

# Three Types of Worshipers

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 18 January 2026

Preacher: Joe Dugger

[0:00] Well, go ahead and open your Bibles back to Matthew chapter 2. We're going to be talking about three types of worshipers. Three types of worshipers. I'll read the passage again, and we'll go through it here together.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him. Then King Herod heard, when King Herod heard this, Herod heard back together.

That's unfair on the translation there. He was deeply disturbed and all Jerusalem with him. So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born.

In Bethlehem of Judea, they told him, because this is what was written by the prophet. And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, because out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

[1:10] Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search carefully for the child.

When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him. After hearing the king, they went on their way, and there it was, the star they had seen at its rising.

It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy entering the house. They saw the child with Mary, his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him.

Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

All right, this is the word of the Lord. This morning, I want to draw your attention to three groups of people we have before us in this text.

[2:10] Three groups of people. And they represent three different types of worshipers, I would say. The first group is going to be found in the Magi. I'm going to use the word Magi instead of wise men, and I'll explain why here in a second.

But that is a group of people that I would call the seekers. The seekers. Seekers are individuals who have a longing for the things of God, a curiosity about the things of God, and they want to find what they're looking for, which reminded me this week of the U2 song, 1987, Joshua Tree, I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

You remember this? It's like the anthem for the seeker, isn't it? This is what Bono says. I believe in the kingdom come, then all the colors will bleed into one, but yes, I'm still running.

You broke the bonds, you loosed the chains, carried the cross of my shame. You know I believe it, but I still haven't found what I'm looking for. That song is offensive to Stephen.

He's holding his ears. Now, that is, again, that's the anthem of a seeker. I think I believe it. I'm interested in it. It seems good. Sounds nice, but I haven't found what I'm looking for.

[3:22] I haven't landed yet. See, the heart of the seeker is someone who longs to be convinced, someone who desires a landing place, but hasn't yet found it. And the ultimate goal of the seeker, whether they realize it or not, any religious seeker is to find the one true king, Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.

Humanity has an innate desire to worship. It's built into us because we're made in the image of God. And so those who have not yet found will seek.

They will seek. So we see this in the Magi of the East. So, again, I'm going to call them Magi, even though the translation that I'm reading says wise men.

And here's why. I don't think that Matthew was telling us that these guys were particularly brilliant scholars or anything like that. I don't think he was trying to tell us how smart they were, that they figured it out, they unlocked the secrets of the universe, like it's, you know, some sort of Da Vinci Code type thing.

I think what he's telling us is actually about who they are, which is probably a group of astrologers from somewhere in Babylonia or Persia, from the east, about 900 miles from Jerusalem, who spent their time studying the stars and reading ancient texts.

[ 4 : 38 ] And so when they noticed big events, cosmic events in the sky, it would, you know, naturally pique their interest. So then they would search. When this star came up, evidently their search was on and now they had a heading.

They were following this star trying to find exactly where it led. And you have this in the people, the Magi. By the way, we sing about three of them, right?

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse so far, field and fountain. It's not Christmas, so we don't have to sing it. But we have no idea how many of them there were. The Bible doesn't tell us that there were three. They had three gifts and that's, we assume then, that there were three of them.

It could have been ten. It could have been two. We have no idea how many there were. What we do know is that these individuals, when they saw this star and they felt this longing to find what they were finally going to find, they set out.

They not only were marked by a curiosity in what they saw, they were also marked by a commitment. They were committed to the search. Now the next group of people, we're going to call the cynics.

[ 5 : 41 ] We're going to call the cynics. Now the cynics are represented by, well you saw the third group. Anyway, actually no you didn't. Anyways, the cynics are going to be represented by King Herod.

Seekers have a desire to find the things of God, a desire to land. But the cynics stand in opposition to God. Cynics adamantly reject the things of God and deliberately refuse to acknowledge the work of God.

In fact, a cynic would seek to destroy the work or the plans of God. The heart of a cynic is filled with pride. It's filled with building up of their own kingdom instead of a pursuit of God's kingdom.

