



## “A Place for Jesus”

Luke 2:1-7

**Idea:** The only suitable place for the Son of God to dwell is on the throne of your life.

**Intro:** Christmas is the most exciting time of the year. But what is it that makes it so exciting? For some it is the opportunity to gather with family and friends. It is a time to take a break from work and travel to be with those you love but do not get to see very often. For others it is the traditions that revolve around Christmas like decorating the tree, putting up lights on the house, baking cookies, and singing carols. Then for others, it is the gifts. Giving a special gift to those you love and watching their face light up is exciting. Likewise, receiving gifts is the blessing for many that makes Christmas special to them.

Economically, what makes Christmas special and exciting is ultimately the giving of gifts. Did you know that over \$1 trillion is spent in America on Christmas each year? An entire industry has been built around the giving of gifts on Christmas. A Forbes article from December 22, 2016, estimated that U.S. adults planned to spend an average of \$419 on Christmas that year. That number has more than doubled in seven years. According to the National Retail Federation Americans spend an average of \$997.73 on Christmas. Some of that increase is surely the result of inflation, but I doubt all of it is. Today, in homes all around our country are Christmas trees standing over mounds of wrapped packages. In some homes the mound of presents dwarfs the tree. As mom brings the newly wrapped presents to the tree, she has to rearrange the pile and make room for the new addition.

Now, there is nothing wrong with giving gifts to others or with receiving them. It is a beautiful reminder of what Christmas is about. I just hope that under our trees and in our hearts, there is a place for Jesus.

Read Luke 2:1-7.

**Inquiry:** Luke records for us the history surrounding the birth of Christ. He details the things that God sovereignly orchestrated so that the Son would be born in Bethlehem and fulfill the prophecies of Scripture (Jer 31:15; Micah 5:2).

Joseph and Mary were betrothed; they were engaged (Luke 2:5). Matthew points out in his gospel that the marriage was not consummated until after the baby was born (Matt 1:25). During the betrothal period, the couple often would act and do certain things as if the marriage had already taken place. Some scholars believe Mary was living with Joseph as his wife at this time. This reasoning would explain why Mary accompanied Joseph to Bethlehem for the census. Mary remained a virgin. The child she carried was of the Holy Spirit.

While in Bethlehem “*the time came for her to give birth*” (Luke 2:6). What an understatement! Every parent here today, knows that “the time to give birth” is not that casual. I remember when the time came for my oldest daughter to be born. We had just moved to Alabama a few weeks earlier. We had purchased our first house, and were still unpacking things. In fact, the nursery was not even put together because Hailey was not supposed to make her entrance for another five weeks.

But on the night of January 24<sup>th</sup>, we got a surprise. I had fallen asleep on the couch watching UFC. About 10:30pm Kara yells out, “James come here. My water just broke.” I stumbled into our bedroom, not quite sure of what I had just heard. My immediate response when Kara screamed again that her water had broke was, “There’s no way. We’ve still got another month.” But there on the floor was the evidence.

We called our friends that lived nearby, and Jenn came over to help us get a bag ready. We had nothing ready! Then off to the hospital we went at about Mach 3.

Luke omits much of the craziness that must have surrounded this great event. He tells us that Mary gave birth to the Son, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. The details Luke gives us make it clear that Jesus was not born in the maternity wing at Bethlehem Memorial Hospital. Due to the census there was most likely a flood of visitors in the small town of Bethlehem. The statement, “*there was no place for them in the inn*” should not be understood that there was a lack of a hotel room but rather a lack of a suitable *place* for Mary to give birth. The “*inn*” probably refers to a public and crude overnight lodging place for caravans. So in an attempt to get away from the crowds, they retreated to a stable.

The irony of the most important event in history taking place in a manger should not be glossed over; it reveals how God elevates the lowly and humble and rejects the proud and mighty of this world.

The people in Bethlehem that night had no idea what was happening. They had no idea that the King of Kings was being born before them. They had no idea that their Creator and Savior was about to enter this world in human form. If they had known, surely some would have found a place for Him. The truth is most people then and during the life and ministry of Jesus misunderstood Him.

Do you remember when Jesus was twelve years old and His parents took the family to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41ff)? Luke points out that when the feast was over Joseph, Mary and the other children started their journey back to Nazareth with the group that came from that region. They traveled for a full day before realizing that Jesus had been left in Jerusalem. Can you imagine that conversation? “Joseph, we lost our Son. We lost Jesus. We lost the Son of God!” The Bible tells us they searched for three days for Him, and finally found Jesus in the Temple confounding the wise. Why? How was He able to confound the wise? He wrote the Scriptures; therefore, He knew them better than anyone setting in the Temple that day. He knew every nuance of Scripture. I can only imagine what those priests were thinking and perhaps saying to Him.

