

Room For Jesus
December 18, 2016

We're going to start this morning by looking at two people. They were ordinary people, busy living their lives. They were not expecting anything extraordinary to happen to them. But something extraordinary was about to happen. They were invited to make room in their hearts, and their lives, for Jesus. The first we find in Luke 1.

An angel appears to Mary and tells her that she will carry a miraculous baby. God invites Mary to make room in her heart and life for Jesus.

Luke 1:30-31; 35; 38 (NIV) "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus...

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God...

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."

God invited Mary to make room in her life for Jesus. It would mean embarrassing questions without answers. It would bring shame. It would ruin her reputation. Would she make room in her life for Jesus? Mary said yes. Now let's look at another person who was invited to make room for Jesus.

Matthew 1:20-22; 24-25 (NIV) "... an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."...

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife...

And he gave him the name Jesus.

Joseph also was invited by God to make room in his heart and life for Jesus. He would be suspected of immorality. He would therefore face the same glares and stares as Mary. He would be talked about behind his back. He might be ostracized by some, even some of his relatives. His good name would be tarnished. Would Joseph make room in his life for Jesus? Joseph too said yes.

God invited these two ordinary people to make room for Jesus. They were not rich, not famous, not influential, not prominent, nor highly educated. They were just ordinary, average people.

Today, God is calling all of us ordinary, average people to make room for Jesus in our hearts and lives. Is there room in your life for Jesus? There wasn't room for Jesus in the inn at Bethlehem.

Luke 2:1-7 (NIV) In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the

town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

I want to put in a good word for the innkeeper. I have read and heard people say the innkeeper was a mean man for not taking in a young family with a new baby. But, you can't do what you can't do. The place was packed out already. Every room was full of people. The lobby was full of people. The dining room was full of people. The indoor swimming pool had people all around it. There was no space left in the inn for this couple and their arriving baby. The inn staff couldn't squeeze another family inside.

And who are you going to kick out? The other families probably all had kids too! Remember everybody had to go and register in their home towns, not just Joseph and Mary. So there were lots of other people there also. It wasn't the innkeeper's fault that there wasn't any room left in the inn. It is likely that all the homes in town were also full of extra people. And we could guess that Mary and Joseph were probably not the only ones sleeping outside. Every building in town was too full of people and animals and such to house Jesus. There was no room for Jesus.

There are a lot of people today whose lives are just like that. They are simply too full to give Jesus any room. Their lives are full of possessions, full of family and friends, full of work, full of hobbies and recreation to make room for Jesus. Maybe you are one of these people. You are enjoying life and are busy living it, without much thought of Jesus. The idea of living this life with Jesus never enters your mind.

Others have hearts that are too full of worries, fears, and troubles to make room for Jesus. Maybe you are one of these people. It never occurs to you that making room for Jesus could make the burden of your cares lighter. But it can.

Even Christians, especially around Christmas time, can get so busy that there isn't any room in their schedule for Jesus. There isn't any room in their thoughts for Jesus, except at those designated times, like Sunday mornings or the Christmas Eve service.

We have all the regular stuff to do associated with home, family, work, and school. Plus, at this time of year, we are doing extra stuff associated with Christmas. We are decorating, shopping, wrapping, shipping, maybe baking, going to parties and school programs. We are cramming into our already busy schedules a lot of extra things. So something has to give. Something has to go undone. And maybe in your life, Jesus gets left out.

Joseph and Mary and Jesus were on the outside of the inn. We don't know where outside they were. We don't know that they were in a stable. The Bible doesn't say they were in a stable. All we know is that she put the baby in a manger, a common animal feeding trough. It may have been made of wood, or it may have been carved into a big rock. It may have been under a wooden shelter, or in a cave, or just out in the open.

The Bible doesn't say. Most of what we picture is just tradition. There may or may not have been animals there.

Were there cows lowing? We have no way of knowing.
Were there sheep sleeping? That's a secret God is keeping.
Were there chickens scratching or eggs hatching? We've no Bible verses matching.
Were there donkeys braying? The Bible isn't saying.

There is a lot about this story that the Bible doesn't say. Much of what we include in the nativity scene is just tradition and based on songs and paintings of the event from across the years. We don't know where the manger was. We aren't even sure what kind of "inn" this was. We don't know how many wise men there were. We don't know when the wise men came, about the time Jesus was born, or if it was weeks later. Some even guess that it was up to two years later. None of that is known. But we picture it a certain way in our minds and it tends to stay that way in our hearts.

One thing, a very important thing, that the Bible DOES say, is that the baby Jesus did not stay a baby. He grew up.