And I would suggest that cynics are formed out of experience. Alright, so in King Herod's case, his experience of having this small kingdom in Israel that he saw as his own, even though he was a vassal king for Rome, that doesn't matter to him.

What Herod saw was power. He saw authority. And any threat to that was a danger to him. And so it built up this cynicism towards the things of God.

[ 6 : 46 ] So we have the seekers and we have the cynics. And there's a third group in this text that we'll talk about when we get to. I'll wait on that one because I think it's gonna matter for us maybe a little bit more than some of these two, these other two.

But in the meantime, I wanna go back to the magi. I wanna talk about the seekers. And I wanna talk about the heart of the seeker because I recognize that some in this room today might be in this category.

You might be on your search. You might be seeking for God. You might be looking for God. And like the magi, you've gone to the place that makes the most sense. You've gone to, you've come to the church.

The magi, they went to the place that made the most sense. They went to Jerusalem. For them, they didn't understand all of the Old Testament prophecies or where the Messiah would be born. So they went to the center of Judaism looking for this object of worship.

And so you might be like the magi. You might be seeking. You might be longing. Again, these are unlikely people to see in this story. The reason I say the magi partly is also because Matthew, in not telling us that they were particularly smart men, was telling us a story that for the Jewish readers of this gospel would have been pretty appalling.

[ 8 : 01 ] They did not respect the practices of the magi of the East. The magi didn't just study astrology. They thought that God spoke through astrology and that was a danger in and of itself.

But they also practiced ancient magic, you know, stuff, right? Ancient magic. You actually see this term again later in the book of Acts when Simon in, in, I can't, Samaria, my goodness.

Simon in Samaria is asking Peter and John to sell him the ability to impart the power of the Holy Spirit onto other believers, right? And so, Peter and John actually reprimand him really strongly there and tell him to go and repent because that's, basically, it's a, you know, terrible thing and you're casting judgment on yourself.

But the point is, is that Simon was known as Simon the Magician, okay? Same, same term here as the magi of the East. These people were not respected. They weren't held in high regard.

They were ostracized. And so, what Matthew is showing us is that this unlikely group of Gentiles from the East are the first people to have a longing to find the King of the Jews.

[ 9 : 11 ] Gentiles from the East come all the way to try to find the King of the Jews. They weren't insiders. They weren't, you know, particularly good Jews or anything like that.

They were Gentiles. And the point that Matthew makes with that is that the kingdom of God is open to everyone who will seek Jesus. Everyone who will seek Jesus. Jew, Gentile, it doesn't matter.

There's no Jew or Gentile, no Jew or Greek in heaven. It's whoever is looking for him, right?

Jeremiah 29, 13, you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.

That's the seeker in a nutshell. The magi, they didn't know all of the things about Jesus. They didn't know all the things about the Old Testament, but they were looking. They were looking. And the heart of the seeker is marked by two things.

One, they're curious, and two, they're committed. So the magi, again, they didn't have just a passing interest in the star. They made a life-altering commitment to find the king.

[ 10 : 10 ] Traveling from Babylon or Persia would have been about a 900-mile journey. Would have taken them 40 days or more across a desert landscape.

They were committed to their search, right? They were committed to their search. It wasn't a weekend trip. This was a long, grueling, and dangerous journey. And they didn't come just to check things out.

They actually tell the people who they ask about, the king of the Jews, why they came. Right? They said, where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him.

They had a specific goal in mind. They were committed to finding the king to worship him. Now, that word could mean pay homage to him, pay tribute to him, honor him as a foreign dignitary.

At any rate, they came to give him honor. They came to find the king and give him honor. Again, they didn't have all of the answers, but they were committed and they searched and they searched until they found.

[ 11 : 11 ] Right? They came to Jerusalem instead of to Bethlehem. If you were Jewish, you would have gone to Bethlehem to look for the king of the Jews, to look for the Messiah. They referred to him as the king of the Jews instead of as the Messiah.

Herod kind of corrects that in verse 3, or verse 4, so he asked the chief priests and the scribes of the people where the Messiah would be born. You see, the wise men were searching for the Messiah.

