

Remnant Life Church
November 25, 2018
Is There Room in Your Inn?
Luke 2:1-7

- Over the next several weeks, leading to our Christmas service, look a little closer at the those who were a bit more in the background of the story of the birth of Jesus.
- This season, when you consider it, is a strange one
 - People are affected so differently
 - Many can't wait for Christmas time as it evokes memories of childhood, of family members long gone, and traditions that warm our hearts and give us a good feeling in the midst of the cold and early darkness of each day
 - Others dread it knowing that routines are disrupted, the simple everyday tasks are made harder, and January brings the credit card statements that tell us we once again overspent even though we swear every year that it will not happen again.
 - And then some ignore it as best they can and carry on with little or no fanfare
 - Of course, there is a 4th group who I know are sitting in here this morning
 - These people recognize that underneath the lights, the insanity of the advertising we are subjected to, and the crush of 450 brand new Hallmark Channel Christmas movies, is the meaning of something of eternal significance and value
 - Jesus was not born in, what on our calendar, would be December or even the winter
 - He was born most likely in the early weeks of April, certainly the spring, as the shepherds had lambs to attend to in addition to the main flock of sheep
- The Christmas story and the birth of Jesus is utilized in virtually every Bible-teaching church around the world
 - Joseph, Mary, and of course, Jesus are at the forefront of every story
 - But there were others who also played a part, and I would like to look at some of them over the next few weeks leading to our Christmas service on Sunday, December 23.

READ – Luke 2:1-7

- If you read through the prophecies of Jesus' birth found in the OT we see that God promised several things. Jesus would be...
 - A human, not angelic
 - A Jew, not a gentile
 - From the tribe of Judah, the 4th of Isaac's 12 sons who comprised the nation of Israel
 - From the family line of David – specific and precise
 - Born in the City of David which is Bethlehem – exact location in that region

- Born to a virgin – a physical impossibility
- But of all the prophetic words spoken, some of them 700 years before it happened, none indicated the physical surroundings in which He would be born
- There are many scholars who cannot agree on the type of “stable” that was the shelter for Jesus’ birth
 - Some say a barn type structure built away from the main building for the animals – the majority of nativity scenes
 - Others that it was part of the lower area of a structure with living quarters above
 - Still many insist it was a cave or dug out area of a cliff that sheltered animals
- What we do know is that it was not a clean, sterile, carefully prepared environment
- How did they even end up there?
 - Joseph and Mary are betrothed (explain the marriage process of that day)
 - She is found to be pregnant before their time of living together (laws of the day regarding such an event)
 - The ruler of Rome, Caesar Augustus, has called for a census to be taken so that taxes could be collected from everyone
 - Caesar Augustus was the first emperor of the Roman Empire
 - Considered by many to be the greatest in large part due to the power and wealth of Rome
 - That came through two means – military conquest and taxation of the people
 - Joseph lived in Nazareth but had to get to Bethlehem a distance of approx. 80 miles in a straight line
 - But they would have had to use familiar roads, avoided dangerous areas, accounted for a man probably in his late 30s to early 40s, as well as a young woman in the late stages of her final month of pregnancy
 - A 4-day trip probably took at least a week
 - Why was it necessary for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem?
 - To fulfill the truth of God’s Word through the OT prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Psalms, Zechariah, and Micah)
 - *Micah 5:2 - But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*
 - 700 years before it took place
 - The sovereignty of God works in perfect precision to weave His eternal ways through individuals and events to accomplish His will and purpose.
 - He did that on the first Christmas...and He is still doing it today.
- What do we know about Bethlehem?
 - It is found throughout the Bible but is called Ephrathah, Ephrath, and the City of David
 - It is where Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin was buried
 - It is where Samuel anointed David to be king of Israel
 - It became the home of Ruth after she settled having arrived from Moab

- Bethlehem means “house of bread.”
 - What better place for the bread of life to be born than Bethlehem?
- Because everyone throughout the entire Roman empire was required to return to their homes, the town of Bethlehem was packed with people
 - Now Joseph was, by all accounts, a very typical man
 - Meaning he never stopped to ask for directions on the trip
 - And he didn’t call ahead to make reservations
 - He tried the local inn
 - Don’t think of this as a hotel along the way that made people comfortable and refreshed
 - An inn during that time was merely a stopover and only transients, travelers, and aliens used it
 - If Joseph still had relatives or friends there, they would have stayed with them
 - The inn may have been nothing more than a large room crowded with people
- Unfortunately, the innkeeper may very well have experienced one of several responses to Joseph, Mary, and Jesus that are still all too common today – (the letter I)

