

Seek the Lord While He May Be Found
(January 3, 2020, By Rev. Anthony Menzel)

Today we started the service with the singing of “We Three Kings” because today we are celebrating Epiphany, often called Three Kings’ Day in Spanish-speaking circles...

Matthew 2:1-12

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, [a]wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, **2** saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

3 When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. **4** And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

5 So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

6 ‘But you, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ ”

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the [b]wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. **8** And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. **10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. **11** And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

For many Epiphany is the official end to the Christmas season...

This will be probably be our last service, at least for this year, with this grand Christmas tree, which means so much to me, because it represents years of memories...

There are photos of my closest family members, including my grandmothers, who are waiting to see me again in heaven...
The creations of my mom, sister, and uncle dominate the tree...
I have put many of these ornaments on it for the past 40 years as a special decoration for the celebration of Christ's earthly birth...

As we celebrate the Coming of the Three Wisemen today, we will start by giving everyone the opportunity to give something to the Lord Jesus that means a lot more to Him than the gold, frankincense, and myrrh that the wisemen gave to Him...

Our souls...

Luke 12:22-24

Do Not Worry

22 Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. **23** Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. **24** Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?"

Luke 15:7

7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine [b]just persons who need no repentance.

Prayer of Salvation....

***Now the message for today is "Seek the Lord While He May Be Found"

This message is echoed in *Isaiah 55*:

Isaiah 55

55 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts,

Come to the waters;

And you who have no money,

Come, buy and eat.

Yes, come, buy wine and milk

Without money and without price.

2 Why do you [a]spend money for *what is* not bread,

And your wages for *what* does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good,
And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

3 Incline your ear, and come to Me.

Hear, and your soul shall live;
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—
The sure mercies of David.

4 Indeed I have given him *as* a witness to the people,
A leader and commander for the people.

5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know,
And nations *who* do not know you shall run to you,
Because of the Lord your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
For He has glorified you.”

6 Seek the Lord while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.

7 Let the [b]wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

8 “For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the Lord.

9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,

11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me [c]void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

12 “For you shall go out with joy,
And be led out with peace;

The mountains and the hills
Shall break forth into singing before you,
And all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree,
And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree;
And it shall be to the Lord for a name,
For an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off.”

***Another key to seeking the Lord is to avoid selfishness, including the selfishness that leads us to become materialistic:

Luke 12:13-21

13 Then one from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

14 But He said to him, “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” **15** And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of [c]covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. **17** And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ **18** So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. **19** And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.”’ **20** But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’

21 “So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

(((Do Not Worry

22 Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. **23** Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. **24** Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? **25** And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? **26** If you then are not able to do *the* least, why [d]are you anxious for the rest? **27** Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not [e]arrayed like one of these. **28** If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe* you, O *you* of little faith?”

29 “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. **30** For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. **31** But seek [f]the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

32 “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. **33** Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. **34** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

35 “Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; **36** and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. **37** Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, and will come and serve them. **38** And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. **39** But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would [g]have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. **40** Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”))))

Does that mean we are not careful with our money?

Proverbs 6:1-11

6 My son, if you become [a]surety for your friend,
If you have [b]shaken hands in pledge for a stranger,

2 You are snared by the words of your mouth;
You are taken by the words of your mouth.

3 So do this, my son, and deliver yourself;
For you have come into the hand of your friend:
Go and humble yourself;
Plead with your friend.

4 Give no sleep to your eyes,
Nor slumber to your eyelids.

5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand *of the hunter*,
And like a bird from the hand of the [c]fowler.

The Folly of Indolence

6 Go to the ant, you sluggard!
Consider her ways and be wise,
7 Which, having no [d]captain,
Overseer or ruler,
8 Provides her [e]supplies in the summer,
And gathers her food in the harvest.
9 How long will you [f]slumber, O sluggard?
When will you rise from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep—
11 So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler,
And your need like an armed man.

God wants us to be good stewards of our finances...
He doesn't want us to take out credit for other people, even people close to us...
If we are able to work, He wants us to work and save like the ant...
This includes workings on ourselves spiritually so that we have plenty of spiritual and emotional strength when hard times come...
But it also includes working in the natural realm so that we have financial resources with which we can support ourselves in dry seasons and help others in emergencies...

One rule of thumb is to try to have at least enough money to cover 6 months of expenses...
The reasoning behind this thinking is that 6 months should give you enough time to find a new source of income and to downsize if necessary...

At the same time, while it is good to have financial goals, we should not worry about them...

1 Timothy 6:6-10

6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. **7** For we brought nothing into *this* world, [d]*and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. **8** And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. **9** But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. **10** For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the

faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

***A key to seeking the Lord is remembering that we don't need material things to be happy...

Philippians 4:14-19

14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. **15** Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. **16** For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. **17** Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. **18** Indeed I [g]have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. **19** And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

In this context, we see that the Philippians were blessed because of their generosity...

We also see that they weren't promised to get all of their desires supplied. Instead, they were promised to get all of their needs supplied...

Our greatest joy will come from being with the Lord Jesus...

Psalms 16:5-11

5 O Lord, *You are* the portion of my inheritance and my cup;
You [b]maintain my lot.

6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant *places*;
Yes, I have a good inheritance.

7 I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel;
My [c]heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

8 I have set the Lord always before me;
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will [d]rest in hope.

10 For You will not leave my soul in [e]Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to [f]see corruption.

11 You will show me the path of life;

In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

We enter into His Presence by praising and worshiping Him...

Psalm 22:3

3 But You *are* holy,
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

However, God will only accept true worship...
We will not get into His Presence with phony worship...

John 4:23-24

23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. **24** God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

We are able to praise Him effectively by living for the Lord Jesus...

Psalm 15

Lord, who may [a]abide in Your tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2

He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,
And speaks the truth in his heart;

3

He *who* does not backbite with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he [b]take up a reproach against his friend;

4

In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honors those who fear the Lord;
He *who* swears to his own hurt and does not change;

5

He *who* does not put out his money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
He who does these *things* shall never be moved.

***A key to seeking the Lord is not only to do what God's Word says...A key to seeking the Lord is to have these godly actions flow out of us at least in part because our minds and hearts are focused on good things

Philippians 4:8

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Joshua 1:8-9

8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you[c] shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. **9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God *is* with you wherever you go.”

We have to fight the battle against thoughts that want to take our focus off the Lord Jesus and God's Word:

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. **4** For the weapons of our warfare *are* not [a]carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **5** casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, **6** and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.