They just didn't have the right terminology. They didn't know all of the things they needed to know, but they were looking for the king. They were looking for the king. And we're going to jump ahead because we'll talk about Herod in a second, but if you go down to verse 7 and onward, Herod summons the wise men, the magi, and then he sends them to Bethlehem and he says, go and search carefully for the child.

When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him. We'll talk about that little line here in a minute. But after hearing the king, they went on their way and there it was. So the star, we don't know what, well here's the thing, we don't know what the star was like.

On your Christmas cards, on the nativity sets, the star is like resting right above the little barn. You know what I mean? We have no idea what this star was. It could have been more like a scene from the Old Testament where God was leading the people of Israel by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day.

[ 12 : 24 ] Something more like a special revelatory bright shining light for these magi to follow. That probably kind of seems more like what we're looking at here. But because it was there for a while, they knew to go to Jerusalem when they saw it and then evidently it was not there.

They met with Herod and then they went outside and it was back and now they get to follow this star again. It takes them the six miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and then it rests over the home. Right? It led them there and it stopped above the place where the child was. By the way, if someone comes to my house and they knock on the door at night and they tell me a star stopped above my house and that's why they're there, I would be a little bit freaked out.

You know what I mean? But that, evidently it wasn't shocking to Mary and Joseph because they welcomed the magi in. They welcomed them into the house. So then entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother and falling to their knees, they worshipped him.

So I want you to see a couple things here about the experience of the magi. First, when they got to the place where the star stopped over the house and real quick, time wise, we try to figure out when this happened, you know, and you pair it up with Luke's nativity scene and like, look, they didn't show up to baby Jesus in the manger.

[13:43] Would have taken them too long to get there. This was sometime later. Up to two years later and we can say that because of the time period of Herod executing the boys in Bethlehem and the surrounding area later.

We'll talk about that another time. But at any rate, it was sometime later. They traveled a long way and by this time, Mary and Joseph had already taken Jesus and presented him at the temple, right? That happened eight days after birth. So he was already circumcised. All of those things that had happened, Jesus was presented at the temple and now Mary and Joseph evidently had moved into a house there in Bethlehem.

Presumably, they lived in Bethlehem for a period of time after the child was born. So they, and this very likely was the same house that Jesus was born in because in ancient Israel, the homes were tiered homes where the manger and all of the animals, the stable, was in the bottom portion of the house, kind of actually in the family living room and then upstairs was the family's dwelling place. So probably the same house that Jesus was born in but this was not the nativity scene. Like it wasn't like, it wasn't, you know, if I guess back before COVID when babies were born, it was like families, you know, lined up at the door, came in and visiting the baby after the, you know, in the hospital, like, hey, how's mom?

[14:56] How's the baby? And the mom's like, actually leave. Like, we're doing great but you know what I mean? Like, don't love that, right? Well, you know, back then, it wasn't like the shepherd showed up first and Mary's there like, the baby and then the shepherds left to go back out to the field and then the knock, knock, knock.

Hey, we're some magi from the east. We just would like to visit your baby. Is that okay? You know, it wasn't like they were there in succession. This was sometime later but they're probably in the same house but they noticed the star above the house.

They knew where they were going and here's their experience is that they were overwhelmed with joy. They were ecstatic. They had a great joy at the reality that their search was over but here's the thing and seeker, if you're here in the room and you're seeking today to find the object of worship, you can't get close and then leave, right?

You don't get close and then turn around and go. They didn't just, oh, we found it. That's the house. Okay, back to the east. No, they went inside. They went inside and they didn't just go inside. When they saw the child, they fell on their knees and worshiped.

They went inside and fell to their knees. So they came to Jerusalem expecting a royal dignitary but they found a child in a humble house. So true seekers are willing to lay aside their expectation to embrace Jesus when they meet him.

[16:20] And there's three marks of worship that you see here in the Magi. One, they were humble. They fell down. They laid down, prostrate before him and they honored him.

They worshiped him. Number two, you see sacrifice. They traveled a long way, a dangerous journey and they brought him gifts of great value. They had gold. They had these spices, frankincense and myrrh.

