

Sunday Morning Message

December 24, 2017

Making Room for Jesus This Christmas

Text for Today's Message – Luke 2:1 - 20

Congregational Reading – Luke 2:6 - 7

2,000 years ago, the King of Glory passed through this earth, entering in the form of a Baby, living as a man, dying an excruciatingly painful death at the age of 33, and because death could not hold on to Him, he rose again the third day; and, the world has never been the same. The Christmas Story marks the beginning of the earthly journey of the Lord Jesus: his very humble beginning in a lowly manger in a very insignificant little town called Bethlehem.

Now, we would all have to admit that Christmas has been ruined and perverted by an unbelieving world. It seems that Praise has given way to Party, the Savior has given way to Santa, Glory has been exchanged for Gifts and that Bows have been replaced by Bows. But, I would like to remind you today that the Christmas season is a whole lot more than boxes, bows and ribbons. It is more than trees, tinsel and lights. It is certainly more than reindeer, rooftops and Ho, Ho, Ho's. I know full well that people are going to do as they please and they are going to follow all their little Christmas traditions, but I would like to remind everyone under the sound of my voice today that It Wasn't Santa Claus Who Came to Town that first Christmas. Allow me to refresh your memory about what really happened that first Christmas day.

I. A PROVIDENTIAL DECREE (vs. 1 – 5)

Caesar Augustus issued his decree for the taxing, not as a lucky coincidence that resulted in Jesus being born in Bethlehem. Neither was it a mere inconvenience for the people of Israel. Rather, it was divine providence that caused this imperial decree.

A. The Promise – Micah 5:2

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2)

Micah declared that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem! This promise was given 700 years before the birth of Christ and foretold His birthplace.

Many in Jesus' lifetime did not understand:

"And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see." (John 1:46)

"Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" (John 7:41-42)

B. **The Problem** – The prophet said Messiah would come from Bethlehem, but Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth. It probably never entered into their minds to go to Bethlehem. Travel was hard and treacherous in those days. An 80-mile trip would have been terribly hard on an expectant mother. Joseph was of the house of David (Luke 1:27) Bethlehem was the city of David. God arranged all these things to ensure that His Son would be born in the right place at the right time.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," (Galatians 4:4)

He even used a pagan emperor – Caesar Augustus - to do His will)

II. A PROMISED DELIVERY (vs. 6 – 7)

A. **The Place of His Birth** – Illustration - The manger, a feeding trough. The King of Kings was born in a manger! Why? Two Reasons.

1.) The immediate reason: That some old shepherds might find Him.

2.) The eternal reason: That some old sinners might be able to identify with Him and approach Him for salvation!

No room in the Inn – Speaks of the rest of His life: – John 1:11:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11)

Many still have no room for Him in their lives today! Do you?

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1:12)

B. **The Picture in His Birth** – Illustration - Swaddling Clothes – Swaddling = "bandage".

These baby wraps prefigure His death and burial. Why did Jesus come? He came to die for you and me!

C. **The Purpose in His Birth**

"And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced." (John 19:37)

The purpose in this birth was the salvation of the soul of man. Jesus was a baby born to die. He had been the expectation of mankind since the fall in the Garden of Eden:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15).

Every lamb, ram, goat, bird, etc., that had been sacrificed down through the ages pointed to this special birth. He is why: Noah built an Ark, Abraham built an Altar, Moses built a Tabernacle, Solomon built a Temple, God built a hill called Calvary! He came down to be our Savior.

III. A POWERFUL DISPLAY (vs. 8 – 20)

In the birth of Jesus, the power of God was on parade before the eyes of men.

A. **The Power of God's Grace** (vs. 8 – 12) – Illustration - Shepherds were outcast by society as vile and filthy; outcast by religion as defiled and unfit to worship. However, they were chosen by Almighty God to hear the first birth announcement. How appropriate that the very men who raised the lambs for the Temple sacrifices were the first to meet the Lamb of God. God came there first because of pure grace.

