

# Let's Live the Epiphany Story!

## Isaiah 60: 1-9 Matthew 2:1-12

Let's start living the Epiphany Story.

Let's Become Magi.

Live! Fight! Pray!—like a Magi!—today!

You too can become wise!

You too can follow a beautiful, moving star!

You can find whatever it is you are looking for in life. **(Pause)**

That said—what are you looking for?

What ARE you looking for? –Really!

What is your life chasing after?

What is the unifying center of energy from which your life emerges— like its own little big banging universe?—

—So that if God looked upon you with love and wisdom, God would say, *“This is what I am going to use you for.”*

*“And this is where—and to whom—I am going to send you.”*

Believe it or not, you can start this thrilling adventure today.

All you have to do is start praying and focusing on this simple, unforgettable line from Matthew's story:

***“And a star went before them.”***

Only now make it your personal story—

***“And a star is going before me.”***

“A star is going before me right now at this time in my life.”

Suppose you try praying and focusing on that simple line of scripture a few minutes a day—every day or a single week in the new year

See where that prayer leads you.

“*Why do this?*”, you might ask?

First of all—if a star is what’s going before you!—

—If a star is what is leading you!—

—And you take that idea seriously!—

Then other strong forces that typically lead you—and lead me!—are not going to be able to take the lead.

For instance, if a star is leading you—then your low grade worries and your high intensity fears will not be able to take control of your direction.

Would that not be of some help to you?

How many of us are too often led by our alarms!

How many of us are led instead by our nagging worries?

We don’t even have room in our minds for a guiding star, because our worries and fears have taken over the driver’s seat!

If the star which God sent to lead the wise scholars from the East—is leading you—then your discouragements will not be able to lead you.

Your frustrations and disappointments will not have sufficient candle power to misdirect you to wherever **they** want you to go.

The bottom line is that if a star is leading me—then **I** am not leading me.

Instead, the star of Bethlehem is leading me!

And even if nothing else comes of your Epiphany prayer, that will be sufficient.

At the very least— you **are** following a star.

And you are **not following** your fears—or your worries—or your distractions—your despair—your disappointments— or any of your self driven, “I want!” “I have to have!”—purposes and obsessions.

It is just you and the star.

And your star is going before you!

This works like any good prayer works—such as:

*Our Father, who art in heaven....*

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change....*

*Lord, Have mercy upon me.*

Why?

You are putting your focus on —God!

You are taking the wrong thing out of the focus—You. Me!

If you are looking at everything through the lens of “Me”, then everything will be distorted.

Imagine that we are talking about a movie or a photograph instead of your life.

If the focus is on something up close, then everything around that thing and everything farther away will be out of focus.

You don't want to live your life like that.

Instead, focus on following the star!—which leads to Christ, who leads to God.

I do know this—If you take this spiritual adventure seriously—and remember, Christianity at its very best is an adventure—

—if you take this star following, Epiphany prayer adventure seriously, you will realize that it is futile to do anything about any problems you are having—UNTIL YOU SEE THEM MORE CLEARLY.

It makes no sense to do anything about any difficulties you are experiencing, any challenges you face—UNTIL YOU SEE THEM MORE CLEARLY.

In other words, a true STAR FOLLOWING MAGI always ends up praying:

*Lord, let me not attempt to do anything about the problems I am having until I see them more clearly.”.....pause*

One of my favorite British writers is Thomas Hardy. In his novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the main character, a farmer, appropriately named Gabriel Oak, is standing on a hill in England.

It is late at night and Farmer Oak wonders what time it is.

Only instead of looking at a watch, which he does not have, Gabriel looks up at the sky.

He begins identifying several of the constellations—Orion rising above the horizon—Pegasus in the northwest, he looks for the position of Dog star in the southern sky and Vega sparkling above a tree, and says matter of factly, “It’s one a.m.”

Is there is anyone watching this worship service who can do that?

If you can, I salute you!

But I doubt most of us can tell time by the stars.

It sounds like Thomas Hardy knew how to do that.

By following a star—Magi style—in your prayers or meditations – you can find out something a lot more important than the time.

You find the star inside of you.

Isn’t that where the star is?

Whatever it is you are looking for—whatever it is you think you are looking for?—the truth of this story for you is—that the star is inside of you.

We think what we are looking for is outside of us.

Some person.

Some place.

Some reward.

Some material thing.

But if you practice this prayer that I am recommending—“A star went before them.”

And you take it personally and seriously—

You will find what you are looking for.

And you will find it shining clearly inside of you.

You will become a Magi.

Over the holidays, I reconnected, after a long absence, with a good friend. We were trying to remember how we met and realized it was when we were both speakers on a panel at a civil rights movement forum at UMKC in the early 2000's.

Lee is one of seven children of share croppers in Arkansas. When he was a child, his father had a stroke, and he had to start working in the cotton fields with his mother at the age of eight.

He remembers being pushed off sidewalks by white people, and not being allowed to go to school.

Eventually the family sought a better life here in Kansas City. In his early twenties he went to work in a local factory. Then, when Dr. King was assassinated, he was drawn into the Black youth movements of the time, became a city-wide leader, and ended up spending his life as an organizer, educator, master chess player, organizer of chess clubs among youth in the Black community, and a leader in the Local Investment Commission, which works with local governments, businesses and schools to improve lives for children and families in the KC Metro area.

We are now working together on a Video "My Book of Life"—

"Not about me," he reminds me, "about the souls I have encountered who are still shining a light in our world."

I think there is a star going ahead of my friend.

Is there a star going ahead of you?

Keep looking for it.

Keep praying for power to follow your inner star.

Never stop living the Epiphany Story.

Amen.

Rev. Scott Myers

Westport Presbyterian Church

January 3, 2021, Epiphany Sunday