

INTRO

- What is one thing you hope to see/do/ experience in 2022?

READ

Matt 2:9-11

REFLECT & RESPOND

Christmas is both a major holy and secular holiday celebrated in different ways. For some, they lament how commercial and consumer-driven it's become and long to see we put "Christ back into Christmas." For others, they question the relevance of the Christmas story in our modern world.

Qu: describe some of your emotions and feelings around Christmas: Is it a true time of celebration or struggle, rest or exhaustion, deeper spiritual communion or consumerism?

The tradition and familiarity of celebrating the Christmas story every year is meant to remind us to be immersed in this particular story of Jesus and all its implications. And the 3rd gift presented by the wise men—myrrh—helps us do just that.

Interestingly, Myrrh shows up in Jesus' life at 3 significant times:

- **Myrrh at the BIRTH (Mt 2:11)**
- **Myrrh at the CROSS (Mk 15:23)**
- **Myrrh at the TOMB (Jn 19:39)**

Myrrh is reminding us of a bigger story beyond just a baby being born; it's the good news story of who Jesus is and what he's done for us.

Qu: "Familiarity breeds contempt" goes the saying. How do you manage the tension of familiarity with Christmas and staying in awe & wonder of it?

This is the story Christmas invites us into, calls us to remember and immerse ourselves in:

- Myrrh at the birth reminds us of the **INCARNATION** and that Jesus is a **HUMBLE KING** — God is with us.
- Myrrh at the cross reminds us of the **ATONEMENT** and that Jesus is a **SAVIOUR KING** — God is for us rescuing us.
- Myrrh at the tomb reminds us of the **RESURRECTION** and that Jesus is a **REIGNING KING** — God is restoring all things.

Qu: how can the Christmas story help the posture of your heart become one of greater peace, hope and joy this Christmas?

This Christmas, what story will you allow yourself to be immersed in? We don't deny the hardships and uncertainty of our current reality, but we must also resist being immersed in and shaped by it.

Christmas is the perfect time to be reminded of the good news story of Jesus—who he is and what he's done, doing and will do for us and his world.

And in response, may we be like the magi who fell down and worshiped Jesus at that first Christmas.

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for one another to receive a fresh understanding and appreciation for Christmas and all it is meant to remind us of as it points to Jesus
- Pray for a heart posture of faith, hope and joy as we close another difficult year and prepare for 2022.