

ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute" ---- Volume III Number 12

Editor's Note: This "MM" is the 36th email sermon in a series we are sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This message was first sent in December 2002, the first Christmas sermon we sent. So many subscribers have come on board since then, we chose to send it again. It develops texts in three of the Gospels; all deal with the incarnation. This message deals with our decision to make **"Room for Jesus."** It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it! If you would like to receive by email a short PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this sermon, just reply with your request.

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

Room for Jesus?

Luke 2; Matthew 2; John 1

Long ago, there ruled in Persia a wise and good king. He loved his people. He wanted to know how they lived. He wanted to know about their hardships. Often he dressed in the clothes of a working man or a beggar, and went to the homes of the poor. No one whom he visited thought that he was their ruler. One time he visited a very poor man who lived in a cellar. He ate the coarse food the poor man ate. He spoke cheerful, kind words to him. Then he left. Later he visited the poor man again and disclosed his identity by saying, "I am your king!" The king thought the man would surely ask for some gift or favor, but he didn't. Instead he said, "You left your palace and your glory to visit me in this dark, dreary place. You ate the course food I ate. You brought gladness to my heart! To others you have given your rich gifts. To me you have given yourself!"

God was willing to do whatever it took to have fellowship with us. Even becoming human.

Consider: Would you become a frog to save the frogs? A worm to save the worms? Jesus, the Agent and Power of Creation, the Word, became human to save every human!

Awesome! John 1:1-14

But do we have "Room for Jesus?"

ROOM FOR JESUS?

Room for bright lights, room for trees,
We seem to always find space for these.
Room for presents, topped with bows,
Room in the budget to buy new clothes.

We drive the streets on December nights,
And find so many electrical sights.
Even when the bank accounts are low
Many can afford to put on a great show.

There's room for tinsel and room for holly
Room for parties to make us jolly.
We find room for shopping at the mall
But do we have room for the KING OF ALL?

When He first came to save from sin,
There was no room in the Bethlehem inn.
To create the world--yes, He was able;
And now His first bedroom is just a stable.

But a larger crime is committed today,
The risen lord, who started on the hay,
Is assigned second-fiddle parts--
"NO VACANCY" signs hang on our hearts.

Oh, once in a while we'll let him in,
Sometimes we'll admit the guilt of sin.
But the one who rose from the garden tomb
Still hears men say: There is NO ROOM.

I will finish that poem later .. for now, let's think about the options: NO ROOM, DARK CORNER, AND FIRST PLACE.

1. NO ROOM. Matthew 2:16-18

King Herod had no room at all! Lashed out at the New Messiah because of envy, greed, and the love for power. No we wouldn't do that!

We distance ourselves from the Herods and the Hitlers and the Stalins and the Pol Pots of the world. We're not that antagonistic. We are not murderers! But how about category #2?

2. DARK CORNER. Luke 2:7

The inn-keeper, though not specifically mentioned, gets a lot of flack, doesn't he! But this "go to the back of the bus" approach is a key to understanding our greatest temptation.

As the poem has described, we'll celebrate Christmas, put up a manger scene, and sing "Joy to the World." And do it all while giving the King of Kings lip service as we spend the big bucks on ourselves - - not on world evangelism or alleviating human suffering. Anti-Christmas? Of course not! But doesn't Jesus get leftovers too often?

It's like He comes to our house and we let Him in, but assign him not to the "Master Bedroom" but to the utility area. He's not out in the cold, but He sure isn't in the very middle of our lives, goals, and dreams. I call this assigning Him the "dark corner" space. He came in a manger, a feed trough, and now he plays second fiddle to our REAL priorities. Look in your daytimer .. look in your checkbook ... what do you see? Where does Jesus fit in?

Luke 7:36-50 contrasts the "dark corner" approach of Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman. That leads us to the only truly appropriate option.

3. FIRST PLACE. Luke 7:45-46

She made Him her King. She gave her all. She put Him first. She had sinned much. She had been

forgiven much. She loved much. How about us? Does pride prevent such selfless devotion? Does busyness preclude full commitment? Let's go back and finish our poem:

When He first came to save from sin,
There was no room in the Bethlehem inn.
To create the world--yes, He was able;
And now His first bedroom is just a stable.

But a larger crime is committed today,
The risen lord, who started on the hay,
Is assigned second-fiddle parts--
"NO VACANCY" signs hang on our hearts.

Oh, once in a while we'll let him in,
Sometimes we'll admit the guilt of sin.
But the one who rose from the garden tomb
Still hears men say: There is NO ROOM.

No room for worship, no room for love
No room to serve the Christ from above.
There are bills to pay; places to go.
We neglect the Saviour Who loves us so.

We can correct such a sad affair
We can start anew, if we really care.
We can open the inner chamber of the heart
We can put Him first in our new start.

So consider this challenge I make today
Make Christ your top priority always.
Avoid the threat of eternal gloom,
Tell Jesus: COME IN! THERE'S LOTS OF ROOM!

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"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

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