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SERMON TITLE: **Seek to be Wise**

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 2:1-12**

DATE **December 4, 2022 Advent Two**

Online service at www.fpcd.org/live

Read Matthew 2:1-12 (below) and then read the sermon.

The Scripture for today's Advent Candle gives a description of the Son of God which includes these character traits: (Is 9:6-7)
The One with Authority and Dominion over governments
Wonderful (meaning wisest) Counselor
The Mighty God
The Eternal Father
The Prince of Peace
Upholder of fair judgment with integrity

This is the One filled with wisdom. But it is difficult to think the world can get there. Looking around at the nations of the world, who is following God?

But God gave us a prayer that calls us to strive to follow God. We pray it every week:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

God's will is about God being the Center. God's will is about goodness, integrity, and justice. It results in peace.

God's will is **WISE**.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

This story of the wise men reflects God's will. However, it might be entitled:

"Heavenly Will Crashes Against Earthly Will."

How does God recover God's plan in the beginning, where human beings walked with God in a beautiful garden, where it was 70 degrees and not one weed or dead plant in sight—and people liked to be with God?

Heavenly will is this:

"Holy night, blessed night
Stars of heaven fill the sky, holding earth in light
Every valley, every woodland sings with joy the Bethlehem song
All creation, every nation, earth and heaven sing good news
Christ the Lord is born this holy, blessed night."

When God set the plan in motion, the clash between heavenly will and earthly will was immediate.

You've heard about major clashes between nations, right? You have also seen that some people seek God and others resist God. This does not surprise us. It is not unusual to see opposition. When tragedy occurs, lawmakers often offer prayers to God for help. But, a few years ago after a public tragedy a New York newspaper put those prayers on its front page with the caption: "God Isn't Fixing This."

Heaven and earth's values clash. One says "pray;" others "meaningless platitudes."

When the late Queen Elizabeth II was crowned in 1953, she was given a Bible and these words written to her:

"Our Gracious Queen: To keep your Majesty ever mindful of the Law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing this world affords. Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God."

How far has society moved from seeking wisdom from God, although Christmas is about heavenly intrusion into earth. Jesus tells us to pray: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

We have here a picture of heavenly will versus earthly will. What will be your response?

King Herod is all about ambition. Rulers are unique. Kings have access to kings. The three kings freely enter Herod's palace to get help. He acts on their request.

Kings are in relationship, yet they are driven by ambition and Herod is threatened by the announcement of another king—nothing under my nose is going to be evident to outsiders and not to me. It's all about power.

Earthly will means power over others.

In contrast, **God's will is first to save**—"Good will toward men."

Herod is about power, ambition, self-first. God is about saving life.

Christians invite God's will because **heavenly wisdom is superior, stronger, and a better will for you.**

The Christmas story is full of heavenly will. Humans balk at heavenly directions.

Christians are continually given the opportunity to invite God's heavenly will into our life, however, it will often be tough. But with God's help you and I can embrace God's heavenly will.

The wise men had to stay with it over many months to finally find Jesus; but God directed them, just like God directed the shepherds who followed the angels' instructions.

You might have a tough time when you stay the course and it does not look promising. Things seem a mess to you. But to God, what looks messy is like looking at the back side of a tapestry as it is being stitched, and when finished, it becomes a beautiful piece of artwork. From God's view, if you trust God, "all things work together for good" for believers.

Heaven's will is for the nations to worship God. Earth's will was to destroy this newborn king.

But God was ahead of it. God knew best. As God spoke to the kings to not return to Herod, God spoke to Joseph and secured the life of Jesus.

Do you ever feel like there's no seeming purpose, or you fear that your mistakes and problems hinder God? Or, your will is clashing with God's and you are leaning toward doing what you want?

Maybe this sermon is to help you rethink your plan.

God saw to it that God's plan about Jesus came to be because "The wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere" (James 3:17).

Earthly will robs life but heavenly will saves life. Will you follow God's heavenly will? If you do, it will be the wisest thing you ever did. Now, as we go to the table, let us pray.

*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven . . .*

AMEN

Matthew 2:1-12

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him." King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" "In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote: 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'" Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!" After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.