

Have you Room for Him?
Luke 2:4-7 ESV
Lord's Day - December 18, 2022

Hear the Word of God from Luke 2:4-7 – ESV

⁴ *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage (family) of David,*

⁵ *to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.*

⁶ *And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.*

⁷ *And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ESV*

We are all familiar with what Jesus' birth was like in the nativity scenes. Sadly, it differs from what the Gospels tell us. One of the distinctive things about Luke's narrative is how simple it contrasts with how great the events are. Luke depicted this most astonishing and amazing and lasting event in a subtle way, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Joseph and Mary come to Bethlehem and Jesus is born there.

Mary a resident of Nazareth in Galilee, betrothed to Joseph, who is also from the same city had every practical reason to give birth to her child in her hometown. Unless absolutely compelled, Mary, along with Joseph, would have not taken this arduous journey of about 80 miles from Nazareth in Galilee to City of David in Judah, called Bethlehem.

What was the reason or compulsion for this journey?

It was a divine plan, essential to prove beyond any doubt that our Lord was born in Judah. It was also necessary for him to be born in Bethlehem-Ephrathah, according to the word of the Lord as spoken by his servant and prophet Micah (5:2) – *'But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me, one who is to be the ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days'.*

You see, God had a promise to keep. He is the promise giver and is the promise keeper. God sovereignly and miraculously carries out his purposes. He works invisibly, but His Salvation work to redeem the world is evidenced in a series of extremely definite and unmistakable phases. To bring his promise to pass, at the fullness of time, he moves a pagan Roman ruler to accomplish His plans. How? Let's read verses 1 and 3-5.

¹ *'In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage (family) of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.*

Thus, our Sovereign God moves Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem by way of taking this arduous journey from Nazareth to fulfil His promise. Jesus Christ is born as promised and moreover, he is recognized officially as being descended from David. So, we see God's providence is even over the place of Jesus' birth, an appointed town (Bethlehem), at an appointed time (during the registration of the world and when the time came for her to give birth) and was placed in an appointed trough (manger) in a stable.

^{7a} *And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger*

The greatest miracle in the history of the world, the eternal Son of God being born as a man, happens quietly in a stable in an obscure village in Judea. Luke's description is very restrained, giving only a very

few details. **Swaddling cloths** - In ancient times strips of cloth were used to wrap babies to keep them warm and secure. **Manger** - a feeding trough for animals, and **'the inn'** is a common lodging place for individual travelers and caravans.

Jesus, though he was wrapped in swaddling cloths which was the norm of the day to keep him warm, I think he was poorly clothed. Think with me, it might be normal to wrap any child with the kind of cloths that are norm of the day.

But Jesus, the Son of God, king of kings and Lord of Lords, the Savior of the world, born as a man, sinless – he should have been clothed in a purple robe, but we see he was wrapped in swaddling cloths; Jesus being King of Kings, he should have been born in a palace, but we see he was born in a stable and laid in a manger, not in the house, not even in proper lodging.

Pondering on this simplicity or lowliness of our Lord Jesus' birth was profitable to me. I'm sure it will be to you as well in the few minutes we have before us this morning.

There could be many reasons for Jesus, the Son of God 's lowly birth, but for our edification this morning, let's review a few observations. In verse 7a - *"And wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger"*

1. To display his humility or rather the degree of his humiliation:

- The prophet, Isaiah prophesied 850 years before Christ, the suffering servant, we read in *Isaiah 53:2-3* – *"He was like a young plant, like a root of the dry ground", "He had no form or majesty", "no beauty", "he was despised and rejected", "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"*
- Gospel according to *John 1:11* – *"He came to his own, and his own did not receive him."*
- Jesus, the Son of God, knew the kind of death he must endure to accomplish the task for which he descended from heaven. The one who was to be crucified on the cross, stripped out of clothing, would he rather preferred a royal robe at his birth? – *"He has no form or majesty", "no beauty"*
- Jesus, who was to be buried in a borrowed tomb, would he rather preferred that his birth be at any choicest palace, than in the lowliest of the available place – in the most unexpected manner? – *"like a root of the dry ground"*
- Jesus, laid in a manger (as there was no room in the inn) and the cross where he died, outside the city on Golgotha, would be the two extremities, seem most fitting, in revealing the degree of his humility and not only at his birth and death, but also reflected in his life, that he wore a seamless garment, he associated with the lowliest of men (fishermen), who were his disciples and rested outside in mountains and once in the open when traveling in a boat. *Luke 9:57-58* – *"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head"*
- Being wrapped in swaddling cloths and being laid in a manger, because there was no room in the inn reveals in reflection how he will be wrapped in linen cloth, and that he would be placed in a borrowed tomb, where no one had yet been laid – *Luke 23:53*. (so that birth and burial mirror each other?)
- Nothing could be more appropriate than for him to be laid in a manger during his period of humiliation to set aside his splendor (emptied himself). *Philippians 2:6-8* – *"laid aside his glory and took the form of a servant, in the likeness of men, in the human form"*

