



Christian Life Fellowship

Becoming fully devoted followers of Christ



No Excuses

December 16, 2007

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Introduction:

This morning we are continuing our series on NO EXCUSES. The miraculous takes place when we don't make excuses for what we have or don't have, but offer it to God.

Two weeks ago we looked at how God did not offer any excuses when it came to sending Christ to be the Savior of the world. We also looked at Mary and how she did not offer any excuse but allowed the Holy Spirit to have His way and by giving God her life and trusting Him, the miraculous took place. It was not convenient, it was not comfortable, but as she gave her being to God, the miraculous happened. God wants to work through us, through our physical being, to do the miraculous.

Today we want to look at the innkeeper and the magi. I would say most everyone who sits in these pews this morning has busy lives. Our lives are full just like the innkeeper. Our lives are crowded with things, with people, with relationships, with challenges, with demands on our time and space. Fullness does not mean that there can not be a place for the miraculous to take place, but it does demand that we consider priorities for the space and resources in our lives.

The account in scripture doesn't really tell us much about the innkeeper. I can only imagine how busy and stressful the innkeeper would have been when Jesus was born. The conditions in Bethlehem were crowded. The opportunities for business were many and lost opportunity meant lost profits. The demands of the public for places to rest and stay while in Bethlehem for the census were incredible.

Mary and Joseph, who were ready to give birth to their first-born baby, came to the inn to find lodging. Even though the conditions were such that there was no room, I find it interesting that the innkeeper didn't turn them out in the street. He could have used the excuse of a crowded inn to turn them away. He could have used the excuse of an extremely busy time to turn them away. Instead, he offered them what he had, as meager, as lowly as it was. There was a place provided for them where the miracle could take place. Jesus was not completely shut out.

There are things we permit to shut out Christ. We can justify and offer excuses for not taking the time, for attempting to carry our own burdens of sin, for allowing bondages to remain in our lives. By offering these reasons or excuses, we fail to make place for Christ. I fear that all too often with our excuses, we shut Him out completely. When it comes to Christ having place in our lives, He deserves first place. He deserves priority over other relationships, over business, recreation, and entertainment.

The gospel of [Matthew 6:33](#) tells us to seek first His kingdom and all other things will be taken care of. Often we do just the opposite of that. We want to seek the other things first and those things crowd the place for Christ out of our lives. In seeking Him first we find joy.

Matthew 6:33 - But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

I. The Innkeeper gave the space he had.

Mary and Joseph were not totally shut out from any kind of shelter. Look at the scripture from [Luke 2:7](#). Here in the record according to Luke, Mary gave birth to Jesus.

Luke 2:7 - And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

God was in control of the situation and had determined where Christ would be born. Even though the inn was full, he found a place for Mary to give birth. It is significant that the place that Mary gave birth to Jesus denotes a place for loosing the beasts of their burdens. It was a place for the animals to find rest and nourishment. I find it interesting that the one who would loose our burdens of sin, give us rest from carrying such heavy loads in our lives, and bring life and nourishment to all who seek Him, was born in such a place.

Does it seem strange to you that the King of Kings would begin His earthly journey without fanfare in a cattle stall? A small place became the place of the miraculous. The plan of God was carried out even though there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn. If this had happened to you or me, we might have thought this was some kind of cruel joke or some kind of mistake, but it was part of God's plan.

II. Look for the miraculous to come out of small things.

If things don't always go the way you expect them, but you are following God, then look for the miraculous. Do not despise even what you might consider something small. God works with small things.

Matthew 17:20 - He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this

mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

When our lives get busy, crowded with people, crowded with demands, crowded with things, crowded with business, crowded with burdens, it becomes easy to offer the excuse of no room without much thought. Too busy, too much business, not enough time, schedule too full, too many demands, no place, and no space. We make excuses at the expense of the miraculous, at the expense of our relationship with Christ who loves us more than anyone else in the universe. We make excuse at the expense of God's plan and other people.

We never know the way God might use the unexpected, the miraculous to do something that impacts someone else through us. With Christ's birth, God's entire plan was coming to pass. Nothing was going to stop that from happening. The fact that there was no room at the inn, the fact that Mary and Joseph were not married yet, the edict of the king to slaughter innocent children, these things did not stop God's plan.

