answers slowly.... “No. A star.”

She moves toward him, standing over him.

- “Follow a star? That’s crazy!
- “For all the years we have been married, I have lived through dozens of your schemes and dreams.”
- “But this!...This! Don’t you care about those who need you?
- “What about your children, grandchildren...your obligations...me?”

Caspar responds to his wife: “I have to go.”

- His wife replies “But why? You have everything here. You have a family, friends, people who look up to you. You have your work.”
- He cuts her off. “I have an empty life. For all my working and searching, for all my thinking and dreaming, I have nothing that will last. I am coming to the end of my life. I hear the echo of my voice in my own tomb and my tears stain what might be my death bed. In my heart I feel a hollowness that will not be filled. I see the darkness coming and I cannot stop it. I have to try this one more chance to find hope.”

“But a star?” Caspar’s wife responds. She says: “And where will this journey lead you?”

- Into disappointment?
- Into danger?
- Into denial of reality?

Caspar replies to his wife: “Or into life. The star may point to what I have looked for all my life---sought in myself and in others and in knowledge and in an endless striving. Perhaps that star will lead to something that is finally eternal. I have to go. I have to follow. I have to find out.”

It’s fascinating to imagine what it must have been like, isn’t it?

We know very little about the wise men who came to find the newly born king.

- We know they probably had studied the stars for years
- We don’t know how many wise men there were
- We know they brought expensive gifts to bring to the king they sought
- We know they believed that the hand of God marked the birth of the new king by the appearance of a remarkable star
- They were so confident that the star was a sign of a special event that they left their homes and traveled a long distance to find the king.
- They followed the star to find the king

Chasing stars seems to be a way of describing the spiritual guests of many seekers today.

- The stars they follow are not just the stars in the sky
- Some follow strange teachers and “wise men”
- Some see the hand of God in the shape of the face of Jesus on pieces of toast
- Some see spiritual messages in a number of mysterious visions

The seeker is a description of many who call themselves spiritual in our world.

- Many of these seekers look for God in countless places besides churches

- They build their own “religion” out of what they discover in the world of nature or the world of mystery

But what is most remarkable about the seeker is that the connection to God and the spiritual fulfillment they seek is right in front of them.

- The truth is that the God they seek is in Christ
- The Christ who was the goal of the seeking wise men is right in front of them

The fundamental truth is that God is not off somewhere in the stars waiting for people to find him.

- God the Holy Spirit is actively seeking those seekers
- God comes to us we don't run to him

We worship “God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:4

- God seeks the seeker
- The truth that seekers seek is here in the Word of God

John 1:14 “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

We are witnesses to the truth. We are the ones who carry the knowledge of the truth and are busy “teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19

Seekers don't have to chase after visions and mysterious appearances or stars or spiritual gurus.

God is reaching out to people with his word.

- We represent, proclaim the risen Christ
- We are witnesses to the risen Christ who is the very gift of God

We witness to the Savior who was born in Bethlehem as we tell what God has done for us in Christ.

- We witness to the Savior who was born in Bethlehem as we tell what God had done for us in Christ.
- We preach Christ crucified who came to bear our sin and take it away

Where are the stars today?

The Apostle Paul says: “Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.” Philippians 2:14-16

We are the stars who light up the sky as we share the Gospel with those around us.

- We invite others to follow the Christ child
- We open ourselves to reveal the God who loves us and redeems us
- We tell of the Lord God who promises us life now and eternally
- We invite them to the gift of the Savior, born in a stable in Bethlehem

The very gift of God for all.