

Sermon outline Generosity Gift and Grace

Stewardship in the context of lectionary

Example Epiphany

Familiar:

The Magi brought the infant Christ three gifts of Gold Frankincense and Myrrh

Offerings to Christ from those who have travelled far. There are many understandings and interpretations of the gifts, I want to offer one that speaks to us of our response to Christ in the context of stewardship.

Gold obviously speaks of wealth. It also speaks of work and labour.

Gold needs mining from the ground, processing, refining and fashioning.

It often speaks of power, affection, connection

Possession that can drive (Golumn's precious springs to mind)

Can become that which defines us.

They give it to Christ. Work and ownership presented in full. Not a token, or a cheap replacement

Frankincense obviously speaks of holiness. It also speaks of nature.

It comes from the resin of trees, long established, planted in planning and then tended and harvested.

It often speaks of atmosphere and sweetness. Used historically to make a pleasant aroma especially when there is animal sacrifice, with all its consequences.

The sight of the smoke, the smell of its perfume, even the taste in the mouth show the full sensory nature of this gift.

They give it to Christ. All our senses presented in full. Our full souls and senses, not just a part of us.

Myrrh obviously speaks of total commitment, as an ointment used to anoint the dead, and historically as an analgesic including childbirth.

It often speaks of the physicality of life, of the care of others in life and death

They give it to Christ. Just as God in Christ gives totally of himself for the world, from the manger to the Cross. A total commitment

Through these three gifts we see total Generosity, Gift and Grace being given in the Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. They are more than tokens or markers but speak of how we as humanity need to respond to what God in Christ has given to us. (He became poor that we may become rich, shared our humanity so that we can be adopted as God's children, Died on the Cross that we might have eternal life.)

In the light of all this, what is our response, including in terms of stewardship.

Do we properly give what we have, how we are, who we are to God.

The Magi were outsiders and yet were prepared in response to Christ's birth to travel far and have their plans dramatically altered.

These were real actions of total commitment in response to God's total commitment to us. Not simply of a small part of life, but of it all.

Does our stewardship reflect this?