Luke 2:40 (NIV) And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

The Bible says that after he grew up there came a time when He began preaching the arrival of the kingdom of God. And the Bible goes on to say that He was executed on a cross. But afterward God raised Him from the dead. And after about a month He ascended back up into heaven and left his followers to take the news of His resurrection to all the earth.

It is these events, not His birth, that are at the heart of the Christian faith. The Christian faith spread with the message of Jesus' death and resurrection, not His birth. Yes, there are miracles associated with his birth, and they add to the wonder of His story. But it wasn't because the story of His birth was so interesting or miraculous that it was preserved. It was because of what he did on the cross. The birth isn't listed in two of the biographies about Jesus that are in the Bible. The cross is in all four of them. And then the cross and resurrection are emphasized from then on in the rest of the New Testament.

So when you say, "I don't really have time for Jesus this week, this season, it isn't a baby you don't have time for. It is the grownup Jesus. It is the risen-from-the-dead Jesus. It is the savior-from-sins Jesus. It is the Lord-of-the-universe Jesus. You don't have time for the Lord of the universe? You don't have time for the one who died for you?"

The truth is we all have time for all the things that are really important to us. **We take the time for what is really important to us.** We speak of making time, but we don't make time, we take time. We take time from some things to give to other things. When I first established a daily prayer time with Jesus, I got up 20 minutes earlier every day. I took time from sleep in order to spend time with God.

When a Christmas party invite comes in, you take time from chores, or from TV, or from somewhere else in order to have time for the party. We all do this. We take time from some of what we are already doing and use that time for what is really important to us. So ask yourself, "Is Jesus really important to me?" And if the answer is no, then why not? Aren't you a sinner in need of a savior? We are all sinners. We all need a savior.

We need Jesus. One day we will each stand before God and have to give an accounting for our lives. God is going to ask us, "Why was there no room in your life for Jesus, My Son?"

And it could happen unexpectedly. Some people get a diagnosis of cancer or such and have time to get their affairs in order. They have time to make peace with God. But plenty of people die without warning. Some died unexpectedly this weekend, as we saw on the news. Life changes quickly.

Thursday night my wife and I were out running errands ahead of the deep cold coming Friday morning. I had just filled the car with gas when the car alarm went off. Neither of our remotes would stop it. I couldn't turn the engine on with the key. One of my first thoughts was, "Oh, no. Not here. Not now. In this cold, wait for a tow truck, disconnect the battery to get the alarm off. What a mess. I don't have time for this."

Fortunately, I hit the right button in the vehicle to turn off the alarm and everything was back to normal. But it was scary for a few moments. And the point is that life changes just that fast. Just that fast, one day you will find yourself standing before our holy God and having to answer why you made no room for Jesus.

It may be that you struggle to make room for Jesus all year long. Well here is a benefit for doing so now, today, this week. If you can take time for Jesus in the midst of a busy December, you'll know you can do it all year round. All your excuses will fall flat from here on out.

We take the time for the people who are really important to us. You were really important to Jesus. He died for you too. He made known to you your need for a Savior. Now is the time to make room in your heart and life for Jesus.

Make room for Jesus today. Make room for Jesus tomorrow.

I recommend you **Start your day with Jesus.** (15-20 minutes) If this is a new habit for you, and especially if you are getting up earlier to do so, start with about 15-20 minutes. Take the time from sleep or email or from watching the TV news.

Greet Him.

Affirm who He is, the sovereign creator of the universe.

Submit yourself to Him, speaking of your commitment to His will.

Thank Him for the blessings of life and His love. Include all kinds of blessings: physical, emotional, relationships, spiritual, including a Savior.

Ask Him for understanding as you read the Bible.

Read the Bible. Do not read too fast. Don't set goals for reading. Read until something catches your attention. Stop and ask what caught your attention. Meditate on it, cogitate on it. **Ask questions of it.**

What do I learn about God here?

What do I learn about people here?

Does it describe a sin?

In what ways might I be guilty of this sin?

If the Holy Spirit convicts you of this sin, confess your guilt to God.

Then ask God, "How do I need to repent of this? What practical steps do I need to take?" And then think it through.

Finally, **Ask Jesus to lead your life this day**, including the steps of repentance you just discovered.

Then all day: pray each activity.

Dedicate each task to Him.

Thank Him for blessings experienced throughout the day.

To make room for Jesus is to make Jesus first in our life, in our time, not last. We should give Jesus the first of our day, not the leftovers. Instead, make a reservation for Jesus at the beginning of each day. Make an appointment with Him. Make room for Jesus. Things will change in you and your life if you do.