

**Series:** Why Christmas?  
**Title:** Why Was There No Room In The End?  
**Text:** Luke 2:7  
**Key Word:** Reasons  
**Proposition:** Everyone will understand the reasons why there is no room for God.

Good Morning. My name is Chris Farmer and I serve as one of the pastors. We are thrilled that you have chosen to worship God with us today. God is in this place. He offers His presence and power, so that we can love him and others; grow to be like Jesus, and serve the world.

Mystery shoppers, you may have heard about them. I suspect that some of you would love to have a job where you are paid to shop. A company hires people to go to a store and check it out. They evaluate the store with regard to its cleanliness, the quality of the facility and its merchandise, and the prices. They also observe the staff's professionalism, appearance, and knowledge of the products. However, the employees or the manager does not know that the mystery shopper is in the store. This mystery shopper then reports to her employer what they observed with all the brutal facts. The parent company then reports the customer's perceptions to the retailer.

I suspect that the retailer would have treated the mystery shopper differently if they had known they were there. The fact of the matter is...if we know who particular people are...if we are ever in the presence of "important" or powerful people...some of us would act just a little bit different.

One winter I played for the N.B.A., The Noon Basketball Association at a local Y.M.C.A. Our pick up games featured mostly over thirty year olds trying to either get

in shape or stay in shape. We played with the same intensity of the NBA, without the same talent. On a few occasions, in the heat of competition, someone would fire off a few four-letter words or cry out to Jesus in frustration with my play. In between games, the conversation came around to what we did for a living. Finally, someone would ask me and I would say, "I am one of the pastors at the Methodist Church." Most of the time, I noticed the color drain out of their faces...and the swear words would simply stop. I still find it a little bit amusing witnessing the dramatic change of attitudes and speech when some people find out my profession.

For the past couple of weeks we have explored the question, "Why Christmas?" I hope that we are learning that the birth of Jesus Christ has significantly affected human history. We have asked, "Why did God become one of us? In addition "Why Bethlehem?" This morning, we ask, "Why was there no room in the inn?" We may not have given this question much thought, unless we are familiar with the story in Luke chapter two. Let us look at the story. Caesar Augustus, the ruler of the Roman world, ordered a census. This census required every man to return to his birthplace. Joseph, a descendent of David, along with Mary goes to Bethlehem to be counted in the census. Expecting a child, Mary rides a donkey all the way from Nazareth to this small village. This census was even less popular than our census that occurs every ten years. If you think filling out a bunch of forms is annoying, try traveling several miles in the desert in order to complete your forms. Let us also not forget about the aversion the people had to counting themselves. The census was not a very popular thing to Israel. In fact,

Josephus, a Hebrew historian, tells that the call for a census sparked a riot among the Jews. This census, however, passes quietly despite the ill feelings about it. Let us pick up the story at verse six...[Read Luke 2: 6, 7.](#)

Many find it easy to shame the innkeeper. It seems that he failed to recognize the identity of this mystery guest, so some would say, he refused to make room for God. Many find it easy then to ask the question: Do we have room for the Son of God in our Christmas Story? **Why was there and still is no room for the Son of God?**

**First, some would say that there was and still is no room in the inn because like the innkeeper many are simply too busy to be bothered by God.** We see that Mary was very pregnant when they arrived at the Innkeeper's door. We think to ourselves...how horrible...he kicked a pregnant women and her husband out into the barn. How could this man be so mean-spirited and grouchy? Any one of us would do all that we could to provide a safe, clean space for this young couple and this baby about to enter this world.

In some ways it is like the mystery shopper or my NBA experience...there were no clear signs of the gravity of the moment. Joseph did not try to check into the hotel and say...oh, yeah, by the way...my wife is about to give birth...to God...so if you have a room that would be wonderful. No, instead they were treated just like every other Hebrew couple would have been treated.

Yet, how could he be so harsh? Things were very different in the first century. Families often had several children. Many Hebrew parents took great pride in the

number of children they had. They did not plan as we do...so pregnant women were very common.

The inn was full too. Hundreds of people arrived in Bethlehem for the census. We do not know how many pregnant women were already staying at that inn. Some could have been turned away before Mary and Joseph. Some could have been rejected after Mary and Joseph had already gone to the barn. The Innkeeper could have been a victim of circumstances beyond his control.

