
The Longest Journey: From Head to Heart

**A sermon by the Rev. Canon Salmoon Bashir
The Second Sunday after Christmas – Year A**

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The longest journey you will ever take is from your head to your heart.

One of my wise friends once shared this saying with me, a truth passed down to him by his grandmother. It is a phrase many great thinkers have echoed in different ways, but its wisdom remains the same: the longest journey you will ever take is from your head to your heart.

I often think of myself when I hear that line. I am not on a single journey, but on many. And I suspect some of you are, too. We can understand things deeply, explain them clearly, even defend them convincingly, and still keep them at a safe distance. We may know the truth in our heads yet resist letting that truth reshape our hearts.

Today's Gospel gives us a beautiful story of that very journey.

The wise men, or Magi, were scholars. They were observers of the heavens, astronomers trained to read signs and patterns. Their journey began in the head. They saw the star, and through their knowledge they understood what it meant. They got the theology right. A king had been born. Scripture confirmed it. The Hebrew prophet Micah pointed them toward Bethlehem. They had the knowledge firmly in their heads.

But they did not stop there. They did not remain satisfied with understanding alone. They moved. They began the journey from here, the head, to here, the heart. They set out to see the king. They chose to follow the star.

The Magi left everything behind: their land, their routines, their status, and their sense of control. They took a long, costly, and uncertain journey. Matthew does not romanticize this moment. But imagine what it means to take everything you know, and then step into the unknown, guided only by a star, in order to kneel before a newborn king. There was inconvenience. There was danger, especially with another king watching closely.

And that is where the journey shifts, from the head toward the heart. They crossed borders, cultures, and expectations. They allowed what they knew and let it change how they lived. And their journey changed them. Friends, belief became their devotion and their belief showed up in their actions.

Now contrast their journey with Herod's.

Herod also knows the facts. He knows the Scriptures, the words of the prophet Micah and likely the other prophets as well. He knows where the child is to be born, where the Messiah is to enter the world. The truth reaches his head, but it stops there. The knowledge never travels inward. It never becomes worship. It never becomes his liturgy.

Instead of wonder, it produces fear for him. Instead of worship, it produces a sense of threat that turns into violence. The information is the same. The response could not be more different. Same knowledge. Very different heart. Same information. Very different journey.

One journey leads toward light and life. The other leads to the killing of hundreds of innocent children. One journey opens the door to those who come from far away, from outside the circle. The other seeks to eliminate

those already within the house. Herod's journey moves inward, revolving around anxiety, control, and self-preservation. The Magi's journey moves outward, toward trust, risk, and surrender. Herod clings to his throne at all costs. The Magi lay down what they carry and acknowledge a throne that is not their own.

One of the most beautiful moments in this story comes when they finally arrive before the child. They kneel. Their bodies do what their hearts now know.

True worship always takes shape in posture and humility, no matter how much knowledge we carry in our heads.

And in that moment, the Son of God, even as a small and vulnerable child, draws in people from every tribe, race, and nation. This is one of the first moments in the Gospel when God's kingdom is revealed as expansive rather than exclusive. Outsiders are welcomed in. Insiders are no longer the only ones at the center. A child has been born who is bringing people from East and West, North and South. In Christ, the boundaries dissolve. In Christ, all are gathered. In Christ, we become one.

And then there is how each story ends. Herod remains trapped in the same place, circling the same fear. He hears the truth, but he is never changed by it. Nothing in him moves. Nothing in him yields. Knowledge leaves him exactly where it found him.

The Magi, however, leave by another road. Yes, they are physically redirected, but something far deeper has happened. They are no longer the same people who began the journey. Encountering Christ alters their way home.

They have taken the long journey from head to heart. And once that journey is taken, there is no returning by the old road.

Our journeys are not all the same. For some of us, the distance from head to heart may feel short. For others, it may be long and winding. But wherever you find yourself today keep walking the journey. Even if the road feels long. Even if the star seems dim. Trust that God meets us not at the end of our certainty, but along the road of our becoming.

Even if you are coming from far away, even if you are following a star that sometimes flickers, a star whose light feels faint or uncertain, keep going. The star may lead you by unexpected ways. It may take you through questions, doubt, or discomfort. Still, keep moving on the journey from your head to your heart. **Because the journey does not end with noticing the light. It presses us to respond to it.**

So, when truth confronts us, which journey will we choose? The stationary path of Herod, where knowledge hardens the heart and nothing changes? Or the journey of the Magi, where understanding gives way to movement, and movement leads to transformation? Where seeking leads to worship, and worship reshapes who we are? A journey where humility and kneeling become our posture.

Friends, the journey from head to heart is never abstract. It asks something of us. It asks us to move, to risk, to let go of the ways that once felt familiar. And like the Magi, once we have truly encountered Christ, we do not return the same way we came. Our way home is altered. Our posture shifts. Our lives begin to tell the truth our minds have long known.

The story of wisemen once again reminds us about finding our own journeys in the midst of many Herods in this world.

Follow your own journey from head to your heart. Amen.