One of those men had to look at Him and say, “Boy, what is your name?” To which, Jesus would have had to say, “That is complicated.” “What do you mean it is complicated?” “Well, on my momma’s side, my name is Jesus. But on my daddy’s side, I am Immanuel, which means ‘God with you.’”

“What? How old are you?” “Well, on my momma’s side I am twelve years old. But on my daddy’s side, it is not how old I am; I am before time, space, and matter.”

“Son, where are you from?” “Well, on my momma’s side, I am from Bethlehem, which means ‘the house of bread’ because I am the Bread of God. But on my daddy’s side, again it is not where I am from; it is what is from Me. I am the One by whom and through whom everything is from.”

“Where are you going?” “On my momma’s side, I am going to a cross and a grave. But on my daddy’s side, I am going to the throne of all thrones and ruling over everything for all time.

Jesus was misunderstood and missed at His birth, during His life, and at His death. Still, to this day He is misunderstood and missed. Even during the Christmas season, this time where we celebrate His birth and entry into our world, the vast majority of people miss Him. They find no place for Him in their lives. What a tragedy! On this Christmas Eve, let’s all, every one of us, find a place for Jesus in our lives. From this passage, I want to share with you how to do that.

## 1. Recognize Jesus as the Savior

The residents and guests of Bethlehem that night did not recognize the Savior. They had no idea that the

young, pregnant lady who rode in on the donkey with Joseph was carrying their Creator and Savior. They did not leap for joy at His presence like John the Baptist. They did not praise and worship Him like Elizabeth and Mary. Instead, they carried on with their lives. It was business as usual. Life was busy. They had to make a living. They had to provide for their families. They had to get to the game. They had shopping to do. They had religious activities to attend. They were too busy and preoccupied by the things in their lives to recognize the Savior. Some, perhaps, wanted nothing to do with a Savior. They were not looking for the Savior because they did not want a savior.

The experience of those in Bethlehem was not unique to them. We too miss and misunderstand Jesus. Life is busy and full. Life is filled with trouble, sorrow, and suffering. Life is filled with the hustle and bustle of providing for your families. It is even filled with all kinds of religious activity.

Today, though, we must slow down and intentionally look at the Savior. We must recognize that Jesus is our one and only Savior. He is the God who came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). So, we must make a place for Jesus.

## 2. Embrace Jesus as Your Savior

It is one thing to recognize the Savior; it is quite another to acknowledge Him as “My Savior.” Mary clearly understood the difference. She knew the baby she carried was the Savior. She had heard the words of Gabriel who declared that the boy’s name was to be Jesus, which means “god saves.” But she also understood that knowing Jesus was the Savior was not enough. It is not the same as making Him my savior. She understood that she had to appropriate that truth to her life. She had to acknowledge Jesus as her savior.

<sup>46</sup>And Mary said, *"My soul magnifies the Lord,* <sup>47</sup>*and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,* – Luke 1:46-47

At Christmas we sing songs about Jesus. We declare that He is the Savior of the world, but is He your Savior? We must make a place for Jesus.

Like Mary we must recognize that the birth of Jesus was no ordinary event. Millions of babies are born each day, but the birth of Jesus was different. Mary recognized that she was giving birth to the Savior of the world, but she did more than that. She acknowledged that Jesus had the power to be her Savior. She acknowledged that He alone had the power to redeem her sin-filled life. However, she did not just recognize and acknowledge Jesus’ ability to be her savior. Mary embraced Jesus as her savior. She put her faith in Jesus alone for salvation.

What was true for Mary then is true for us today. Finding a place for Jesus demands that we recognize Jesus as the Savior and embrace Jesus as my Savior.

The good news of great joy the angel declared to the shepherds was that in Bethlehem the Savior had been born into this world. And today, the good news of great joy is still the Savior has been born. Therefore, *“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”* (Rom 10:13). Everyone who will place his or her faith in Jesus and embrace Him as Savior will experience forgiveness of sin and come into relationship with the God who created him or her for Himself. But we must embrace Jesus.

**Conclusion:** Christmas is truly the most exciting time of the year. And what makes Christmas so exciting is the gift. No, it is not the gifts that we exchange with one another as wonderful as they are. The gift that makes Christmas, Christmas, is the gift of God the Father to man. He sacrificed His only Son so that whoever would believe in Him would have everlasting life (John 3:16). God gave His very best to us.

Today, have you made a place for Jesus in your life? Have you recognized Him? Have you embraced Him?

No one on Christmas morning would dare unwrap all the lesser gifts under the tree and leave the greater, bigger, and more expensive gift wrapped and under the tree. No, you rip the paper off and rejoice in the gift you have received. Jesus is that greater gift. He is your joy, your peace, your comfort, your forgiveness, and your life. Make a place for Him on the throne of your life. That is the only suitable place for Jesus to dwell.