

Worship

December 12, 2010

The famous prophecy of Balaam, 'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre will rise out of Israel' (Numbers 24.17), was very dear to Jewish hearts, and this again was one of the messianic proof texts found at Qumran. People mused on such verses, and drew much encouragement from them. So both Jewish and Gentile worlds were predisposed towards seeing in the stars an indication of what they might expect. (M. Green, *The Message of Matthew*)

People say that what we are seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think this is what we're really seeking. I think what we're seeking is an experience of being alive. (*The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell)

Eternity is infinitely quick like that winged steed, temporality is an old nag, and the existing person is the driver, that is, if existing is not to be what people usually call existing, because then the existing person is no driver but a drunken peasant who lies in the wagon and sleeps and lets the horses shift for themselves. Of course, he also drives, he is also a driver, and likewise there perhaps are many who—also exist. (Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*)

What is the nature of the search? You ask. Really, it is very simple, at least for a fellow like me; so simple that it is easily overlooked. The search is what anyone would undertake if he were sunk in the everydayness of his own life. (Binx Bolling in *The Moviegoer* by Walker Percy)

Welcome

Prelude and Time for Reflection

Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song

Declaring What We Believe: Confession of Faith (Apostle's Creed, 4th c.)

Welcoming Each Other (Kids may go to their classrooms)

Community Together: Prayers of the People

Giving Back to God: Offering

Please complete the section on the back and give it during the offering. We will let you know about upcoming events.

Hearing God's Word: Scripture Reading Matthew 2.1-12

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 " 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.' " 7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." 9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Understanding God's Word and Our Lives: Sermon

The Christmas Season: a Search for Christ

Outline:

1. What do you Mean by a Search for Jesus?
2. An Objection about Searching
3. How do we Search for Jesus?
4. What is the Goal of Searching for Jesus?



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Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin

Public Reading

Father, we spend mental and emotional, energy and time, searching for things--sometimes the special items our kids need for a quiet night sleep but more often what we hope will thrill, satisfy and quiet us. We start many searches but you have not been our primary object. Forgive us. We have not searched for you like Magi, and we are the poorer not finding Jesus as they have. Help us in searching; help us in finding you. Compel us on a journey, let us rejoice on the way, let us find the one we will desire to give our greatest gifts. Show us how Jesus the King brings light to our day with kids, to our day at the office. We want to both know you truly and taste your glory. Please meet with us; help us to find you afresh.

Private Reflection

Words of Forgiveness

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Ps 103.11,12)

Remembering Jesus with Bread and Cup: Lord's Supper

Jesus called those who find their life in His death and resurrection to receive the bread and cup as a tangible sign to remember and be strengthened by His Gospel. It is a spiritual meal for all who believe in Him.

On the first and third Sundays of the month, we come forward as families, groups and individuals to receive the bread and cup and for a prayer of blessing. The second, fourth and fifth Sundays, we remain seated, with time to personally remember Jesus' death and resurrection for us with the bread and cup. Whether you take the elements or not, we encourage you to either come forward for prayer or use the time for personal reflection about your relationship with Jesus.

Juice is in the outer ring; wine is in inner rings.

Responding with Song

Taking hold of the Good Word: Benediction ("the good word")

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." 2 Thess. 2: 16, 17

Prayers for Those Not Taking the Bread and Cup

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reason for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me and open me to the reality of your identity. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am more wicked and sinful than I ever dared allow, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, to give me complete forgiveness and rightness with God. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, in joy I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Covenant Children (Not Yet Confirmed)

Lord Jesus, thank you for placing me inside your family, the church. Help me more and more to know you, to love you, and to follow you as your faithful disciple. Amen.



**Grace
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Church**

Grace Hill is a church that seeks to live by and testify to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ (see John 1.14-18). We are affiliated with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a denomination with a rich history of Christ's grace and truth.

Our pastor is Ross Durham; he can be reached by email at ross@gracehillchurch.net or by cell phone at 919.593.2169.

Our Worship Director is Michael Musser and our Children's Ministry Co-Directors are Robyn Musser and Kaylyn Fernandez.

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Please let us know about your visit with us!
Also feel free to ask any questions about
Grace Hill.

Please fill out the form to the right and place
in the offering basket during "Giving back to
God."

Or if you prefer you can send your name,
email address, and mailing address by txt to
919 593 2169 or by email to
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