

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst:**

**The Shepherds and The Magi**

Luke 2:8-20, Matthew 2:1-12



**Background:** During the Christmas season, I look forward to singing Christmas carols, giving and receiving gifts, and lots of food in a large family gathering! This year, however, Christmas will look very different for many of us. Perhaps this will cause us to re-examine what we really hunger for during this season. Christmas is, after all, a celebration of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what better time than now to focus on Him, encountering Jesus in a special way in our prayers, devotions, and activities?

This Sunday, we are going to meet two groups of people that truly encountered Christ on Christmas. These people sought for Jesus purposefully and with excitement because they were hungry and thirsty for the right thing – a genuine relationship with God. They were transformed by the encounter and were filled with great joy. This Sunday, we'll visit the story of the shepherds and the Magi on their journey of faith to meet Jesus. See you then!

**Sermon Text:** Matt 5:6, Luke 2:8-20, Matthew 2:1-12 (NIV)

**Matthew 5:6**

*<sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."*

**Luke 2:8-20**

*<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

*<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

*<sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known*

to us.”<sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.<sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.<sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.<sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.<sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

## **Matthew 2:1-12**

<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> 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.” <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> “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.”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.<sup>8</sup> 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.”<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **1. Preparation**

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

### **2. Sermon questions (pick 3)**

- a. The theme for this third Sunday of Advent is joy. What are your joys of 2020?
- b. Would you say that your hungering and thirsting for righteousness is sharp or dull? Why or why not?
- c. God chooses ordinary shepherds to share his good news *with*, and then to *share* his good news with the world. This is our journey as well. What does this look like practically for you during this Christmas season – to share the good news of Jesus? (Jerry encouraged us to “not be overwhelmed or afraid” to do this.)
- d. The Magi rejoice exceedingly, worship humbly and submit completely. This shows that they are hungering and thirsting for God. What would it look like for you to worship humbly and submit completely this Christmas season?

- e. We all have a “God-shaped hole” inside us. Filling it with anything but God will still leave us empty. How do you plan on filling that hole this Christmas?
- f. What encourages you most from the shepherds and Magi?