

Sermon: "What Does God Want for Christmas?" **Text:** various scripture

**Introduction:** Why do we give gifts to each other at Christmas? What is our motivation? Have you ever thought about giving gifts to the Lord at Christmas?

**Reflect on the sermon:** Open up the discussion with any initial responses people might have to today's message.

**Examination:** In the sermon four "gifts" were identified that we could give to the Lord this Advent/Christmas season. Read the scripture associated with each one and discuss the questions.

1. *Helping outsiders to the faith become insiders* (Matthew 2:9; Luke 2:8-11, 13a; Luke 15:3-7). Discuss the process God used to get the Magi and the shepherds to the Christ child. What does this tell us about the Lord? What do we learn about the heart of God in relation to the lost from the Luke 15 passage? Share some practical ways we might reflect God's passion for outsiders in our personal/corporate ministry.
2. *A surrendered heart* (Luke 1:26-27 & 38. Matthew 1:24; 2:13-14; 19-20). How do Mary and Joseph exemplify surrendered hearts to the Lord? Discuss the multiple ways that Mary and Joseph suffered in their obedience to the Lord. What are your thoughts about this quote: "Most of the problems of a Christian's life can be traced to two related sources: sin (ours and others) and failure to submit to Christ. We do not yield or surrender to Christ and as a result we fall easy prey to Satan and sin." (Cosgrove, Essentials of Discipleship). Agree/disagree? Discuss this.
3. *Passionate Worship* (Matthew 2:11; Luke 2:13; Luke 2:20; Luke 2:28a & 38a). Is it possible to attend worship but not engage? "Worship is always a choice that we make." Do you agree with this? What does it mean to *choose* to worship? Discuss the choices that the Magi, shepherds, Simeon & Anna made to worship. How would you define "passionate worship"? Why is this so important in our relationship with the Lord? Can you identify some ways you will pursue this during Advent?
4. *Blessing a child* (Matthew 2:16 – 18). How do you think Jesus was affected by Herod's massacre of children as he learned of it later in his life? Spend some time as a class discussing some practical ways you could bless a child in need this Advent/Christmas season.

**Application:**

Invite a lost friend to church during Advent / Pray daily Mary's prayer: "I am the handmaid (servant) of the Lord, may it be done unto me according to your word." / Choose every day to worship the Lord / Do something special for a child in need this Advent.