

Week of The Epiphany 2022

“The Whole of Life”

GETTING STARTED

- What are you willing to do/endure so that other people have an healthy understanding of Jesus & The Gospel?
- Share a time when you were set free from “darkness” of some kind.
 - How did it impact:
 - *Your understanding of life’s ups & downs?
 - *Your relationships with others?
- Discuss an occasion when your plans didn’t go as intended & how The LORD guided you in new directions.

Ephesians 3:1-12

- Why do you think Paul felt led (read: “had to”) write this message if the Jews had always been called to be “a light unto the nations”?
- What made Paul uniquely equipped to reach BOTH Jews & Gentiles?
 - What are your particular gifts for evangelism?
- How do “powers & principalities” obscure The LORD’s message & make it a “mystery” (to those outside of authentic “religion” &/or relationships with GOD)?

Isaiah 60:1-6

- In what ways does this passage address the “ebb & flow” of our lives & societies?
- Considering that this passage was probably written as the exiled Jews were starting to return to Israel (after being in bondage for over a generation due to their internal conflicts & mistreatment of foreigners), paraphrase what the prophet is saying to the people.
- Discuss the role of earthly institutions in this Text (i.e.—“kings”, “powers”, etc.).

Matthew 2:1-12

- Why, do you believe, Matthew makes it a point of addressing geography in this narrative?
- What is the importance/significance of where the “wise men” came from?
 - Why was the reference to the star important to the cultures of the ancient world?
 - *What might be the meaning of this for us today?
- How was the place of Christ’s birth important & counter-cultural?
- Discuss the meaning(s) of the gifts the magi brought.
- How does this passage fulfill our reading from Isaiah?
 - What do you make of the Magi both speaking-with Herod & defying his orders?

IN CLOSING

- Connect our passages to one another (particularly Ephesians as a fulfilment of what transpired in Matthew).
- Talk about this week’s Scriptures in-light of the phrase: “The universal is specific & the specific is universal”.
- (How) Are you carrying the message(s) of Christmas beyond annually celebrating Jesus’ birth?