

# Fix Your Eyes on the Star - Part 1

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of keeping our eyes on Jesus Christ and seeking first His kingdom, and warns against the consequences of taking our eyes off Him.*

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 3:18, Matthew 2:10, Matthew 16:26, Luke 2:18, Luke 9:62, Acts 20:26-27, Revelation 22:16

**Topics:** "Birth Of Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about a captain who passed away while urging his crew to keep their eyes on a star. The preacher uses this story as a metaphor for the Gospel, emphasizing the importance of staying focused on Jesus Christ. He highlights the tragic reality of many people losing their way because they take their eyes off the star, leading to their spiritual downfall. The preacher also warns against the dangers of prioritizing worldly pursuits over following God's will, using examples of parents forsaking the Gospel for the sake of their children and a young man who rejected God's call for the pursuit of a degree. The sermon emphasizes the need to remain faithful to Christ and not make the mistake of taking our eyes off Him.

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## Transcript

Let us read from Matthew chapter 2. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and the scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

So they said to him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet. Behold, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, or not the least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search carefully for the young child, and when you have found him, bring back word to me that I may come and worship him also. When they heard the king, they departed. And behold, the star which they had seen in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to him, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. We'll read so far. Amazing story.

And we could call it the revelation of God to the Gentiles, to the heathen. And one doesn't understand why for Peter and the brethren, the early church, why some were confused regarding this point. Because here God revealed himself to the heathen.

They are the ones that came and worshipped the child. We hear of the wise men. We don't really know who they were and which country they actually came from.

Some say it was from Persia or from the Medes or from some other Arab country. One doesn't really know exactly where. But the word says they came from the east.

Those were Gentile nations, heathens, people who didn't know God. I have a story which I shared before regarding the time when Jesus was born. At that time, throughout the world, there was a strong feeling that it was the time where God was going to reveal Himself to mankind.

Now in China they discovered a document. It was in the year 24. When Zhou was ruling China.

It was on the 8th day of the 4th month. At that time, a very bright light shone onto the palace. And this light came from the southwest.

And the king was amazed about this bright light which shone in his palace. And so the king summoned his wise men. Those who could explain things.

And they explained to him that there are writings about a time when something great would happen. Someone great would be born. Someone who would be a savior.

And they said he would be great and holy. And they said for them it was written that he would appear in one of the lands in the west. And that his religion would spread as far as China.

And so the king himself investigated and found this document with this that was written. And it even said that it would happen in the time of Zhao Wang. The king when he heard this, his heart was filled with great joy.

And then he chose certain of his men to go and investigate. One of the officials was Cai Yu and Sun Qing. And Wang Chun.

And fifteen other men. And he sent them to the west. To investigate this whole matter.

It's amazing. Now tradition has it that there were three wise men. And that they were kings.

But that's not for sure. Especially when we hear this matter from China. So they undertook this mammoth journey.

It's a long way from China all the way to Israel. They were not reluctant. They didn't complain saying it's a difficult journey.

They persevered and went all the way to Jerusalem. They got to Jerusalem. They went to Herod and said, O king, where is this new king that is born? The savior.

The messiah. Now they were wise. But here they were foolish.

They used their own understanding and reasoning. They had been led by the stars. They were led by the star all the way.

They had kept their eyes on the star. Till they got to Jerusalem. Then they took their eye off the star.

And they used their own reasoning and logic. But here they were foolish. They went to Herod and said, O king, where is this new king that is born? The savior.

The messiah. They said, if a king is born in Israel, surely he will be born in Jerusalem. So they looked for the child there.

And so they went to Herod. Not knowing that they were going to an enemy. Someone who had an evil heart.

Who was only concerned about himself and his position. Herod was shocked. And all Jerusalem with him.

Now I can't go into why Herod and Jerusalem were shocked by the news. Because then we'd have to go into the whole history of the political situation of Jerusalem at that time. These wise men made a big mistake.

They made a big mistake. It's a pity because many Christians can make big mistakes. But we can make big mistakes, because this is how we deal with our problems.