2. To declare he is for the lowliest of the peoples:

Finding the baby Jesus, lying in the manger, Jesus declared that he is the king of the poor. It was evident his relationship to the shepherds, because from the position in which they found him just as the angels made known to them, very specific sign concerning them, we read that in verse 12 - *"And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."*

One can imagine the degree of their excitement in the minds of the poor shepherds, and their inexpressible awe filled with joy, when the angel announced, *“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy”* while tending their sheep out in the hills, far outside from the civilized society where all the people were preoccupied with the latest and the greatest happenings, such as the registration and the booming economy that brought to the cities, people travelling each to their own towns.

A man in costly attire is not appealing to the eyes of the poor, but the one dressed in their own garb attracts their confidence. A leader in order to gain his followers, should present himself to be one of those people he would like to attract, understand their toils, and sympathize in their sufferings and have a genuine interest in all their affairs. The infant king of man who was born in Bethlehem was not spared from the normal calamities of the poor, his was even worse than theirs. We read in verse 17, 18 – *“When they saw Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.”* Verse 20 – *“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.”*

In contrast, Jesus is also for the wisest of the peoples, and even more, to all those who that seek him *Matthew 2:1-2* – *“Behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.””* *Jeremiah 29:13* – *“You will find me when you seek me with all your heart.”* He will be found to all those that seek him.

3. To invite the most needy and humble to come to him for deliverance

Being wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger, Jesus gave an invitation to the most needy and humble to come to him.

- In fulfilling the prophesy as spoken by *Zechariah 9:9* – *“Behold your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey”* had we first saw the King who is meek and lowly, riding upon a colt, the foal of a donkey, through the Jerusalem’s streets in a stately manner, on the cloaks of the crowd, spread in front of him, and as the crowd strew His way with palm branches, and sang His sweet praises, resounding all the day Hosannas, we could have assumed though even that assumption would have been incorrect, that he was unapproachable.
- He had no guards around him to push away the most needy, the sick, the lame, the blind, and the humble people to come to him with petitions, nor his disciples who are friends of Jesus, who is their Master, did not object the desperate women who had been challenged with infirmity to touch the fringe of Jesus or the ruler of the synagogue who approached him, falling at Jesus’ feet begged for the life of his only daughter – *Luke 8:40-56*. The only time when the disciples rebuked the children, *“Jesus called them to him, let the children come to me, do not hinder them”* – *Luke 18:15-17*. He himself had a hand always ready to touch many and delivered them from all their infirmities. Jesus said, *“Whoever comes to me I will never cast out”* – *John 6:37*
- His ministry was available freely for all, the same way our Lord Jesus Christ, being laid in a manger, in the inn’s stable, was free and for all. Likewise, the gospel is preached freely to all men, and no one is excluded. Gospel is not restricted to only a choicest few, gospel is not limited to a few castes, or creeds, but for all. He is the Savior of the world. Jesus Christ is the Lord of all.
- And it was said of Jesus, *“This man received sinners and eats with them”* – *Luke 15:2*, the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to him. And to you, Jesus says, *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I’ll give you rest”* – *Matthew 11:28*, also he says *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink”* – *John 7:37*. Jesus invites and welcomes all.
- How does it matter to the poor, the needy, the sick, and the outcasts, if Jesus was born in a palace and wrapped in royal robes? To approach any earthly throne might bring fear to you, but there is no fear in approaching a Savior lying in a manger. The one *“who dwells in an unapproachable light”* – *1 Timothy*

6:16 condescended in to flesh and being laid in a manger invited the most-needy and the humble to come to him.

- Low in the manger he lay, the Savior of the Word, the Prince of Peace, made himself approachable to all. He invites and welcomes each of you individually and every one of you. Why do you wait? Come, and behold him, kneel, and bow before him, touch and kiss him, the God incarnate Son, accept him as your Savior.

So far, we have seen a few compelling reasons for Christ's lowly display at the time of his birth. They are 1. To display the degree of his humility; 2. To identify that is for the lowliest of the people; 3. To invite the most needy and the humble to come to him for deliverance.

The later part of verse seven - ^{7b} ... "*because there was no place for them in the inn*", gives insight into one more observation. The text implies that there were other places besides the inn in Bethlehem, which had no room for Christ.

