

MAKING ROOM: Christmas Surprises!

Scriptures used: [Luke 2:7-10A \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Today was the final week of our *Making Room* series! Pastor Hurmon expanded on the theme of making room for Jesus by suggesting we watch for the Christmas surprises that this season brings. He reflected on John 1, where John described the birth of Jesus as light coming into darkness, but darkness not understanding it. We too have been confronted with the question, "Do we understand the light?" The light is the impact of God's love in history, the overturning of the power of death and division, and is the SAME glory that draws us to Him, as well as those who are different from us. Jesus' birth is good news for ALL people!

KEY POINTS

- 1. Mary and Joseph knocked at the door.** They asked, "Is there any room?" Whomever provided the space for them also unknowingly provided a space for Jesus. As we reflect on the birth of Jesus, we are also reminded that Jesus is working in the lives of people all around us. Are there those who are so different from us that we are tempted to not make room for them, whether those who are different in culture, politics, or class? Pastor Hurmon reminds us to be careful about "locking out" those whom we may not have thought we should make room for, to be aware that to exclude them might be to exclude Christ Himself. Indeed, during Jesus' ministry, many religious leaders were so outraged by the company Jesus kept, such as tax collectors, prostitutes, and other "sinners," that they rejected Jesus himself. When we look for Jesus' Presence in unlikely people, God tends to teach us important discipleship lessons.
- 2. Don't be the one who slams the door.** It may be that we locked someone out. Pastor Hurmon reminded us not to beat ourselves up but to be aware that Jesus is often nestled in the stories of those who don't acknowledge Him in their lives. When we seek to love those whom God loves, we are learning and growing as we allow the light of Christmas to illuminate our hearts. We can choose to live out [Matthew 5:23](#), and be people who are always ready to initiate reconciliation. The big issues that divide us are not greater than the capacity of Jesus to unite us in relationship with others. Most importantly, we are called to be Jesus-first Christians, not allowing anything secondary, like politics, class, or culture, keep us from loving our brothers and sisters. A good place to start is to always be open to hearing another person's story.
- 3. Dark beginnings to the Great Enterprise.** Terry Storch had the abundance of what life can bring, but he found himself in a parking lot that he didn't know was a church, struggling with emptiness, seeking the help of the Lord. He was knocking. When he encountered the love of God, he not only received the gift of God's salvation, but he also became a gift as he aligned his life to God's purpose. He helped to create the YouVersion Bible App, which is used in billions of households to allow people to access the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus. He found his place in God's story. This Christmas, let us receive the incredible gift of salvation and relationship with Him that God gives us, and let us also allow our lives to be a gift to others as we allow God to shine His light through us!

DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - Whom has God placed in your life that it is difficult to "make room" for? Why? Listen for the knock of those who need the healing and restoring salvation that Jesus came to bring.
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - Consider the various elements of the Christmas story in Matthew and Luke. Who were all the people involved? What kinds of different backgrounds did they come from? Embrace the truth that no matter what your background is, you are a part of His story and included in His love.
- 3) DO** - Consider asking someone in your life who feels they have been slighted by you, "What do we need to do between us to make things right again?" Loving someone does not mean we have to agree on everything; often, we may agree to disagree, but continue to be in relationship. Invite someone to join us for our Christmas celebrations on December 22 at 7 PM in San Jose, on December 23 at 7 PM in Redwood City, or 11 AM on December 24 in Redwood City or San Jose (also online at all of the above times. Our Gatherings will be Online Only (no In-Person Gatherings) on December 31, and we will resume our In-Person Gatherings on the first Sunday of 2024, January 7. See you soon!