And this scene, by the way, it's a recognition. So you have humility, sacrifice and a recognition of the prominence of the figure that they came to visit. This scene looks a lot like in 1 Kings chapter 10 when the queen of Sheba from the east comes and visits King Solomon after he's inaugurated in his kingdom in Jerusalem.

And the queen of Sheba brings him gold and spices. She brings him great quantities of things as a recognition of his prominence. So if you're a seeker in the room and you're searching for a landing

place, I want you to recognize a couple things.

Number one, the Magi were outsiders too. Right? They weren't born in Jerusalem and raised around the temple. They didn't know all of the things but they had a longing in their heart I think given to them by God and they searched until they found Jesus.

[ 17 : 37 ] And the challenge though that you have and that they have is once you find the object of worship, stop your search and worship him. Stop your search and worship him.

If you just keep going on, you know, I acknowledge the validity of the biblical story like Bono and then say, but I still haven't found what I'm looking for, then you haven't landed at all.

So if you're in this room and you're searching today, then rest in Christ. Worship him. Alright? And then the second person that I mentioned is the cynic. And so let's take a look at the mind of the cynic here with King Herod.

To understand King Herod, we have to understand a little bit of history. King Herod the Great, this is, it's that one, Herod the Great. Herod the Great was not an ethnically full Jew by birth.

Okay? Herod's father was an Edomite, which is kind of a half-Jewish person. And in fact, in his day, Josephus called him a half-Jew. So that was what he was known as.

[ 18 : 37 ] He wasn't a full, you know, full-blooded Jewish male. So his kingdom, his title of kingdom, a king of the Jews that he had kind of propped up on himself, it was really given to him by Caesar Augustus.

Okay? So Herod had this position of power and authority insofar as Rome would let him have it there in Jerusalem. Now King Herod the Great, there's some things to understand about him too.

First of all, historically speaking, he is one of the greatest builders of the ancient world.

Like, the projects that he started and finished in his lifetime are unbelievable. He rebuilt the temple, the Solomon's Temple, and he rebuilt it in a beautiful measure there in Jerusalem. He did that to curry favor with the Jews.

He also built this beautiful vacation spot in Caesarea Maritime. It's just unbelievable the water. He had a pool. I think he, my understanding is he had the ability to pull water in from the sea to have a swimming pool in this place.

I mean, like, unbelievable the things, the archaeological, architectural, how do you say that word? Architectural? Is that right? Okay. Architectural things that he was able to do was unreal. But near the end of his life, scholars think that Herod probably suffered from some debilitating kidney disease.

[ 19 : 50 ] And when you have this debilitating kidney disease, over time, toxins will build up in your brain and you become really, really paranoid, increasingly paranoid. So Herod became increasingly paranoid near the end of his life, so much that he killed his three sons and his wife because he saw them as threats to his power.

All right? This is allegedly what led Caesar Augustus to saying that it's better to be Herod's pig than to be his child. That's how crazy Herod was.

Okay? Herod was a madman, literally. And any threat to his power became the object of his focus.

Like, he was completely set on ending any threat to his power. So he's a great builder, but he had a broken soul and he had a lot of paranoia, but he also had a great deal of power.

So, a cynic is anyone who views the lordship of Jesus or submitting to God at all as a threat to their own autonomy. At the end of the day, that's what Herod's issue was, is that he saw submitting to the ways or the plans of God as a threat to his own power.

But if you look here in the text, there's a couple of things that we'll see about the mind of a cynic.

Number one, it's deceitful, and number two, it's angry. There's an anger there with cynicism. So, Herod, when he heard this, was deeply disturbed and all Jerusalem with him.

[ 21 : 13 ] All Jerusalem was probably disturbed with him because they were scared of how he would respond to these questions that the magi were asking. So, he assembled all the chief priests and the scribes of the people and he asked them where the Messiah would be born.

Notice that Herod knew the people to ask, but he was not a God-fearer. He was not a Jew, a faithful Jew. He didn't know the answers. He had to bring the people in who would know the answers. And they told him, they told him that the baby would be born in Bethlehem.

