# Christmas TreasureLuke 2:15-20, Matthew 2:1-11

[OPEN VERSES!!!]

What is the best verse that you ever received from another person?

You are probably familiar with the song the 12 days of Christmas. Every year PNC bank computes the values of the 12 days of Christmas. For instance:

1. Partridge in Pear Tree $210.18
2. Turtle Doves $450.00
3. French Hens $210.00
4. Calling Birds $599.96
5. Golden Rings $845.00
6. Geese-a-Laying $470.00
7. Swans-a-Swimming $13,125.00
8. Maids-a-Milking $58.00
9. Ladies Dancing $7,552.84
10. Lords-a-Leaping $10,000.00
11. Pipers Piping $2,748.87
12. Drummers Drumming $2,972.25

If you buy each gift once, it will set you back $39,242.10, however if you go all out and buy the gifts the number of times it is mentioned, the price is even higher, buying 5 golden rings on 7 different days adds up! In this case the total would be $172,743.15. Of course, if you got nicer rings or paid the maids more than minimum wage these numbers would go up tremendously.

The thing is, with the exception of the 5 golden rings, I wouldn’t treasure any of it. What’s more, some experts believe the 5 golden rings refers to a type of pheasant found in Europe, in which case none of it would be a treasure.

In contrast, some people believe the 12 days are each symbolic of different aspects of the Christmas story. While there is little historical evidence of this view, if you choose to look at the 12 day this way, then the entire list is a treasure:

12. Drummers Drumming – the 12 Apostles

11. Pipers Piping – the 11 faithful disciples

10. Lords a Leaping – the 10 commandments

9. Ladies Dancing – the 9-fold fruit of the Spirit

8. Maids a Milking – the 8 beatitudes, or the 8 people saved from Noah’s Flood

7. Swans a Swimming – the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11:2-4

6. Geese a Laying – the six days of creation

5. Golden Rings – the five books of Moses, aka the Torah

4. Calling Birds – the Four Gospels

3. French Hens – Faith Hope and Love or the Trinity

2. Turtle Doves – The Old and New Testaments

1. Partridge in a Pear Tree – Jesus and the Cross or Jesus in the Manger

While that may not be the point of the song, it gets closer to what the Bible shares as Christmas Treasure. In Luke 2:15-20 and Matthew 2:1-11, we learn about 5 different kinds of treasure that God provides in the Christmas Season. God provides treasures of good news, memory, guidance, worship, and meeting our needs.

## God provides the treasure…

## ...of good news. Luke 2:15-18, 20

“**15** When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." **16** So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. **17** When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, **18** and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.
**20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”

As we saw last week, the shepherds had just heard from an Angel that the Messiah was born in Bethlehem. They had then witnessed a chorus of Angels praising God and experienced the very glory of God. When the angels left them, their initial feeling had to be dazzlement. Their brains were spinning trying to understand what had just happened. Finally, one of them proposed that they do the obvious thing, go to Bethlehem and see if what they had been told was real. Not that they doubted God’s messengers, but that what they had been told was too fantastic to comprehend.

Once the idea was proposed, it was like someone had fired a starter pistol, they all moved as quickly as they could to find the place that the angel had named. When they saw him, we are not told how they reacted, but I am confident that they worshiped. But then they spread the word about the child.

Good news should be hard to keep quiet. Imagine that you just found out that you won the publisher’s clearing house and were going to receive $10,000,000. But even better, they gave you a code and said that for the next 8 hours every person who entered that code into the Publisher’s Clearing House website would also get $10,000,000. Who would you tell? You run quickly to tell each of your family members, you call each of your friends, you call your coworkers, you even call your boss, they guy who bags your groceries and the guy across the street who listens to the radio too loud.

The good news of the messiah was a greater treasure than millions of dollars and the shepherds knew the best way to receive the treasure of good news was by sharing it. Are you treasuring the good news by sharing it?

## ...of memory. Luke 2:19

**19** But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

The best treasures are not financial, they are the things that we treasure in our hearts. When my sons were baptized, when Hannah decided to let Jesus in her heart. When (12 years ago today) I married Amy. If I promise you a billion dollars, but in exchange you have to lose all of your memories, you most likely would not accept the offer. There may be specific memories that you would give up, but if you were asked to give up all your memories, that would be far more painful than living in poverty for the rest of your life.

On the day we got engaged, seconds after Amy agreed to marry me, as we kissed for the first time ever, the horse pulling our carriage let out a large fart the way that only a horse can. It normally would have been disgusting, but in the moment, we just turned to each other and laughed. To this day we smile and laugh about it. Even the worst things can be a precious treasure, when they are in the context of a treasured memory.

Mary understood the real treasure of Christmas was treasuring the event in her heart. Going over every word, every detail, every sight and smell. Probably from that day forward, while barns still smelled bad, they also brought to Mary’s mind a wonderful day.

Are you treasuring the memories of what God has done?

## …of guidance. Matthew 2:1-9

“**1** ¶ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem **2** and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." **3** When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. **4** When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. **5** "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: **6** "’But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’" **7** Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. **8** He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." **9** ¶ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

In spite of the song, the Magi who came from the east were not kings themselves, nor do we know that there were three of them. We do know that they brought three gifts with them, but from the Bible, we cannot tell if there were three or 50, but we can make some guesses.

