

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY (2018)

In our First Reading today, the Prophet Isaiah says to us: **“Raise your eyes and look about.”** Then he says, do this and **“you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow.”**

To be radiant means to be glowing or shining brightly. Like a bride radiant with joy or like a fire which radiates heat and light. Your heart shall throb and overflow as a father who takes pride in his son or anyone who is filled with the satisfaction that comes from some great accomplishment.

The Prophet tells us, raise your eyes and look about, and your hearts shall throb and overflow and you shall be radiant at what you see.

And what are we to see? What are we looking for?

We are looking for the living God. We are looking for the one who made us. We are looking for all that is true and just and good. We are looking for that peace which only God can give.

God has revealed Himself to us in many ways, but in these last days He has revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ who was born in the little town of Bethlehem in the far-off land of Judah.

God sees us, and He knows us by name. God looks down upon us and calls out to us. He is ever present to us, and He loves us.

The wise men knew this, and that is why they came from distant lands to see the Lord Jesus and to worship Him and to do Him homage.

For His part, our heavenly Father did not let them wander aimlessly. Rather, our Father in heaven guided them to the Christ Child by the light of a star, and they followed that light from their homes in the East to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem and then to where the star stopped, at the stable where the Child Jesus was.

We call these men wise because they looked up and saw. They raised their eyes to the heavens, and their hearts were filled with joy.

So what about us? Are we looking for the Lord? Have we raised up our eyes to look about? Are we following the star?

You know there is another scripture passage from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah which is appropriate here. It goes like this: **“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near (Is 55:6).”**

These passages remind us that our relationship with God is a two way street. It's not all about God lighting the way for us. It's not all about God calling out to us. It's not all about God revealing Himself to us.

Our relationship with God is also about us answering the call. It's also about us following the light. It's also about us opening our eyes and seeing the God who loves us right before us, and then it's about us kneeling down in worship.

Some people don't buy this. They think God is going to do all of the work for them, and by all, I mean all. They figure that they can just sit there and God will come to them and wait on them and pamper them as if they were the lords and ladies and kings and queens and not the other way around. These folks are not willing to meet God halfway or a fourth of the way or even a small fraction of the way, and so, they are never going to find the Lord.

I used to be pastor up on the Iron Range in Aurora and Hoyt Lakes and Babbitt. In the early days, all of the mining there was done underground. That meant that in the winter months, the men who worked the day shift would get up when it was dark and would get to work when it was dark. Then they would go underground for the day, and when they got done with their shift in the late afternoon, the sun had already gone down. So they would leave the mine in the dark and would go home in the dark. In the winter months, they never saw the sun. They never saw the light, and what a hard and difficult life that was. It must have been awful.

The strange thing is that many people live like that today, but unlike the miners who lived in a dark physical world, these people live in a dark spiritual world. They live in a kind of spiritual underground, never looking up to the light of God shining on them. Never listening to God's voice. Never hearing His call.

Instead of turning to the light, instead of looking up to God, they just go deeper and deeper into darker and darker places where they will never find what they are looking for which is true peace. Instead, they only find sorrow and despair.

We for our part must not follow them. We must seek the Lord while He may be found, but as I've said, this is a two way street.

Today, Satan has done a good job of hiding God from those who do not raise up their eyes and look about. However, even now, God is still plainly visible to those who look for Him in the right places, and so we must look. We must seek the Lord while He may be found.

The wise men did not just sit there when they saw the star. Instead, they set out on a journey of many miles and many months. They followed the star which guided them to the place where Jesus was. You might say they carried their cross on their journey, but even though it was a difficult journey, it was a journey that led to life.

And that is exactly what we must do. We must raise our eyes and look about. We must search out and find the star which God has sent to guide us and then we must follow it wherever it leads us and whatever the cost until it comes to the place where Jesus is.

Then, when we arrive at that place, **“our hearts shall throb and overflow”** and **“we shall be radiant with joy at what we see.”** And what we shall see is our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.