

Excited and Hopeful

SERMON NOTES

December 29, 2024

"Excited and Hopeful"

Matthew 2:1-18; Isaiah 43:18-19



I. Introduction

- A. Epiphany can mean many things, such as a moment of sudden revelation or insight, but for Christians it is the celebration of the visit from the _____.
- B. The star over Bethlehem showcased that Jesus draws _____ to himself.
- C. _____ was not thrilled at hearing the news of the birth of a new king of the Jews.

II. Look for Signs

- A. In Jesus' life, fisherman, Mary Magdalene, the _____, and crowds of people were drawn to his teaching and miracles.
- B. Question: How did Jesus call _____?
- C. Other signs God used through the Bible included appearing as a cloud of smoke or pillar of fire, the Holy Spirit as a _____, and God audible and inaudibly speaking directly to people.

III. Celebrate Daily the Coming of Christ

- A. Question: Are you looking for _____?
- B. _____ is not the only time Christians should be excited about "God with us"
- C. "Every _____ is a 'little Easter'" a quote attributed to Robert E. Webber.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE Dec. 30, 2024 – Jan. 4, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Another year comes to a close. Christmas has come and gone, yet the message of Christmas is ours to cherish. Christ is still calling people. Some see miraculous signs while others can look back and see years of activity from the Holy Spirit. We turn to the Scriptures now to further illuminate our walk with the Lord and entrance into a new year of following Jesus. Let us lift all things unto the Lord and trust that God will lead us to greater ministry in the coming year.

Monday: 1 Kings 19:11-13

God's method of communication ranges throughout the biblical narrative. In this passage, we find several great forces of nature that God could speak through, yet it is in the silence that Elijah hears the Lord's voice. God's question to his servant is "what are you doing here?" Are you in the place God wants you to be?

Tuesday: Matthew 2:19-23

The events following today's celebration of Epiphany sees Mary, Joseph and Jesus escape to Egypt and then return after the death of King Herod. I'm sure after such a long journey to Bethlehem the last thing desired was another long journey, yet it is what enabled God's plan of salvation to take place. In your life, what events were difficult in the moment yet, upon looking back, were crucial to where you are today?

Wednesday: Luke 19:1-10

A New Year reminds us that surprises can be around any corner. At times, they are welcomed blessings and other times tragic concerns. We can also have surprise moments from the Lord, just as in the case of Zacchaeus. How has God surprised you in your life?

Thursday: "We Three Kings" UMH#254 (can be found at <https://hymnary.org/hymn/UMH/254>)

A rightful staple for the occasion given the name, lyrics, and subject of this hymn; the chorus of which we reflect on today: "...westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light." As Jesus followers, we continually seek God's guidance and pursue the Light that has come into the world. What does your pursuit of the Lord look like now versus your younger self?

Friday: 1 Peter 3:13-16

Finally, let us consider Peter's advice to the 1st century believers: "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (v.15). Why do we hold the birth of Christ in highest esteem? Why is his coming to earth an ever-present reason for our worship? Why do we seek to be people who walk in his Light?

MOVING FORWARD

Our Advent journey has come to a close yet our work as Kingdom builders continues into this New Year. Let us, with eagerness and great hope, pursue God's calling anew. May the actions we take in this new year draw us and our community ever closer to the Lord. Lastly, may our faith increase so that should anyone ask the all-important question of "why," we are ready, willing and eager to answer them. Amen?

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) Magi B) people C) Herod. IIA) sick, B) you, C) dove.
IIIA) God, B) Christmas, C) Sunday