And so then, Herod had this plan. He was going to ask the magi to go to Bethlehem, find the baby, bring back a report, and then Herod would be able to quietly go in and just kill that one baby, right?

End the threat. And we know that that's his plan because if you jump down to Matthew 2, verse 16, when the magi have gone on their way, Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men and he flew into a rage.

He gave orders to massacre all of the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men. Herod was paranoid and he was terrified that he would lose power.

[ 22 : 19 ] I mean, imagine this person who was viewed as a half Jew hearing that a king was born who was fully Jewish who would actually be able to take his authority. That would have been a terrifying proposition.

So, this deceitful cynic, he went the route of manipulation and deceit. He tried to trick the wise men into giving up the king of the Jews.

And then, as he goes on and he became angrier, became angrier, he set out to massacre the innocent children there in Bethlehem. Bethlehem and around. And we'll talk about that more next week.

We'll go through the rest of this chapter next Sunday. But, just so you have this in your mind, that should look a lot like what happened with Pharaoh when Moses was born. Pharaoh killed the boys aged two and under.

That should look pretty familiar to us. But Herod wasn't just mad at the magi who had outwitted him. He was terrified of a king who threatened his kingdom. So the cynic is someone who's scared of losing their self-autonomy and scared of losing their power also.

[ 23 : 23 ] But I want you to see in this cynicism and if you're here today and you fall into this group of a, you're a cynic, you're someone who does not like God, doesn't like the things of God, even denies the existence of God, I want you to understand that Herod is a great example that no matter how hard you try, no matter how bad you want to, you can never undo what God has willed, what God has planned.

God is, he has his providential care over the universe and his plan is going to come to pass regardless. You can't thwart God's plan. You can deny the Lord on earth but I want you to understand that there's coming a day, Philippians tells us that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

So Herod rejected Jesus. He rejected the Lordship of Christ but make no mistake, there will come a day when Herod will bend the knee and praise the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Everyone will. Everyone will. He will submit to the Lordship of Christ. Cynicism will always relent to the work and the power and the majesty of God.

To the cynic, Jesus is a threat but to the seeker, Jesus could be the Savior. Now I want to really quickly draw your attention to a third group of people.

[ 24 : 47 ] A third group of people and I haven't mentioned them yet but they're somewhere in this story and this group of people I would call the settled. The settled. We have the seekers, we have the cynics and then we have the settled.

The magi were moving towards Christ and Herod was reacting to the working of God but there were these religious leaders who were settled in what they knew about the Old Testament prophecy.

So when Herod and presumably the chief priests and scribes heard about these questions that the magi were asking and Herod called them together, he asked for where the Messiah would be born, the scribes and the chief priests knew the answer, right?

They didn't tell Herod, hang on, let's go check the scrolls, right? They knew the answers, they had studied the Old Testament, they knew the Messianic prophecies. In fact, they knew them so well that this quotation, this list that they give back to Herod about where the Messiah would be born is actually a combination of two Old Testament passages.

It's a combination of Micah 5-2, you Bethlehem, Ephrathah, you may be small among the nations but from you a leader will come, a ruler will come. And then it's also a combination of 2 Samuel 5-2, and that passage talks about how the leader, the ruler, will be a shepherd for the people of Israel just like David was.

[ 26 : 16 ] So you have this, they knew the text, right? They knew the prophecies, they knew where the Messiah would come from and when they were asked and they heard that there's these rumors going around that the Messiah was born there and somewhere the Messiah was born, these magi from the east are here, stars are telling them that the king has been born, they were completely

unmoved.

They didn't go and search. They didn't go to Bethlehem to see if this was the reality that they had heard about. They didn't go to test the scriptures. They didn't do any of that. They were unmoved. They gave the answer to Herod and then they backed out. And I would suggest that that's dangerous. There's a tragedy built into the accuracy of their answer to Herod and it's that they knew where Jesus was, where the Messiah would be but they had the wrong hearts about that messianic promise.

They weren't actually interested in seeing the fulfillment. So the magi traveled 900 miles, right, 900 miles across the desert to find this king led by a star.

