

Today we continue to reflect the hymn, Joy to the World. I want to share the meaning of the first verse of the hymn. As I shared in the last Sunday, The hymn, Joy to the World, is about Christ's second coming. It doesn't really have anything to do with the Christmas story.

Nevertheless, when we sing the first verse of *Joy to the World*, "Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare him room," it reminds us of the story that Joseph had to seek the room desperately, but there was no room in Bethlehem. Just as Mary and Joseph struggled to find a room in Bethlehem, the world is still little room for the Lord Jesus Christ.

A woman was doing her last-minute Christmas shopping at a crowded mall. She was tired of fighting the crowds. She was tired of standing in lines. She was tired of fighting her way down long aisles looking for a gift that had sold out days before. Her arms were full of bulky packages when the elevator door opened. It was full. The occupants of the elevator grudgingly tightened ranks to allow a small space for her and her load. As the doors closed, she blurted out, "Whoever is responsible for this whole Christmas thing ought to be arrested, strung up, and shot!" A few others nodded their heads or grunted in agreement. Then, from somewhere in the back of the elevator came a single voice that said, "Don't worry. They already crucified Him."

Sometimes the Christmas season actually draws us away from God rather than drawing us closer to God, For many, this Christmas season will be filled with rushing, hurrying, and milling around department stores. No wonder the little girl who was praying "forgive us our trespasses" got confused and said, "forgive us our Christmases." Sometimes we need to be forgiven for our Christmases. We are too busy. We may leave no room for Jesus.

Luke 2:7 says, “And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

There was no room for the baby Jesus in the inn that first Christmas. In fact, the only place Jerusalem had for Him was a cross. Even in His death there was no room for Him, for He was buried in a borrowed tomb.

Why was there no room for the Lord Jesus? The reason was ignorance. John 1:10-11 says, “He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.” The innkeeper didn’t know the baby about to be born was the Son of God. Mary and Joseph certainly knew. The shepherds, the wise men, Anna and Simeon in the temple, and Elizabeth knew, but the innkeeper did not know who the baby was.

A television interviewer was walking the streets of Seoul at Christmas time. Much as in America, Christmas shopping is a big commercial success in South Korea. The interviewer stopped one young woman on the sidewalk, and asked, "What is the meaning of Christmas?" Laughing, she responded, "I don't know. Is that the day that Jesus died?" There was some truth in her answer.

Christ is dead to some people, but Christ is not a part of their Christmas. It's just another holiday season to them and nothing more. It's the partying and the presents, but it is not the person of Christ!

But we know Who He is, we have every reason to make room for Jesus. And yet, many times we don’t give Him the room He deserves.

Moreover, why was there no room for the baby Jesus? The innkeeper was too involved. He was so busy, he just didn't have time. His rooms were filling with guests and his purse was filling with gold. Like many of us, he was too busy with others things. He had no room for the Lord Jesus.

A lady once lamented to a pastor. "O, preacher, I'd really like to serve the Lord, but I just don't have any time! Between raising my daughter, working a 20-hour a week job at the video store, taking my daughter to soccer practice and soccer games, scrapbooking with my scrapbook club on Saturdays, working out at the gym four nights a week, blogging my daily blog on the Internet, and keeping up with "Desperate Housewives," "Survivor," and "American Idol," by the time Sunday rolls around, it is the only day my husband and I have to take our boat out and spend the day at the lake or go paintballing, or riding our ATV's in the desert. We just don't have the time to serve the Lord like we'd really like to."

Today we have all kinds of the time-saving devices that our grandparents didn't: air fryer, microwave ovens, remote controls, dishwashers, fast food, convenience stores, on-line shopping, baby food.

Let me ask you, Where do you use the time you saved by all these time-saving devices? We have filled the time we saved by using a microwave oven instead of a conventional oven. Now we spend that time surfing the internet. The time we save by using a remote control. Now we spend that time text messaging. Where do you use the time you saved by using time-saving devices? Do you pray more than your parents? Do you spend the time with God more than your grandparents?

If our lives are so busy that we don't make time to give proper attention and priority to our relationship with the Lord, then we are much busier than we were created to be. Do you have room for Jesus in your life?

Today there is still little room for the Lord Jesus Christ. Some insist that the days surrounding the Lord's birthday not be called "Christmas Holidays," but "Winter Break." Irreverent and irrelevant Christmas cards fly off the shelves. The heroes of Christmas are Tiny Tim, Rudolph, Frosty, and Santa. We need to remember who is responsible for the whole Christmas thing. It is all about a God who so loved the world that He gave His one and only son so that whoever believes in Him might have eternal life.

The Christmas season must be the happiest time of the year because Jesus is here, and His name is "Emmanuel" — God with us. God loves us. He knows all about you, and He still loves you. He understands you. He knows your every weakness. He wants to have a relationship with you so much that He suffered, bled, and died for you. The deepest need of your life is met in the One we call Jesus. You won't find Him in bars, parties, or ball games. That's not what Christmas is all about. It's important that you're surrounded with family, fun and food. The most important thing is that you, your friends, and your family are with Jesus.

When we sing, "Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King," we have to remember that while the world has no room for Jesus now, it won't always be that way. When He was here the first time, He stood before Pilate. When He comes again, Pilate will stand before Him. When He came the first time, He came as a baby. When He comes again, He will come as King. When He came the first time, He was rejected; but our Lord says, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." (Romans 14:11)

There's no room for Him now, but one of these days, we will say, "Let every heart prepare him room" Do you prepare Him room in your heart? Is there room for Jesus, the King in your life this Christmas?

I want to close the sermon with Revelation 3:20, “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.”