This is the lesson we want to teach you. We want to teach you that it's easy to make mistakes. It's easy to fight.

It's easy to deny. But it's easy to make big mistakes. And that goes wrong when we take our eyes off the star.

Off the lord. We no longer use him as our point of reference, but we then follow our own hearts, our own understanding, and the way we see things. There's something that happened many years ago and there was a captain, an experienced sailor of a ship.

Now his ship was already old. They were sailing through a very dangerous part of the ocean where there were many rocks. And there they experienced a terrible storm.

And the wind drove them towards the shore where they were full of these rocks. If the ship was to hit any of these rocks it would have been the end of the ship and everyone on board as well. But he was an experienced captain.

He knew the seas very well and he also knew his ship very well. He went around to encourage his crew because they were all in a state of panic. They were expecting that the end was about to come.

Now he was already very old and also quite weak physically. But his voice was still strong. Then he called one of the young men and he said, class you stand here at my side.

The mast of the ship was creaking under the strain of the wind. The whole ship, it sounded like it was about to fall apart. And he said, class you stand right here next to me.

I am going to unconsciousness. Please I rely on you. You must steer the ship.

And he said, you see that star there? And class said, yes I see it. Said if my strength fails me and I can no longer steer the ship then you take over and steer the ship in the direction of that star there. And class said, I understand, I see it.

And he said to the young man, the moment you take your eyes off that star, I guarantee you that's your end. You'll land on the rocks. You'll be finished.

This captain was a Christian. He was faithful, reliable. He was trustworthy.

You could build on what he said. And he said, and the sailor said, class, but you see there's that star, but there is another star too. The star of that, the name of that star is Jesus Christ.

And class said, captain, I know that. And class testified, he said, there was just no other man like his captain. This captain had a heart for the Lord and he'd share the gospel with everyone he met, even on his ship.

And he said, there's no other way of salvation on this earth. And it didn't take long and the captain fainted. And they took him down into a cavern underneath where the control room was, where the ship, the ship was steered.

And the last moments of his life, he just kept on saying again and again, keep your eyes on that star. He said, boys, don't take your eyes off that star. And that's how he passed away.

When I read the story, I said, what a wonderful way of describing the gospel. If you look today, how many people are going lost because they don't keep their eyes on the star. Young people going to school, they go to work, they go into the city, they go into the world, they go lost.

If you look at the children, the young people, there are few that are saved. And there are even some parents that forsake the gospel because of their children. It's tragic when you see parents who once had a heart that was on fire for the Lord, they lose that fire because of their children.

How sad it is. They're not like the wise men who forsook family, home, children, their riches. They forsook everything saying we are going to worship, to look for this Christ child.

They were distracted by absolutely nothing. Not like today where people will forsake the Lord just because of a dress, just because of clothing, because of the world. They forsake the Lord instead of clinging to Christ no matter what the cost.

Looking to Christ wherever they are, never taking their eyes off Him. These wise men forsook their gold, their frankincense, their myrrh for Christ. But you, you forsake Christ for gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And they were heathens. And they were heathens. But yet they recognized the Christ child, forsook everything for Him.

But you, you grow up as a Christian and you forsake the Christ for all these other things. Your eyes are not on Him. They got to Jerusalem where they'd made that terrible mistake.

They follow their own mind, their own understanding, and their own logic. If you do that, it will get you into terrible trouble. It will be your end unless God is gracious to you.

And Herod, a hypocrite that he was, he called his wise men. They couldn't help him. Then he got the scribes and the Pharisees.

And they said, no, the Christ child, the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. They knew it, but they didn't go there. And Herod, the hypocrite, told the wise men, go there, investigate, find out more.

And when you found the child, come back, report back to me, because I also want to go and worship the child. But he was a liar. It was a blatant lie.

He wanted to kill the child, not to worship it. And then they continued on their journey. And once they were back on the road, they saw the star again and rejoiced greatly.

But it was tragic that for that time they lost sight of the star. They no longer saw it. After it had led them for so long over such a vast journey, they lost it for that time.

