

Epiphany 2022

Sunday January 2nd

Today we are celebrating Epiphany. The word epiphany has two meanings that overlap for us. It means a moment of sudden and great revelation or realisation and it also refers to Jesus being revealed to the wise men or the Magi.

Now there is so much that we just don't know about the wise men, but I thought I would start with a quick quiz about what we do know, or what we think we know.

How many were there? (*why do we think there were three?*)

What were their names? *Casper/Melchior/Balthasar Came from a Greek manuscript dated around 500ad*

How did they travel? *We don't know, camels would not be an unlikely mode of transport.*

What gifts did they bring? *Gold/Frankincense/Myrrh*

What did these gifts represent? *Gold for a King/Frankincense used in worshipping God/Myrrh for healing and or for burying the dead*

Where did they find Jesus?/ *In a house*

What did they do when they found Him? *Knelt down and worshipped*

Where were they from? (Persia – Iran?/Sheba – Yemen?)

What was the most important gift that they gave to Jesus? *Worship*

In a sense, by inviting the Magi to see Jesus, God was giving us a gift – He was saying, right at the beginning of Jesus' life, that His gift of Himself was for everybody, He had come into the world for everybody, not just for the Jewish people. And there are lots of other times during Jesus' life that He reaffirmed this. He revealed who He was to the Samaritan woman at the well, He healed a centurion's daughter and cast a demon out of a Greek woman's daughter.

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So, Jesus is God's gift to us His way of giving Himself to us and for us. But what can we give to Him? The beautiful Carol, In the Bleak Midwinter, talks about giving Him our heart. Hopefully that is something that we all have done, are doing, but I was thinking about what sort of commitment we could make specifically in 2022.

Who has made a New years Resolution this year? Who has broken it already? I don't make them anymore, but I do make a list of things that I would like to try and do without putting myself under pressure and giving up or feeling I have failed if I only partly achieve them.

This year I was thinking that maybe, as our gift to Jesus we could try specifically to grow in one attribute of the fruit of the Spirit. Could you pick just one – maybe write it out on a piece of paper and put it on the fridge or somewhere where you will see it every day to remind you? Could you tell God that this year you will try to be more:

Loving

Joyful

Peaceful

Patient

Kind

Generous

Faithful

Gentle

Self-controlled

Of course, we should all be growing in all these things, but maybe think of the one that you find hardest or the one you would really like to be better at. Tell God that you really want to be better at this and ask Him to help you. If you

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fall down or mess up or forget, just say you are sorry, ask for His help again and pick up where you left off. The list is on your Fellowship/Pew News along with the reference – Galatians 5:22-23. I am not going to be more prescriptive than that – each one of you will I am sure be able to think of at least one of those things you could be better at and how. Be kind to yourself and remember that God is not a big policeman with a stick waiting for you to fail, but a kind, loving, infinitely patient and forgiving parent, who wants you to succeed and will help you in every way that you let Him. So that is your challenge for 2022 – whatever other resolutions you have or haven't made, resolve to grow and be better at at least one of the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit. With God's help I know you can do it!