

All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadems and crown Him, Lord of all. Those are wonderful words from a wonderful hymn, speaking a wonderful truth this day, that Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. The one that to whom all things belong and the one to whom all authority has been given. But Christians, what does that mean to you? What does that mean to you in your daily lives? Is it something that means a great deal so that it changes even the way that we live? Or is it something that unfortunately, we think of indifferently? Something that doesn't really change the way that we live from day to day.

Because in our reading for this evening, from Matthew chapter two, we encounter this very question. The Difference between someone to whom Jesus means a great deal. Someone that we might even say is hot or on fire for the Lord, and people who are cold or even they just don't care. And we see both of them in our reading for this evening. Because Matthew tells us that on the night that Jesus was born, a great star arose in the sky. And the magi far off in the East saw that star when it arose. And they didn't have any other information, it's not like they had the Bible or anything, but they saw that star and they had everything that they needed. They saw it and they knew that a King had been born. And so gathering up all of the stuff that they would need for their journey and gathering up all of the presents that they wanted to give this King, they set out on a very long journey. One that was hundreds of miles long, one that took them at the very least, several weeks to accomplish.

I mean, after all they were walking on foot and when they finally got to where they were going, they were rejoicing to find the King that they had sought for, for so long. Even though they didn't know much, they were excited. On fire for the Lord, knowing that they had come to worship Jesus as the King. Jesus meant a lot to them. And that's why they came. But when they got there, they weren't really quite sure where they were going. So they went in to Jerusalem and they said, "Where is He, who has been born, King of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose in the East, we've come to worship Him." You'd think Israel would be just as excited. You'd think that the one they had been waiting for would set them on fire too, so that they would be just as eager to go and to find Jesus. After all, they had to have seen the star, they had to have known that it meant something, right? But it didn't. They were cold, indifferent to what God had come to do.

And so they were afraid at this news, they weren't excited, but fearful. What did this mean for them? What was going to happen as the result of the birth of this child? And Herod, who we meet here, Herod, who is a wicked man, Herod, who would later in his life, kill his own son to keep his kingship. Herod doesn't want any competition. He's not excited about the news of this child being born. He doesn't have a living faith, but he wants to destroy Him. Because he sees Him as a threat. Israel, for the lack of a better way of putting it, is cold towards the Lord. Frozen even, because they are not the... Because He doesn't mean anything to them. But the magi go anyway and they find the child and they go in with great joy and they worship Him. And giving Him these great gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh and being warned by an angel, they go back to their home by a different way.

And so we see these two groups together, Christians, the magi on the one hand to whom Jesus meant a great deal, and Israel on the other hand to whom He meant very little. The magi on the one hand knew very little about Jesus. All they knew about Him was that He was a King, but that was good enough. With just that knowledge in mind, they set out on a great journey going

hundreds of miles, just so that they could worship this newborn King for a few moments. They put forth all of that effort because He meant so much to them. Israel on the other hand, knew a great deal about Jesus. They knew that He was coming. They knew that David had been promised a son, a King who would rule in his place.

They knew that Micah had said all those years ago that in Bethlehem Jesus would be born. But knowing all of that, they didn't care. They were still indifferent. They rejected Him and turned away from Him in everything. The magi paid a great cost to go and to see Jesus. The cost of their money. It cost a lot of money to travel even in those days, the cost that cost them their time, because it would have been several months to go back and forth just to see Jesus for a few moments.

And it cost them a great deal to give Him those gifts. Gold and frankincense and myrrh are not cheap. They're the things that are fit for Kings. The things that it took a King's wealth to pay for. But they're willing to pay it because Jesus meant so much to them. Israel on the other hand, were right next door. All they would've had to do was go right down to Bethlehem, 20 miles away out of Jerusalem. That's all it would have taken, but they didn't care. They didn't want to go. He was right next door and they were disinterested.

The magi on the one hand felt great joy at the birth of this child. Such great joy that when they saw that star in the sky, they couldn't help but be excited about it. They were on fire for Him. Giving up so much so that they might come and worship Him. Israel on the other hand was afraid. Jesus would mean that things would have to change. And they didn't want the things to change. They wanted things to stay the same as they always had. And so the magi were hot for God, but Israel, the ones who should have known better were quite cold.

So Christians, what does Jesus mean to you? How much does He mean to you? I don't think our temptation is that we are tempted to be cold towards Him. If we were truly tempted to be cold, we wouldn't be here. Being cold means that we just absolutely don't care. That's Israel's problem. They didn't care at all. They rejected Jesus. But I think our temptation is to be somewhere in between, lukewarm, if you will. Neither cold, nor hot. To be caught up in this for the lack of a better word, indifference, because everything is the same as it's always been and we get caught in a kind of cycle. So that even though Jesus means so much to us, and even though we sing about how He is the King of all, does it make a difference in our day to day lives?

Does our worship become half-hearted? The thing that we're just here because well, that's what you're supposed to do. It's what you're supposed to do on Sunday morning. And that's the reason why we go. And so, we become not as willing to pay great costs either. How much would we be willing to give up for the sake of Christ? How much would we be willing to do, just to go and to worship Him. And then we might even be tempted towards a kind of indifference toward our neighbors too.

To love God is to love our neighbor. But if we say that we love God and we hate our neighbor, we don't have the love of God in us. And so we sort of become indifferent towards the needs of those next to us as well. But Christians, this lukewarmness is a dangerous thing. It kills the soul. It leads us away from God, because especially in these times, we are called to be zealous for

God. We are called to be hot for God, because to be lukewarm in a difficult time is to not be ready for when that time of trial comes. We are called to be zealous for the Lord of Hosts.

But how do we deal with that then? How do we deal with our own indifference, our own temptation towards lukewarmness? We deal with it by turning towards our Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus is the way out of this indifference. Jesus is the way towards being zealous toward God. After all, it is Jesus's word that sets our hearts on fire as He did for the disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is Jesus's word that is like fire. As the prophet, Isaiah tells us, if we want to be on fire for God and not lukewarm or indifferent. We're called to be in the things of God, to go to the place where He has called us to be. Jesus makes us willing creatures. Jesus as our King transforms us so that our lives will never be the same. And we saw that with the wise men, with just a star, He could change their hearts forever.

And so now with His word, He will change ours too, to make us hot for Him, to make us on fire for our Lord. So Christians let us not be indifferent. Let us not be tempted towards lukewarmness in the things of God. Come to Him this day, come let us worship Him. Worship our living King, the King who has been born at Bethlehem, the King who has been born for us. He is worth every cost that we might pay for Him, because He is our King, our treasure above all things. So come let us worship Him in spirit and in truth because He is the Lord of all. To Him be the glory now and forever. Amen.