The sailor, the captain said, boys, don't take your eyes off the star. Those were his last words as he passed into eternity. If you ever take your eyes off that star, you will go lost.

Maybe you go and your eyes are set on your job or whatever else it is, and you take your eyes off the star. Don't do what many people do. Make that big mistake of taking their eyes off Christ.

You hear many stories. You read many newspapers, and there are lots of newspapers, male and female newspapers, people telling stories all the time. You have an ear for it, you fall for it, and you take your eyes off the star, and you go off the way.

You go lost. And people forsake the Lord Jesus. Don't take your eyes off that star, which is Jesus Christ.

Some people see gold, how it shines and glitters. They are attracted by it, but the wise men, they sacrificed that gold for their child. And frankincense, they presented to the child.

Now, if you run after gold, you're not counted among the wise men, you're counted among the foolish men. Maybe you are attracted by frankincense, that lovely scent that draws you and it draws you away from Christ. Amaka is a medicine, but it's bitter like anything, but it's got strong healing properties.

Now, this is all actually prophetic, because the gold stands for royalty, that this is a king, this child. And the frankincense is something which they presented as an offering to the Lord on the altar, and it was a sweet smell, wonderful aroma, and it was a sweet aroma to the Lord. And the myrrh, which stood for that bitter battle that was to be fought at the cross, where he had to give his life.

But let's just focus on the gold for a moment, instead of us presenting the gold to the Lord, sacrificing it for him. No, we are drawn by it, we run after this gold, the riches, the big salaries, the big money, that's what draws us. The best they had, they gave to this child, but we'll forsake Jesus and seek the best we can get for ourselves.

Frankincense, we should be a sweet-smelling aroma to the Lord, presenting that to the Lord, seeking the best for him. But no, what do we do? We seek the best for ourselves. We go our own way.

We want what we think is good. Young people, girls running after boys, we want what we want, and eventually it will be our downfall. I remember some years ago when a girl came, a young lady came and said, Kalelo, I want to preach the gospel together with you.

God is calling me into full-time ministry. And a relative said, A relative said to her, but you can't go and preach the gospel before you've gone to study. At least get a degree first, study first, and then see after that about serving the Lord.

And she came and she said, Well, I can't do it now because I've been advised to go and study first. Because what future do I have in this world without a degree? Well, all I could say was, Well, if that's what you feel you must do, I can't stop you. He did it.

She didn't even finish her studies. While she was still studying, she was deceived by a young man who professed to be someone who loved the Lord and was going to become a preacher. And she was deceived.

Like so many girls who seem to be the easiest thing on earth to deceive. You just see a pair of trousers and you're like hypnotized. She got married to him.

But he was like a devil. And she was pregnant. He kicked her in her stomach.

It was like hell to her. She was told, She was told you can't just go on faith and rely on the Lord, but you must at least try and do something yourself. Get a degree.

Well, she didn't get her degree, but she got hell instead. There's so much I could tell you. But unfortunately, so often you try and tell, especially a young person who doesn't accept anything from you.

You tell them something. They don't want to accept it. They know better.

But sometimes they even are advised by other older people that they accept it from them. Now here are these heathens. They sacrificed their gold.

Now you call yourself a Christian even, but you're not prepared to sacrifice the gold. You want it. Jesus said, don't be like the Gentiles, the heathen who say, what will I wear? What will I eat? Your heavenly father knows what you need.

Seek first his kingdom and the rest will be added unto you. God can care for you. Here were Mary and Joseph, poor people.

They had nothing. But here the Lord cared for them. He brought them all these gifts, silver and gold.

He gave them. Seeking first God's kingdom. He adds that all unto you.

Not like you heathens who say, who will look after me in my old age? Who will care for my parents in their old age? Who will care for my children? And we care about all these things instead of seeking first his kingdom. They were in Bethlehem. The Lord told them now go to Egypt.

But he also cared for them. He made provision for them. He gave them all they needed for that journey.

God cared for them. He's cared for me. And he still cares for me.