The scribes and the chief priest couldn't even travel six miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to see if he was there. So we have the settled and here's what you see in the settled.

[ 27 : 36 ] The settled are comfortable with what they know. They're unwilling to move even when God is at work among them and they're joyless in their quote unquote worship of God. They have a knowledge but they don't have a pursuit.

And I would suggest that while there might be seekers in the room, there might be cynics in the room, more likely in today's American church context, we have a lot more people who are settled in the way that they worship than we do have seekers or cynics.

And that's something that should raise our eyebrows a little bit. Concern us. Comfortable with the experience we have? Comfortable with the knowledge that we have?

No desire to grow in the Lord? Tradition and preference in the way that we've always done things become more important than following what God is doing or where God is going or where God is leading?

I mean, this is the religious leaders, this is their MO throughout the life of Christ. And then afterwards as they reject the church and the movement of God by the Spirit as well. For these people, and I think sometimes for us, worship or study becomes a checklist of things to get by.

[ 28 : 55 ] You're trying to fill maybe some aspect of knowledge but not really a deep pursuit or desire there. It's a list of duties to perform rather than a heart of worship to the king.

And then you see in the Magi when they found, when they finally were led to what they were looking for, they were overwhelmed by joy. And you have the scribes and the chief priest this joyless response.

We know where he is. And they knew that the people were asking but they were uninterested in going and seeking and finding him. They were informative.

And if you haven't been moved to joy by the gospel lately, you might be in this group. A serious question, when was the last time you had an experience of joy at the things of God?

I'm not talking about an excitement at a football game like you might have experienced a joyful moment at Christmas with your family. I'm not talking about that. When were you studying God's word and you were just overwhelmed with joy at the revelation of the king of kings?

[ 29 : 58 ] When was the last time you were singing praise with your eyes closed and just abandoning your heart, just singing to the Lord, just glorifying him because of who he is? When was the last time you were out in nature and you saw creation and you had to stop because it took your breath away and you were just overwhelmed by the amazing work at the hand of God?

When was the last time you saw someone give their life to Christ and it actually moved you in your heart to a place of joy? When was the last time that happened? If it hasn't been recent then we need to do a pulse check.

So I like to illustrate this settled behavior like this. Everybody I think in this room is probably familiar, you may not have one, but you're probably familiar with a hot water heater, right?

Yeah? Hot water heater? Okay. When Audrey and I first bought our house back here in Lewisburg it was a new build and so the guy from the company we bought it from came and walked around and told us all the, you know, change your air filters every three months.

Yeah, right. You know, things like that. And that's been on Audrey's to-do list for me for about three weeks now. But anyways, personal confession, I'm sorry guys.

[ 31 : 05 ] Anyways, but he also showed us a hot water heater and I was like, yeah, I've seen one of those, you know what I mean? Like, okay. Well, he told us that if we wanted to, this was his words, he said, if you want to, then at about the six month mark hook up a water hose, turn off the water to it and drain your hot water heater and then turn the water back on and refill it.

But he explicitly said, if you wait longer than six months, do not ever drain your hot water heater. Do you know why? Yeah, so hot water heaters, water has minerals in it and it builds up these minerals and becomes sediment, becomes calcified at the bottom of the tank and if you drain your water heater after that has settled there, you risk exposing some cracks that you wouldn't otherwise know and having a huge leak and a big problem.

You miss messing up, you risk messing up your hot water heater. Here's the thing, if we don't regularly drain and fill our lives in Christ, if we don't have these experiences of growing in the Lord and earnestly seeking Him, then pretty soon and we become calcified.

It's like at the bottom of the water heater, the tank gets hard and then it becomes even more challenging to drain it out and refill. And I'm not saying lose everything and refill, I'm saying replenish yourself in the Word with excitement, with joy.

It becomes really, really hard. We become so rigid and afraid that anything new and fresh becomes a terrifying proposition because it might lead to some leaks. it might mess us up.

[ 32 : 38 ] We cling to the old sediment because it's familiar even though it might make us less effective in our true worship of the Lord. That's what I see in the seekers is that they were so used to their tradition, they held so tightly to those that they were scared of anything messing that up.