There are other places that did not have a room for Christ:

- Friends and Family had no room for Christ. It's a possibility that Joseph might have had his relatives, Bethlehem being his own town, but we do not see a record of it, nor we do not know if Joseph's request had been denied, but we can safely assume that could be the case, because of the scandalous way Mary became pregnant during the betrothed time and before the marriage and this could bring shame to the family that provides a place for them and might get them potentially excommunicated.
- Kingdoms and palaces have no room for Christ. Palaces of emperors and kings cannot afford to host a royal stranger. Hardly there is any place for Christ in the palaces. Jesus is prince of peace, but they are for war. The earthly kings and their kingdoms cannot host the Heavenly King. If Jesus were to be born in a palace, he would have brought heaven down. Earthly kings lack righteousness and justice to host the Righteous King.
- The other places where there was no place for Christ - Local commerce, Jewish synagogues, Sanhedrin and schools, etc

Currently, in our day

- Nations and Governments have no room for Christ
- Politics have no room for Christ
- Neighborhoods, communities, and street corners have no room for Christ
- Educational institutions have no room for Christ

And before I close, I'm sure you agree with me here.

It was not easy for Mary, who was but a teen, to make room to conceive and to give birth to Jesus, the Holy Son of God. It was a shameful thing for Mary to conceive a child before marriage. Mary was not carrying her child, not even Joseph's child, but God the Son. Mary endured the shame, pain and suffering to become the means and prepared a room for Christ, to bring forth the heaven's gift of Salvation to the world, that is for you and for me.

Likewise, **it was not easy for Joseph** to continue his commitment with his betrothed and soon to be wife Mary, who was conceived by the power of the Most High. But he willed to do, what the angel of the Lord commanded him in a dream and assisted Mary in this arduous journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, risking the shame, and the wrath of his people. Yet, he made a room for Jesus, the Savior of the World.

Remember there was no room in the inn for them, and so the text implies not only the inn was full, but the stable would have been at full capacity with **animals** that were used for transportation, exhausted from the day's journey. Yet the animals made a room for Jesus to be laid in a manger.

Let me also remind you that if you have room for Christ, then the world has no room for you.

The later part of verse seven – “for there was no place for them.”

There was no room for Mary, the mother and, no room for Joseph, the reputed father, and no room for baby Jesus, yet they made room for God and obeyed as commanded. Jesus said in *Mark 3:35* – “*For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother, sister and mother.*” Likewise, there is no room in the world for the one who does the will of God, the true follower of Christ.

As Christ's disciples and as true followers of Christ:

- There is no room for you in the world, to sit back and relax and be satisfied with your own comforts in luxury, with your achievements or with all kinds of goods of this world. Instead, you must press on forward in the journey as Christ's followers, and as his servants fulfilling God's purposes. **Have you room for Him?**
- There is no room for you to hide your treasures in the world. Jesus said in *Matthew 6:19-21* – “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay-up yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*” **Have you room for Him?**
- There is no room for you to love the world. If you think that everyone would love you and appreciate you for your actions, applaud you for your deeds, then you are gravely mistaken. Do not forget, the world says, I have no room for a man who has Christ.
 - *1 John 2:15* – “*If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*”
 - *Luke 6:26* – “*Woe to you, when all people speak well of you.*”
 - *John 17:16* – “*You are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*”
 - *Luke 9:23* – “*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*” **Have you room for Him?**

Christian, do not let the hardships, difficulties, and sufferings (of any kind) of the world distract you, but let the sufferings draw you close to Him, Jesus Christ and being mindful, as the author of *Hebrews* reminds us *12:1-2* - “*let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and the perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*” There is no consolation and comfort for you in the world, but Jesus is your only comfort, consolation, and strength for endurance in this race, to the finish. **Have you room for Him?** If so, prepare Him room.

If you do not have room for Christ, let me remind/plead with you

- The apostle Paul's reasoning for why Jesus was born into a humble and impoverished household, in a little town of no prominence or importance? Why wasn't there a room for the family in the inn? In his *2 letter to the Corinthians 8:9* – “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*” **Have you room for Him?**
- *John 4:42* – “*Jesus, indeed is the savior of the World*”. **Have you room for the Him?**
- *1 John 1:19* – “*If we confess, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins*” – **Have you room for Him?**

Let there be no excuse that hinders you to answer the question today. Never mind of what your past has been; he is willing to forgive you and not remember your sin. If you have but room for him, let him in, he will come and be your guest. Do not say, not today. *Psalm 95:7-8 – “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”* and again in *2 Corinthians 6:2 – “Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”* – **Have you room for Him?**

As the words of the song reminds us, ‘Hear the knock, don’t say there is no room in the inn, through the cradle, cross and grave, see the love of God displayed. Now He’s risen and He reigns. Prepare Him room, Prepare Him room, let the King of glory enter in’.

May the Spirit of God help us to prepare Him room. Amen!