When Daniel was in Babylon, he was in charge of the wise men (Daniel 2:48). These magi interpreted dreams, administered provinces, and served as advisors to the King. If the king did not have an obvious heir, it was these wise men who determined who would be the next king. They were not kings, but they were king makers.

Being high ranking officials, the Magi probably traveled with a caravan of dozens, if not hundreds of people, camels and horses. There were enough of them that King Herod was disturbed… and worried about them bringing down his dynasty. There were enough Magi that Herod felt he needed to trick them instead of killing them.

We also don’t know what star they followed. It could have been an astrological sign, a supernova or an unusual conjunction. It was a miracle. Whatever the star was, it likely lasted for a prolonged period of time. They saw it in the region of Babylon, followed it to the area of Judea (a trip of at least 4 months) and then later followed it to the home of Mary, Joseph and Jesus in Bethlehem. By the time they got to Bethlehem, the family was living in a home. Including, planning, travel, etc. it could have taken a full two years for the magi to arrive.

The guidance of the wise men started hundreds of years earlier as Daniel taught the class of priests to expect a Jewish Messiah (education). The star guided them from Babylon to Jerusalem (Circumstances). Micah 5:2 guided them to Bethlehem (Scripture) and then the star again led them to the place where the child was (Miracles). Anyone who has ever been lost, knows the true treasure of guidance. The guidance from God was more than they could expect. God offers you guidance from education, circumstances, scripture, and, sometimes even miracles. Are you treasuring the guidance that God has given you?

## …of worship. Matthew 2:10-11

**10** When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. **11** On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

Why were the magi overjoyed? Their journey was done, but more importantly, they were able to worship the long awaited king. They were honored to be able to worship.

Worship is, in itself, a treasure. Think about this song: ♪♬♪♫♩

You are my strength when I am weak,
You are the treasure that I seek,
You are my all in all.
Seeking You as a precious jewel,
Lord to give up I’d be a fool,
You are my all in all.
Jesus, Precious Lamb of God
Worthy is Your name.
Jesus, Precious Lamb of God,
Worthy is Your name.

Are you treasuring the chance to worship Jesus?

## …of meeting our needs. Matthew 2:11b

Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.” (Mt 2:1-11 NIVUS)

Too many people associate treasure with things of monetary value. Sometimes God will bless with treasure, but it is offensive that the reason some people worship is so that they can get God to give them more stuff. When God blesses with treasure, it is usually for a purpose of serving Him and others or for meeting a need.

In this case, why did God have the Magi bring these three gifts. First, the gifts were symbolic. Gold is symbolic of earthly royalty and power. Incense is symbolic of worshipping God and recognition that Jesus is God. Myrrh is an embalming spice and recognizes Jesus’ eventual death. But why else did God send these gifts? Jesus was to be known as a man of sorrows, oppressed, afflicted, and despised, not as a wealthy person. So why the valuable gifts.

God knew that Joseph would have to flee with the family to Egypt and would need money for traveling, paying taxes to cross the border legally and to establish a life to live in Egypt. By selling the gold, frankincense and myrrh, the family was able to survive, without having to be impoverished beggars, until Joseph could find work as a carpenter. Also, because of their rarity, Frankincense and Myrrh may have been worth 4-5 times as much money as the equivalent volume of Gold, making it convenient to hide from potential crooks as they traveled to and eventually back from Egypt. If they brought half a pound of gold, and a couple ounces each of frankincense and myrrh, it would have been worth about a year’s wages.

When God has blessed you with financial treasures, have you considered how it is to meet the needs of you AND those around you?

# Christmas TreasureLuke 2:15-20, Matthew 2:1-11

## God provides the treasure…

## ...of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Luke 2:15-18, 20

Good news should be hard to keep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Τhe best way to receive the treasure of good news was by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it.

Are \_\_\_\_\_\_ treasuring the good news by sharing it?

## ...of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Luke 2:19

The best treasures are \_\_\_\_\_\_ financial.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ things can be precious treasure, when in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of a treasured memory.

Are you treasuring the memories of what God has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

## …of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 2:1-9

When Daniel was in Babylon, he was in charge of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ Daniel 2:48

God offers you guidance from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and, sometimes even \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Are you treasuring the guidance that God has given you?

## …of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 2:10-11

They were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to worship.

Worship \_\_\_\_ a treasure.

Are you treasuring the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to worship Jesus?

## …of meeting our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Matthew 2:11b

God blesses with treasure for a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

God knew Joseph would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ money to establish a life in Egypt.

Have you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ how to meet the needs of those around you?

Partridge in Pear Tree $210.18
 Jesus and the Cross or Jesus in the Manger

Two Turtle Doves $450.00
 The Old and New Testaments

Three French Hens $210.00
 Faith Hope and Love or the Trinity

Four Calling Birds $599.96
 the Four Gospels

Five Golden Rings $845.00
 the five books of Moses, aka the Torah

Six Geese-a-Laying $470.00
 the six days of creation

Seven Swans-a-Swimming $13,125.00
 the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11:2-4

Eight Maids-a-Milking $58.00
 the 8 beatitudes, or the 8 people saved from Noah’s Flood

Nine Ladies Dancing $7,552.84
 the 9-fold fruit of the Spirit

Ten Lords-a-Leaping $10,000.00
 the 10 commandments

Eleven Pipers Piping $2,748.87
 the 11 faithful disciples

Twelve Drummers Drumming $2,972.25
 the 12 Apostles