And that's how he cares for all his children. He keeps them. He even kept them and protected them from wild animals and all other things that could have happened.

And I trust God that even in the future he will still care for me. And I can rejoice, be happy, experience joy, knowing that God cares for his children. So the Gentiles came, the heathens, they came, they sacrificed their gold, their riches, and they bow down to this child.

We all need to celebrate for all us Gentiles that God revealed himself to the Gentiles, even for us Germans. If we think of our ancestors who lived in the bush wearing just skins, living eggs. And the Germans were brought help by the English who came as missionaries to these barbaric Germans, their Northern Germany.

At that time, they were worshipping idols. They were sacrificing human beings on their altars. And the gospel came to them.

The word of God came to them, brought by men. How else will the nations hear? They obediently followed it. And then they found people who opened the scriptures to them, who explained to them, pointed them in the right direction.

They eventually got to the Christ child, bowed down to him, worshipped him. And they became, they were saved through that. And that's how even our forefathers were saved.

Now, even today, there are many heathens in the world who don't know God, who still worship the ancestral spirits. And the Lord says, if you don't warn them, I will require their blood of your hands because you didn't tell them. Statistically, almost 80% of South Africans claim to be Christians.

But are they all real Christians? People who have been saved from sin, who have repented from their sin, turned from it, living godly lives. And God says, if they haven't heard and you didn't bring them the message, you didn't warn them, their blood, he'll require of your hands. While they are perishing, all you're concerned about is your own future, your career.

That's all that matters to you. Fine, you carry on with your career, your ambitions. They will perish, but God will require their blood of your hands.

You will perish with them. You want to, you want a job, you're looking for work. Jesus said, what is my work? My work is to do the will of my father in heaven.

Here are these heathens. They heard about the gospel. They accepted it.

They were saved. They came from afar. And they sacrificed much to come to seek the Christ child.

When they found him, they presented what they had to him. They gave it for him. What have you given for the Christ child, for our savior? Are your eyes on this child? Is it your earnest desire, your longing to go out into the world, to tell the people about this child, about Jesus? That they may get to know this child.

Tell me, are you furthering this gospel, this message, taking it into the world and even to your children? Woe to you if you're not busy with that, because you think you're going to heaven. You won't get in there because your hands are bloodstained. All these people who are perishing.

And you say, but what about my work? If I'm not there day and night, things will go wrong. Well, you just be busy full time with your work and you'll see what it will bring you. Your work can even become logs that will burn you when you're in hell.

God says, if I say to the wicked, you will perish and you don't warn him, he will perish, but his blood I'll require of your hands. How much worse will it be for you as well? If maybe you are giving other people alcohol, the things you're talking to them, the things you are spreading, how much worse won't it be for you then? And so the wise men came from that faraway country, traveling all the way to seek the Christ child, and they found him and had a meeting with him. They made a mistake, but God was gracious to them.

He showed them their mistake, warned them that Herod was a liar. He was not wanting to worship the child, but to murder it. They went back another way.

Not everyone loves the Lord Jesus. They don't rejoice about him. They want to kill him.

But they realized that the wise men weren't coming back to him. They'd gone back another way. He went and killed all the boy children under two years old, and much blood flowed.

There was weeping. Rachel wept. Be careful how you walk, how you live.

If you make a mistake, much blood can flow as a result. And it will be said it's because of you, the mistake you made. Because you took your eyes off the star, the Christ child.

So pray and ask God to help you. So pray and ask God to help you. He never got that degree.

How will you ever stand before God if you've taken your eyes off him, if you haven't done what he has told you to do? Even the wise men will condemn you. They'll say what? That which we sacrificed, that is what you were seeking, and you sacrificed the child for those things, and we had sacrificed everything for him. Let us bow our heads.

Lord, we rejoice when we hear about the wise men who came from so far away. Truly, Lord, they were wise, for they sacrificed everything just to seek you and to see your face. Lord, may amongst us be found wise men.

Those who will be regarded as wise, for they have forsaken everything which could have been gained, but they counted it as loss so that they could see the Savior. Amen.

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