

Text: Luke 2:6,7

Theme: Do You Have Room?

Date: December 25, 2022 (Christmas Day)

In the name of Jesus, who stands at the door of our hearts and knocks this Christmas Day, Dear Christian friends,

The bad guy

In every story there seems to be a bad guy. There are bad guys in Christmas stories, too. In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the bad guy, for a time, was Ebenezer Scrooge. Dr. Seuss wrote about another bad guy – the Grinch who almost stole Christmas. Even when it comes to the Christmas story of Luke 2, some might conclude that there was a bad guy in this story as well. Who is he? Well, allegedly, he was the innkeeper who wouldn't let the baby Jesus have a room for the night. Whether or not there was an innkeeper that night in Bethlehem, the message was clear, "Sorry, you can't stay here, there's no room! You'll have to find some other place to spend the night." So, Mary and Joseph made their way to a place where cattle stay.

The real innkeepers

Actually, we don't know that there ever was such an innkeeper when Jesus was born. But it doesn't really matter because the real innkeepers in the Christmas story are you and me. The real Jesus is looking for a place to stay not only on this Christmas Day but on every day of the year. The Bible says that he wants to enter our hearts by faith and remain in our lives not just for a few hours or days through the Christmas season, but throughout the entire year. The real question that God's Word asks of us today is, "Do you have room in your heart for Jesus to stay or will you turn Jesus away after lights and garland, and presents and wrapping paper are gone?" As we listen to the familiar Christmas story from Luke chapter two, let us all ask ourselves that very real spiritual question: "Do I have room for Jesus?" As we ponder that thought, we ask ourselves, 1) Do I have room for Jesus' Words? 2) Do I have room for worshiping Jesus all year long? 3) And finally, do I have room for sharing Jesus with others?

1. Do I have room for his Word?

Every word matters

As we read the Christmas story from Luke 2 and hear the names of people like Caesar Augustus and Quirinius or places like Syria, Nazareth, Galilee, Judea, Bethlehem, have you ever wondered how they all relate to God's plan of salvation and the birth of Jesus? **Who are these people and where are these places?** Why did God include them in his Word? Why not just skip over them and get to the heart of the story – Jesus' birth? While we may be tempted to just quickly read through these words without much thought, God wants us to know that every word in the Bible is from God and important for our salvation. Including names like Quirinius and places like Galilee. These words teach us that God directed world events so that the promises in his Word would come true where and when he determined. Caesar Augustus may have ruled the Roman Empire, but God ruled Caesar Augustus. At that time Mary and Joseph lived in the city of Nazareth in the region of Galilee some 60-70 miles north of Bethlehem. It was no coincidence that God caused Caesar to order a census of the entire Roman world. This census would take Mary and Joseph on a journey south to the little town of Bethlehem. For God had promised 450 years earlier through the prophet Micah that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem. "But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will rule over Israel" (Micah 5:2). When it comes to hearing and appreciating the Christmas story of Bethlehem, every word of God is of great worth to our salvation.

Room for Jesus means room for his Word

As Christmas Day worshipers we need to ask, "Do I have room for Jesus this Christmas?" As ones who sit in church on Christmas Day, it may seem like a question that has an obvious answer, "Yes, I have room for Jesus!" But there's so much more to this question than just a simple answer on Christmas Day. The question "Do I have room for Jesus?" really implies a much deeper and more meaningful question. "Do I have room for Jesus' Words in my heart?" Trust in Jesus Christ and trust in his Word go hand in hand and cannot be separated. "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). Making room for Jesus is making room for every word of promise he has ever given us.

Words of truth and comfort

Do we have room for his Words that assure us of sins forgiven when we struggle with the guilt of our sin? Do we have room for his Word of promise in the midst of the struggles of life in a sinful world?

- Words of promise that assure us our times are in God's hands,
- that we are never alone for he is always with us,
- that comfort us in knowing that God never punishes believers for sin, but loves and cares for us as his children.

