



Small Group Guide: The Gift of Frankincense

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: What's a smell that immediately takes you back to a specific memory or time in your life? Share briefly about that memory.

Sermon Summary

This week we explored the second gift the Magi brought to Jesus—frankincense. While gold declared Jesus as King, frankincense prophetically announced His role as our Great High Priest and Intercessor. This precious incense was used in Old Testament worship, representing the intimate relationship and intercession between God and His people. The gift of frankincense declares that Jesus came not just to rule over us, but to intercede for us—to walk through our suffering with us and represent us before God.

Key Scripture References

- **Matthew 2:1-12** - The Magi's visit and gifts
- **Leviticus 2:1-2** - Frankincense in the grain offering
- **Exodus 30:1-8** - The altar of incense
- **Hebrews 4:14-16** - Jesus as our Great High Priest
- **Hebrews 7:23-25** - Jesus intercedes forever

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Gift

1. Why do you think Matthew was so specific about mentioning these three gifts when he left out many other details about Jesus' early life?
2. Read Exodus 30:1-8. What's significant about where the altar of incense was placed in the tabernacle? What does this teach us about worship and God's presence?
3. How does frankincense differ from the gold we studied last week? What different aspect of Jesus' identity and mission does it reveal?

Personal Reflection

4. The sermon stated: "God has not come to us and sent us into our struggles. Instead, God comes to us and chooses to walk with us through our struggles." How does this truth change the way you view your current challenges?
5. Read Hebrews 4:15-16. Jesus "sympathizes with our weaknesses" because He experienced human life. How does knowing Jesus understands your struggles personally affect your prayer life?
6. The psalmist wrote, "May my prayer be counted as incense before you" (Psalm 141:2). What does it mean for our prayers to be like incense rising to God?

Deeper Application

7. The sermon addressed the "problem of evil" —if God exists, why is there suffering? How does the truth that Jesus came to experience suffering with us help you wrestle with this question?
8. Jesus is described as our "permanent priest" who "always lives to make intercession" for us (Hebrews 7:25). What does it mean practically that Jesus is interceding for you right now, in this moment?
9. The statue in Oklahoma City showed Jesus weeping over loss and suffering. How does the image of Jesus weeping with us in our pain impact your understanding of God's character?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Prayer as Incense

- Set aside 10 minutes each day for prayer
- As you pray, visualize your prayers rising like incense to God
- Thank Jesus for interceding for you even when you don't know what to pray

Option 2: Emmanuel Awareness

- When facing a difficulty this week, pause and remind yourself: "God is with me in this"
- Journal about how knowing Jesus understands your struggle changes your perspective
- Share this truth with someone else who is struggling

Option 3: Intercession Practice

- Just as Jesus intercedes for us, practice interceding for others
- Choose 3 people to pray for daily this week
- Ask God to make you aware of their needs and how to support them

Prayer Focus

- Thank Jesus for being our Great High Priest who understands our struggles
- Pray for those in your group facing specific challenges, asking Jesus to reveal His presence with them
- Ask God to help you grasp the gift of Christmas—that He came to be with us and intercede for us
- Pray for opportunities to share this hope with others during the Christmas season

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll explore the third gift—myrrh—and what it prophetically declares about Jesus' mission and sacrifice.

Preparation: Read Matthew 2:1-12 again and consider what the gift of myrrh might symbolize.