1. Indifference

- a. Most people today have no open animosity toward Jesus, just no room in their lives for Him
- b. The self-revolving schedules make it so that we wear ourselves out for 6 days of the week
- c. Rather than adjust our schedules we justify staying home and sleeping in on Sunday because “I just have to have a little bit of time for myself!”
- d. And so, we rob God of the little time that He asks for our undivided attention (not those here today)
- e. Yet we still complain and can’t figure out why we don’t have the peace, guidance, and comfort that the Bible says is ours as followers of Jesus

2. Ignorance

- a. The innkeeper just may not have known to look for the Christ-child
- b. How many, in our lives, don’t know of the love of God shown through the gift of His Son?
- c. It remains our responsibility to tell the people in our lives that Jesus loves them
- d. Show them the love of God in what we do, how we act, what we say.
- e. Do you demonstrate a heart that is the dwelling place of the Christ-child or is the inn of your heart too filled with the things of the world including the importance of having your own way?
- f. God is not hiding from anyone
 - i. [Jer. 29:13](#) - *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

3. Involved

- a. This is an easy one, isn't it?
- b. Very simply, are you too busy for God?
- c. Can you conceive of not having the TV, the computer, your phone, the radio constantly on and demanding your attention?
- d. [Psalm 46:10](#) – *Be still, and know that I am God...*

4. Indulgent

- a. I'm sure the innkeeper was very concerned about his bottom line and taking advantage of the events.
- b. No late-arriving peasants from the backwater town of Nazareth were going to make him any richer
- c. His business was about profit and compassion gets in the way of profit
- d. We may not be that aggressive or overt in our expression as we seek to be prosperous, but we must always keep in mind what the Bible tells us about that pursuit
 - i. Paul's warnings to Timothy for him to teach
 1. [1 Tim 6:10](#) - *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*
 - ii. Jesus tells the parable of the rich fool -
 1. [Luke 12:20](#) - *"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'*

- Phillip Brooks

- Episcopal pastor and teacher in the mid to late 1800's
- Wrote the words to "O Little Town of Bethlehem"
- The rector of Trinity Church in Boston

Christ comes with His love to the great, roomy, hospitable human heart. But the hospitality-not so wise as lavish-has it not already been more than wasted on a host of unwise and ill-worthy claimants, so that when the heart's Master comes there is no room to spare? And so daily is the scene of Bethlehem repeated. He comes unto His own, but his own received Him not. The world is too full for Christ, and the heart too crowded for its Savior."

How do we make room for Jesus?

1. Give Him first place again in your life

- a. That means some adjustments will probably need to be made
- b. Things that are a common, comfortable part of your life might need to be let go
- c. [Rev 3:20](#) - *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*
- d. We tend to focus almost exclusively on Jesus knocking on the door
- e. We must also see that the door must be opened

- f. Any closets or rooms so cluttered that you have a hard time even getting the door open?
 - g. That very well could be your heart this morning, and it is keeping Jesus outside
- 2. Make room for Him for the first time**
- a. Are you here this morning and you have never asked Jesus to come into your heart?
 - b. This doesn't mean you are a bad person or do bad things, but the Bible says none of our good works save us from our sins
 - c. Jesus came as a child, but He is coming back as a King

Luke 2:7 - ...she wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger...

- Newborns in that day would be wrapped tightly in strips of linen for warmth and protection
 - This was a sign of a mother's affection and care for her child
 - It kept the baby warm but also protected its very delicate and sensitive skin from cuts and abrasions
- Well shepherds would also often wrap newborn baby lambs in the same way and for the same reasons
 - The angel told the shepherds in the field that night to look for a sign that would have been familiar to them
 - There are some scholars who believe it may have been possible those shepherds were actually priests who were raising the lambs in preparation for the temple sacrifices
 - The baby lambs were often wrapped to protect them so that they could be presented in the temple as spotless and acceptable for sacrifice
 - Jesus too was wrapped and protected as a baby – even then a symbol of what would be the perfect sacrifice in just 33 shorts years for the sins of the world

My desire for each of you this morning, as we begin to move fully into the Christmas season, is that you make room in your heart for Jesus

- If you have never done that before there could be no better time to receive the greatest gift ever given
- If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, make sure He occupies the first priority of your heart and doesn't just get the leftover time and energy of your life.

Vacancy or No Vacancy – which sign will Jesus see when He knocks on the door of your heart?