

## Prepare Him Room

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### Introduction:

- Socrates – “Beware of the barrenness of a busy life.”
- When we run into an old friend and ask how they’re doing, they often reply “busy.”
- It’s not that we’re busy. We’re too busy.
- We’re living at 100 mph in a 45 mph speed zone.
- This series I’ve entitled “Make Him Room” is not just about Christmas, though Christmas reminds us of the problem.
- It’s a problem we experience year-round – making room for God in our overcrowded lives.
- The Bible indicates Jesus was born during a busy time.
- In our modern times, is there a busier time than Christmas?
- Let’s look at the opening verses of the Christmas story.
- Luke 2:1-7 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she

gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

- Caesar Augustus sent out a decree that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.
- Vs. 3 “And everyone was on his way to register...”
- It kind of sounds like Ashley Park this weekend.
- But it’s not just Christmas. We are busy people living busy lives.
- One person who gets a bad rap in the Christmas story is the innkeeper.
- We don’t even know his name, and he’s actually not mentioned, but he’s one of the bad guys of the Christmas story.
- Luke 2:7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.
- We assume there was an inn keeper. There had to be an inn keeper.
- The concept of an inn is a little off in our minds.
- We think of maybe the Hampton Inn, but this inn in Bethlehem had little similarities.
- The Greek word translated “inn” could be guest room, hostel, or shelter.
- The inn could have been something between a bread and breakfast place to a lean-to with extra sleeping space on the side of someone’s home.
- With Bethlehem being so small, we can assume there was only one public place to spend the night in the small town.
- “There was no room for them in the inn.”
- Whoever turned Mary & Joseph away that night has been villainized, but he or she probably felt like they had no choice.
- Here’s the facts we know about that night.
  - A lot of people came to Bethlehem
  - The one place in town for public lodging was full.
  - Someone must have told Mary & Joseph there was no room left.
  - It would have been highly unusual to give birth without a midwife, but it’s possible they didn’t have time or connections.
  - Mary may have been alone when Jesus was born.

- “And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger...”
- Whether the innkeeper had a choice or not, he/she missed out on the greatest birth of Christmas.
- It’s possible for us still to miss Christmas. Many things can crowd out Christ, and one of those things has been around since the dawn of time: busyness.

## 1. Prioritize

- Henry David Thoreau: “It’s not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is, **what are we busy about?**”
- I don’t meet many people who aren’t busy.
- We don’t know anything about the innkeeper in Bethlehem, but he was busy the night of Christ’s birth.
- It’s ironic that the mother of the Son of God knocked on his door, and in his busyness, he turned her away.
- We can give the guy a pass, but what about us?
- It’s possible to have a busy life that’s not productive.
- Ephesians 5:15-17 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- Making the most of your time = focus on first things
- Robert J. McKain: “The reason most major goals are not achieved is that we spend our time doing second things first.”

- **The priority of loving God.**

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Philippians 3:8-10 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...that I may know Him and the

power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

- **The priority of loving others**

Matthew 22:39 The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

- Loving others should be hardwired into our spiritual DNA

1 John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- **The priority of obeying God.**

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

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- Henry Blackaby: "If Christians around the world were to suddenly renounce their personal agendas, their life goals and their aspirations, and begin responding in radical obedience to everything God showed them. the world would be turned upside down. How do we know? Because that's what first century Christians did, and the world is still talking about it."

- When someone asks how you're doing and you're tempted to say "busy," let that be a challenge to stop and evaluate your life.
- Are your priorities out of sync?
- Is God really your first priority?
- Bruce Leafblad: There is no other cause that is first priority. It is not people, evangelism, discipleship, it isn't even worship. God Himself is the first priority of the church."
- Our schedule might be the dipstick of our spiritual passion.
- Like checking the oil in our cars, we should check our schedule to see what it says about our priorities.
- When we make room for Jesus, we're not just clearing out a spot for Him in our lives. We're clearing out THE spot, the throne of our lives.

## 2. Ponder

Luke 2:19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

- What does it mean to ponder?
- To think about, reflect on, to consider, to weigh in the mind
- We might think of it in terms of dwelling on something.
- Busyness is a thief of pondering.
- If we're not careful, we will find ourselves packing our Christmas decorations and never giving Jesus much thought.
- When is the last time you really pondered?
- A Bible word is meditate.
- The word meditate comes from a Hebrew word describing a cow chewing the cud or the cooing of a dove or purring of a cat.
- A lot of people are good at action and not so good at thought.
- Len Holman: "We have become a nation of thoughtless rushers, intent on **doing before thinking**, and hoping what we do magically works out. If it doesn't, we rush to do something else, something also not well thought-out, and then hope for more magic."

- **Ponder the Word of God.**

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

- You may call it your quiet time or Bible reflection.
- But notice that God didn't just admonish Joshua to have a time of Bible reflection in his day.
- He said we should meditate on it day and night – all the time.

- **Ponder the activity of God.**

- What has God done? What is God doing?
- Interesting throughout Israel's history, God had them build memorials of His activity.
- Exodus 17 we read about Israel's encounter with Amalek.

- In battle, while Moses held up his arms, Israel prevailed.
  - Aaron & Hur
  - Exodus 17:15 Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner.
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  - Spend time alone thinking about what God has done in your life.
  - Think about the true meaning of Christmas.
- **Ponder the purpose of God.**
    - What is God's goal? What is His purpose in the world?
    - Acts 13:36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep...
- **Ponder the course of your life.**
    - James 4:14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.
    - We want the course of our life to be in response to the previous three ponderings: the Word of God, the activity of God, and the purpose of God.
    - We want our actions to be a natural, unthinking response to God's Word, activity, and purpose.

### **3. Participate**

- Participation = joining God in what He is doing in the world.
- Mary decided to join God.
- Luke 1:38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."
- Mary said yes to God, but it was not her first yes. Yes had become a life-pattern for Mary.
- Luke 1:30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.
- We want serving God and honoring God to become commonplace.

- What happens when you repetitively serve the Lord? When participating with God becomes normal?
- When serving God becomes normal, it becomes action without thought, or reaction.
- It becomes automatic
- Tying your shoes used to require a lot of thought. Now, you can tie them while doing other things.

### **Conclusion:**

- I want you to think about these three things in the busyness of the season.
- Busyness will try to snuff these things out, but we conquer busyness by working on these three things:
  - 1 – Priorities – How am I focused on God’s priorities: loving God, loving others, & obeying God?
  - 2 – Pondering What am I doing to ponder God’s Word, activity, & purpose?
  - 3 – Participation – How am I participating with what He is doing in my life & in the world?
- God is calling us this Christmas to make room for Him.
  
- Henry Blackaby: “You cannot stay the way you are and go with God.”

## Make Him Room – Overcoming Busyness

Luke 2:1-7 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. How do you overcome the busyness of the season & of life to honor God?

### 1. Prioritize

Ephesians 5:15-17 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

- **The priority of loving God.**

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Philippians 3:8-10 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

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- **Ponder the activity of God.**

Exodus 17:15 Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner.

- **Ponder the purpose of God.**

Acts 13:36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep...

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What will you do to overcome busyness this Christmas and next year?

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