Whether he was a hero or a villain, he was a busy person who could not be bothered. His inn was full. His time had to be devoted to his guests who had already come. Never had the demands on his time been so pressing. He wanted to be a great innkeeper that night for his guests.

I suspect this happens today. In many of our cities, the malls opened up at 8:00 in the morning, & chances are good that more people are in the malls right now than are in all the churches, because Christmas is such a busy time.

It is so easy to fall into the trap of the innkeeper, where we are so busy & so out of focus that other things take first place, and God takes last place in our lives. Therefore, I challenge you this morning to refocus, and put first things first.

**Secondly, some would say that there was and still is no room in the inn because many are too burdened by other life demands.** It seems to me that the Innkeeper and all of Bethlehem were too burdened by other life demands to even notice

this poor young couple. No one seemed to help them find a place to stay. One had an opportunity to help, but he was burdened with the census crowd.

Certainly, far off Rome and Caesar Augustus could not have known about it or listened if by any chance he had been told. Who cared what had happened in insignificant Palestine? What did it matter that one life more or less would be added to the community?

The Innkeeper may not have had any ill will toward Mary and Joseph; he simply was stressed to his limit in caring for others. His patience had been spent. I suspect that is still true today. Many are burdened, even over burden by other important demands of life. They are not hostile toward God's coming, but Jesus may be excluded from the inn of ones heart. We have merely filled all the space we have with other guests, other demands. We do not mean to be spiritually insensitive, but our thoughts and feelings are so preoccupied with other matters that Jesus cannot find a place. We live in a world filled with demanding sights and sounds, areas of interest and hobbies calling for our attention, possessing our time and energy, and then when Jesus comes with his transforming gift there is no room for him in the inn.

On the night before Christmas, a young father scolded his 3-year-old daughter for having wasted expensive gold tasseled ribbon on a Christmas present.

The next day however, she gave him the present, a box wrapped with the golden tasseled ribbon.

When he opened the box, he saw there was nothing in it and began to unload on his daughter. “You can’t give an empty box as a Christmas present” he said “It has to have something in it “His daughter started to cry and then sobbed: “Daddy, the box is full – it’s full of kisses for you.” We too can miss the present if we are burdened by financial pressures, challenging relationships, overwhelming circumstances, or simply by the everyday stuff of life like groceries, laundry, work, homework, housework, health demands, or whatever burden distract us. There can be no room in the inn. So we miss the present.

On the other hand, we can look at this story from a different perspective. **Some would say that there was and still is no room in the inn because God wants to make room for shepherds.** Luke moves from the closed door at the inn to the open hearts of the shepherds. They were out in their fields, busy tending sheep, burdened by their deprived status, but open to God’s coming. Messengers from heaven entered their lives and announced Good News of Great Joy. His coming always brings joy. When anything happens in life that is or might be of great joy, then we need to understand that God wants to make room in our heart for his glorious presence. God wants to make room in our lives when we fall in love for the first time, when we experience the birth of a child, when we receive the news of a new opportunity, or begin a new friendship. We may see these things as something we deserve or created. On the other hand, we may welcome them with a sense of wonder, that the Living Jesus is moving in our lives in such a way that we could not do on our own.

Luke tells us that the shepherds left their fields to stand in the presence of innocence. In this world filled with so much scandal, wars and rumors of war, famine, poverty, and hunger, we're tempted to grow apathetic and complacent. We see so much compromise that we may doubt whether there is any such thing as purity and integrity. We make room for God by leaving our doubt behind and adoring God in the simple and plain, like little children gazing at a nativity, bell ringers in a local grocery store, volunteers standing at a Salvation Army red kettle on a cold winter night, and students who choose celibacy in an age of promiscuity. Then we recognize that people still make room for the Living Christ.

After worshipping the Christ-child, the shepherds spread the word concerning what they had seen and heard. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. Each time we see and hear a generous witness we know that someone has made room for the living Jesus. Generosity can be more than material gifts. It can be seen in a quick observation of a need before someone can tell us about it. It can be seen when someone breaks through the barriers of fear and self-centeredness to make an eager and outgoing witness through acts and words of compassion. Such generous love is not simply human, but a witness who had made room for God. The Spirit of Jesus comes to make room within the humble, and when He enters, then there is nothing less than a radiant witness who loves, grows, and serves.

