



Christmas

Unwrapped

Christmas Unwrapped - Week 1

Message Discussion Questions

Introduction:

This week Matt begins a new series called 'Christmas Unwrapped'. Are you a gift person? Is gift giving at the top or bottom of your list? Do the holidays add extra gift giving demands?

For Week 1 we'll begin looking at some really important gifts that we're given that teach us who Jesus really is. The gift we are looking at this week is Frankincense. What is it, what was it used for? Why did the wise men bring it as a gift to the baby Jesus?

Questions:

1. What is Frankincense? What was it used for in the Jewish culture and when was it used? Why was it an appropriate gift for the Magi to bring to a newborn king, who might be the savior of the world? How was it a deeply spiritual gift? Matthew 2:1-3; 10-12
2. What does it mean that Jesus is our High Priest? What was the primary role of the priest in the Old Testament? What two functions made up the priest's role? Why were those two functions critically important?
3. Why is it important for you to understand the contrast between two opposing forces, the Holiness of God and the sinfulness of man? Why don't we like to talk about sin in our culture? Why do you need to understand the reality of sin?
4. Is it important that God is Holy? What does the word Holy mean? How does the Greek word agios help to explain who God is? What's the impact of the holiness of God? If we are all sinners, how does sin break

our intimacy with a Holy God?

5. What was wrong with the Old testament practice of an annual sacrifice for the sins of the people? Why was this just a temporary covering for sin? What did the scapegoat symbolize? Did these practices seem unfair? Why were these required because of God's holiness?
6. How is Jesus a new and better sacrifice? What makes Jesus' sacrifice different than the old covenant practice of annually sacrificing a spotless lamb? How can you be made Holy? What does it mean to be justified? Hebrews 10:10
7. Why is it important that you can now have direct access to the throne of God? How reassuring is it that Jesus knows whatever it is that you are going through and that He can empathize with you? How does His sacrifice provide access for you to God? Is it surprising that you can now approach God boldly? Hebrews 4:14-15

Key Takeaway: *No matter what you're facing today, cry out to Him. We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, no, we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he did not sin. So as we enter this Christmas season, realize that Jesus isn't just some baby in a manger, no He's our great High Priest and He's worthy of all of our praise.*

Summary:

- Frankincense is _____; an oil used for many purposes including as incense in the temple
- Jesus as our High Priest; priest offered annual sacrifices and prayers for the people; interceding to/from God
- Contrast: Holiness of God and the sinfulness of man
- God is Holy; agios = separate or set apart from
- Annual Sacrifice and Scapegoat was temporary
- Jesus the perfect sacrifice once and for all
- We can now approach God's throne with confidence