When our hearts don't have room for Jesus and his words of promise, then our lives are plagued with doubt and fear. Then it's easy to question God's loving care for our bodies and souls. **Making room for Jesus, means making room all year long for his Word of truth and comfort.**

Room for Jesus' Word

Do you have room for Jesus this Christmas? Do you have a place for him to stay this year? If so, then you will have room for his Word. You will make room in your busy schedule for studying your Bible at home and in Bible class, for reading daily devotions like *Meditations*, and for coming to church to hear this word. If you have room for Jesus, there will naturally be room for his Word at home with your children. **When you have room in your heart for Jesus, then you will be like Mary and ponder his words over and over in your heart.**

2. Do I have room for worshipping Jesus all year long?

Room for worshipping Jesus is not seasonal

There is another way to find out how much room you have in your heart for Jesus. If there is room in your heart for Jesus, then there will be room for worshipping him throughout the year. How familiar is the scene that during the Christmas season many make room for Jesus by coming to worship. But shortly after the Christmas season is over, it becomes clear that having room for Jesus by coming to worship isn't as high a priority as it was during the Christmas season. Multitudes of people fill churches at Christmas but in the weeks that follow, the number of worshipers falls off dramatically. Faith congregation is no exception. If we have room for Jesus on Christmas Day, a faithful follower of Jesus will have room for worshipping him next week and every week throughout the year.

- If we only have room for Jesus once or twice a year, then we have to wonder if we are only pretending to have room for Jesus at all.
- If we have room for Jesus on Christmas Day but for the rest of the year our work comes first, our busy schedules come first, our kid's activities and sporting events come first, or even sleep comes first, then we have to wonder if we are the ones who send Jesus out into the cold of night.

The shepherds had room in their heart to worship Jesus

Do you have room for Jesus in your heart? As you ponder your answer, consider the shepherds in the Christmas story. They listened to the Word of God as it was announced to them by the angels. Having heard that Word of God, they left their work behind and went to church, you might say, to worship Jesus. It was their highest priority! They left their work, their possessions – their sheep – in the fields so that they could go and see Jesus and make room in their hearts for him. They worshiped Jesus at his place, they bowed their knees before him, and they had room in their busy schedule for Jesus. Worshipping Jesus was their number one priority. When you worship Jesus, God takes care of the other things in your life. Isn't that what he promises? *"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you as well"* (Matthew 6:33).

Others had room in their heart to worship Jesus

The shepherds weren't the only ones in the Christmas story who had room for Jesus. Simeon and Anna were both in the temple worshipping when Jesus was brought there. Even the wise men traveled hundreds of miles just to worship Jesus and present him with thank offerings. In all of the Bible there is not one example of a believer in Jesus who did not have room in his or her heart to worship Jesus. Do you have room for Jesus? If you have room for Jesus, you will make room for worshipping him. **When you have room in your heart for Jesus Christ, you have room for worshipping him in church.**

3. Do I have room for sharing Jesus with others?

Room in your heart to share Jesus

There is still one more way to tell if you have room for the Savior in your heart this Christmas. The Bible says of the shepherds: **WHEN THEY HAD SEEN HIM, THEY SPREAD THE WORD CONCERNING WHAT HAD BEEN TOLD THEM ABOUT THIS CHILD.** The shepherds had time for telling others the Savior had been born. So did Simeon. His song testified to others when he said, *"I'm ready to die in peace."* So did Anna. She spread the word throughout Jerusalem. *"Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks"* (Luke 6:45). When you have room for Jesus in your heart, you can't help but speak to others about him. So, who is it that the Lord has placed into your life that needs to hear about Jesus from you: a parent, a child, a neighbor or dear friend, maybe a co-worker? **Make room in your heart for Jesus by sharing him with others.**

Jesus made room for you and me

Having the desire to make room for Jesus today, next week and throughout the year, doesn't come from the presents under the tree, or the garland and lights, but it comes from the manger in Bethlehem, the cross of Calvary and the empty Easter tomb.

- **Jesus has made room for you and me** in the mansions of heaven by becoming one of us in the flesh, by living a perfect life in our place, by dying the death that our sin brought about.
- **Jesus has made room for you and me** by cleansing us from every sin, by removing our guilt before a holy God, and by enduring the punishment of hell for us.
- **Jesus has made room for you and me** by rising from the grave and giving us this word of promise, *"Because I live, you also will live."*

Room for us in Jesus' heart of love isn't limited to a day on the calendar, nor is it sporadic throughout the year. Because Jesus' love for us is given in full measure every day of the year, we in turn will have room for Jesus every day of our lives. *"We love, because he first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). **We have room for Jesus because he first had room for us.**

Conclusion

While we don't know anything about an innkeeper who may or may not have turned Mary and Joseph and Jesus away on that first Christmas, we do know that Jesus is saying to each of us from his Word in the Bible, *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock"* (Revelation 3:20). Do you have room for Jesus? May the Holy Spirit continue to open our hearts for Jesus today and every day by making room for his words, room for worshipping him, and room for sharing him with others. Amen.