Can you imagine the blessing the innkeeper would have forfeited and missed if he had said, "NO ROOM – go your way." The place he provided was not clean, it was not inside the inn, it was not the place a king should be birthed, but it was all that was needed for the miraculous to take place. It became the place where Jesus drew his first breath as a human being.

It amazes me to think that God moved all of the Roman Empire to fulfill prophecy. He used the Roman governor to require that the entire world should submit to a census. Because of that decree, Mary and Joseph were at the right place at the right time for the fulfillment of prophecy. It had been prophesied where Jesus would be born and the signs that would accompany his birth and first coming. He would be born in Bethlehem, he would be born of a virgin and he would be born in the lineage of King David.

I'm not even sure if the inn keeper was aware of what was about to happen when he gave Mary and Joseph a place in his animal pen that evening. I'm not sure how it happens in your life, but I can tell you I don't always know what God is up to. I know He is active, I know He is at work, but I don't always see what is about to happen. Just because we give Him place in our lives, doesn't mean that we know how things will turn out. Many times I am surprised and shocked. At times I'm uncertain, but I am confident in this truth, that when we give place for God in the ordinary, miraculous things happen.

God will move heaven and earth to make sure that everything is in order for His plan to come to pass. The only thing that we as human beings can do to mess up is to make excuse and refuse to cooperate with God's miraculous plans. Let's look for a moment this morning at the magi and how they offered no excuse for their part in coming to worship and giving gifts.

III. The magi were on their way to worship.

Matthew 2:1-2 - After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

Matthew 2:9-11 - After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

All too often excuses are offered for not coming to worship. The weather, our recreation, a Packer's game; things that we think are reasonable reasons keep us from worship.

The magi couldn't wait to see Christ. They did not let the distance or the expense or the time away from their family members, or their jobs, or anything else keep them from coming to worship. They could

have really been frustrated when they got to the place where the star rested. This wasn't a palace, or a temple, or any place fancy. They did not let their surroundings deter them from worship. They rejoiced when they saw the star. Why? Because they knew that God was directing them.

As part of their worship, they bowed down before Him. What a picture for us. True worship of our Lord brings joy to our heart. Worshipping in His presence should be a time of elation. Also as a part of their worship, the magi brought treasures to the Lord. They did not think it would cost too much to bring gifts to the Lord. They did not give the gifts because they were motivated by the need. They did not give their gifts out of obligation. They brought and gave their gifts because of love, honor and respect. They understood who they were giving to, why they were giving and that their giving was an act of worship

Something miraculous takes place when we worship. Worship is the time we connect with our Creator. Why did you come to worship this morning? Who did you come to meet with today? What did you bring with you to present to the Lord? Examine your heart, your purse, your attitude and see if joy, awe and wonder do not fill your heart as a result.

IV. Worship involves giving.

Too often we use excuses when it comes to giving our resources to our King. I don't have enough for myself; I cannot afford to tithe or bring an offering. I believe there is a great deal of joy that comes into the life of the person who has learned how to give. Joy overflows when we give our very best to God. We can offer all the excuses but those excuses will keep us from the miraculous. Do not limit God when it comes to giving treasure to Him. Giving is a matter of trust and honor and love. When we give with joy, as worship to the Lord, we will see the miraculous take place in our life and in the lives of those whom that gift touches.

Luke 6:38 - Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

The gold, frankincense and myrrh that were given were all valuable gifts. The magi gave cheerfully, joyfully, and without excuse. Let's make no excuses when it comes to giving gifts to God. Let's not allow our giving to be joyless.

What is it that He wants to do in your life, in your business, in your family, in your world? What small place is He asking you for? More than that, what place are you willing to give Him? Are you substituting excuses for treasure or space? If we consider ourselves to be followers of Christ with the

Conclusion:

Here is the next step you can take today or this week in your spiritual journey. Regardless of how busy, how crowded your lives, how little time you feel you have, how little money you feel you have, give God place. Take steps against shutting out the Savior from your life. Who knows what joy you will receive and what miracle God will work to bring His plan to pass.

opportunities that come our way we must be careful how we respond to those opportunities. All too often we seize opportunities if they fit into our schedule, if they fit into our space, if they don't take us away from things that we consider more important. Those opportunities are most likely from the Lord and even though we may not see it, we need to consider how we can make place for God to work. **"Heaven is still waiting to pour promise into earth's most unlikely place."** Jack Hayford – *"The Christmas Miracle"*