And if the messianic prophecies were true, then there was a recognition that everything would change. So they had to reject it. I don't want any of us to become so settled that we're unwilling to worship the Lord and experience joy at His work among us.

The danger is that they were so close to the truth that they became immune to it. You know, familiarity breeds contempt, right?

That's the phrase. Sometimes familiarity breeds complacency. You're so familiar with the things that you know that you become complacent with them instead of having that pursuit, that desire.

So I'm gonna wrap up here, okay? I actually am gonna wrap up, I promise. John Marks, what's my time? He told me I needed to get a clock last week, so I am gonna wrap up here.

[ 33 : 46 ] But if you look at the narrative of Matthew 2, you see, I think, the danger of being so close to the things of God and yet far from the heart of God.

And these priests and scribes, they were so close to the things of God, but they were far from the heart of God. But I wanna address each of the groups who might be here today. To the cynic, I would suggest the biblical response to a recognition of cynicism is to repent of self-righteousness and stop trying to build a kingdom of yourself and instead, trust in Jesus who died and rose for you. So don't look to your own interest, but look to his glory. Because again, eventually, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Choose to bow the knee today in the grace of God instead of later when you're witnessing his glory and wrath and judgment.

To the seeker, I would suggest that your search is over. Step inside the house and bow and worship the king. Maybe you're wondering, like, what's it gonna take for me to finally feel settled in believing in Jesus?

Here it is. Believe in Jesus. Trust him. Repent of your sins. Quit your seeking and settle at the foot of the cross. Be satisfied in him.

[ 35 : 11 ] So land here. Don't settle for being impressed by Jesus or look for, you know, convincing argument after convincing. He is the king of glory and he is right here.

The search is over. Relent and repent today. And then, if you are in the group of the settled, I would suggest that you should chip away at the sediment. We have the right answers like the scribes but lost our willingness to move when God moves because we've become so calcified by comfort and tradition.

So the call to you today is to fan the flame of desire for the Lord. If your faith has become just a joyless experience of checking boxes, repent of that complacency and if you want to move from settled to satisfied in Christ, commit to these three things.

Number one, prepare for worship. Prepare for worship. If you are reading the emails each week to see the order of worship to estimate how long the service might be, I think that maybe you should quit that habit.

Prepare for worship. Come in here with your heart ready to sing to the Lord, to study his word with passion to actually grow in your faith.

[ 36 : 23 ] Prepare your heart for worship. Don't just show up. Number two, have passion in your worship. Sing praise to the Lord with your eyes closed if you know the words. It doesn't really matter if you like the tune.

Sing the songs because the truth is there. Praise the Lord together with the people of God and study his word with the hunger of someone who's just found great treasure.

You want to go through every single bit of it. And then three, commit to being movable when you see God at work. Be sensitive to what God is doing in and among his people and move when he leads you to move.

Being movable means that your preferences might take a back seat, songs might sound different, the method might change, but God is the one we are here to worship. Jesus Christ is the one that we are here to worship and that will never change.

If God is moving, move with him. Don't be a monument, be movable. And I think that as we come together and we sing joyfully and we study God's word passionately and we grow closer to the Lord, we will have the same experience together that the Magi had when they saw the house and we will be overwhelmed by joy week in and week out, filled by the good things that God has done and is doing.

[ 37 : 46 ] With that, we're going to sing a closing song and you respond how God leads you to respond, but we're going to have a time. I'm going to be down front. If you feel led to come and pray and repent of being so settled and stationary that you're unwilling to see God move, then come and pray and repent.

If you feel led to come and talk to me about what it means to become a believer, if you've been searching, then come and talk to me and I'm gladly going to share with you what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ. Whatever God leads you to do, then you respond appropriately.

Lord Jesus, we thank you. We thank you for your word. We thank you that you are the king of glory who's worthy of our worship, our honor, and our praise. And Lord Jesus, we praise you.

God, I pray that you would move in this place today, you'd move in the hearts and the lives of the people here and that you would be glorified. It's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.