B. **The Power of God's Glory** (vs. 13 – 14) – The pure praise of the angels. They praised Him because they are programmed to. We should praise Him because of who He is and what He has done for our souls! The angels praised God at Creation (Job 38:7); as they beheld His wonderful works, they praised Him (Revelation 7:11-12). Now, when they see God step off the throne and be born as a baby in human flesh, their song reaches new heights. If they can praise Him for what they can see God do, then we should praise Him for what He has done in our hearts. The psalmist said:

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." (Psalm 40:1-2)

C. **The Power of God's Gift** (vs. 15 – 20) – The shepherds came and worshipped the baby and were forever changed by their meeting with Jesus. They came out of curiosity and left rejoicing in the glory of eternal life. They came wondering what they would find, and they left witnessing about the One who had found them. The power of God in changing lives is glorious.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV)

Conclusion: What are you looking for this Christmas? If it is some material thing that you are dying for, then you will probably be disappointed, even if you get it. If, however, you are seeking the Christ of Christmas, you will never be disappointed. He is still found of all who seek

Him, and He still changes all who meet Him. No, it wasn't Santa Claus who came to town that first Christmas. It was Jesus! He is still here, looking for all who have room for Him in their lives.

You Can Have My Room

Wally was nine years old and in the second grade, though he should have been in the fourth. He was big and clumsy, slow in movement and mind, but well-liked by the other children in class, all of whom were smaller than he.

At times the boys did have trouble hiding their irritation when the uncoordinated Wally would ask to play ball with them. He would stand by, not sulking but hoping. Always a helpful boy, willing, and smiling, the natural protector of any child he felt was being mistreated.

As Christmas time approached, plans were made for the annual school pageant. Children were being assigned their parts: angels, shepherds, wise men, Mary, and Joseph. Wally stood by expectantly then suddenly his joy knew no bounds; for he heard the teacher say, "Wally, I want you to be the Innkeeper." (Not many lines to learn, she reasoned and his size would make his refusal of lodging to Joseph more forceful.) Little did that teacher dream the lesson that such a tender-hearted boy would teach to all who would attend that program.

Then came the rehearsals with the manger, beards, crowns, and a stage full of squeaky voices. Most caught up in the magic of the night was Wally. He would stand in the wings, watching the performance with fascination. His teacher had to make sure he did not wander on-stage before his cue.

Then came the long-awaited night and Wally stood holding a lantern by the door of the Inn, watching as the children who portrayed Mary and Joseph came near him.

"What do you want?" Wally asked with a brusque gesture.

"We seek lodging."

"Seek it elsewhere. The inn is filled."

"Sir, we have asked everywhere in vain. We have traveled far and are very weary."

"There is no room in this inn for you." Wally looked properly stern.

"Please, good innkeeper, this is my wife. She is heavy with child and needs a place to rest. Surely you must have some small corner for her. She is so tired."

Now, for the first time, the Innkeeper relaxed his stiff stance and looked down at Mary. With that, there was a long pause and the audience became a bit tense.

"No! Be gone!" the prompter whispered from the wing of the stage.

"No! Be gone!" Wally repeated automatically.

Joseph sadly placed his arms around Mary and Mary laid her head upon her husband's shoulder, and the two of them started to move away. The Innkeeper did not return inside his inn, however.

Wally stood there in the doorway, watching the forlorn couple. His mouth was open, his brow creased with concern, his eyes filling unmistakably with tears.

And suddenly this Christmas pageant became different from all others.

"Don't go, Joseph," Wally called out. "Bring Mary back." And Wally's face grew into a bright smile. "You can have my room!"

A burst of laughter then silence, then tears flowed freely as the message came through to the listeners. Wally, the boy considered 'slow' had made room for Jesus. He could not turn Mary and Joseph away. God's only begotten Son would be welcomed by him! His tender heart had made room for the Saviour.

Have YOU made room for Him Who loved you so much that He died on the cross for your sin? If not, why don't you right now, like Wally, make room in your heart for Jesus, then give Him first place in your life? He is standing at your heart's door. Just invite Him in.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him..." (Revelation 3:20)