

## No Room for Doorkeepers Matthew 23:13-14; 37-39

### Introduction

- Personal observation of our Neighborhood
  - Almost half of the homes in our neighborhood have vehicles sitting outside of their garage.
  - It's my understanding that a garage is built with the purpose in mind for a car to sit in it.
  - The only time my cars are not in the garage is when the garage is full of stuff.
  - I don't go snooping around my neighbors' houses, but I did notice that one of the neighbors has a hot tub occupying their garage. That's probably the only acceptable excuse! If any of you have a hot-tub occupying your garage, I'd love to come snoop around!
- Continue Advent Series, "Making Room for Jesus"
  - Luke 2:7, "And she (Mary) gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."
  - In the midst of all the chaos going on in Bethlehem, preparing for the registration, the most important scene was about to play out in a manger; the only room that could be found!
  - Last week we learned about the invitation
    - Love, Joy, Peace, Hope
    - Don't miss the invitation
  - This Week
    - **Matthew 23**
      - Jesus is very critical of the scribes and Pharisees
      - They have tried to make room for the Messiah by becoming doorkeepers of the kingdom of heaven
      - **Vs. 13-14**
      - I encourage you to, again, reflect upon the invitation that Jesus makes during this Christmas season. Could these verses be true of us?
      - "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees are false teachers who have drawn the people away from the kingdom of heaven, not toward it."<sup>1</sup>
      - Christmas is not only an invitation for us to draw closer to God, but to draw others closer to God as well.
      - There are no room for doorkeepers
      - We must make room for Jesus in our lives

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<sup>1</sup> Lane T. Dennis, executive editor, *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008, Kindle Loc. 371549.

## Reclaim the Purpose

- When a garage no longer has room for a car, then a garage has lost its real purpose.
- Consider why Jesus, of all places, was born in Bethlehem.
  - Before Jesus, Bethlehem was considered the home town of David.
  - After defeating Goliath, David became Israel's greatest king
  - David's reign was considered the glory days of Israel's history
    - As time went on, similar to what happens in our lives, Israel lost it's way.
    - God made a promise to David that his kingdom would never end
    - **Luke 2:11, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."**
    - The fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem must be lost on us.
    - When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it was an invitation for Israel to reclaim it's purpose.
- Throughout the year, you and I accumulate "stuff" in our lives
  - Fear
  - Anger
  - Distractions
  - Just like a garage, the more we accumulate over time, the less space there is for the real purpose of a garage. Before long, the cars are sitting in the drive-way, because there is no room.
- Jesus has a way, if we will let him into our lives, to enable us to reclaim our purpose
  - In the midst of the chaos of Bethlehem it's a star and angels that draw people to the real event going on in Bethlehem.
  - A baby of all places, lying in a manger, who just happens to be the Savior of the World.
  - It's the humility and power, and grace displayed in the manger that draws us back to the very purpose of our lives.
- George H.W. Bush Funeral
  - This week, for a brief moment, we were able to witness the world stopping to observe the life of former President George H.W. Bush.
    - Politics were set aside.
    - News organizations for a brief moment stopped speculating about "what might happen" and focused on "what had happened"
    - There seemed to be a consensus that although this was a moment of mourning, it was also a refreshing moment
      - The eulogies given at the funerals said very little about the political decisions that the former President made; much like the President wished, those could be saved for history to decide
      - However, the eulogies spoke of the character that made this President so special.
        - Friendship
        - Humor
        - His last words, "I love you too"

- All of this culminating in the greatest friendship that President Bush shared, the one he had with God.
- You could not watch the funeral without witnessing the power of God. What a wonderful testimony!
- I know I felt it, but I heard others comment on it as well, “Where has this kind of character gone?”
- While the journey back to this kind of humanity may seem far off, it’s as simple as a relationship with God.
  - John 1:11-13, “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
  - It’s time to clear out the stuff we have accumulated. It’s time to reclaim the purpose we were created for. It’s time to make room for Jesus.
  - While we may feel far off, it’s as simple as responding to the invitation to let Jesus into our lives that will restore our purpose.

#### What will we allow ourselves to get wrapped up in?

- A time when our garage was full
  - Moving into our house
  - Garage was so full that there was not a clear line from the kitchen door to the garage door
  - Cars were parked outside
  - Things were all over the places
  - Get lost amongst all of the stuff
- Unique theme that can be traced from the manger to Jesus’ return to Jerusalem; the theme of “wrapped”
  - Manger scene- Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes
    - Not only a baby wrapped, but hope, love, joy, peace
    - Salvation was wrapped in the swaddling clothes
  - Scribes and Pharisees- wrapped in hypocrisy
    - 6 times, “Woe to you” to describe their hypocrisy
    - Not only were they keeping others from entering the kingdom of heaven, they had not entered in themselves!
  - Jesus overlooking Jerusalem
    - From a baby to an adult
    - Matthew 23:37-39
    - Jesus’ desire was to wrap Jerusalem, the people who were called to be a light to the world, into his arms.
    - The people of God were so wrapped up into their own world, that they had no room for Jesus to enter into their hearts.
- What will we allow ourselves to get wrapped up in?

- As you take inventory of your life, maybe it looks similar to my garage when we were moving into our house.
  - It's filled with stuff
  - The garage has lost its purpose; there's no room for the cars
  - It's overwhelming when you begin to think about all the stuff in your life
  - You are so wrapped up into everything else, that there's no room for Jesus
- Examples from the Christmas story
  - The number of times that the angels spoke, "Fear not"
    - Mary
    - Joseph
    - Shepherds
  - Mary was afraid
    - Number of questions
    - "How will this be?"
  - Joseph was afraid
    - Considered divorcing Mary
    - "What am I supposed to do?"
  - Why do the angels repeatedly begin their announcements with "Fear not?"
    - Despite this great proclamation, it was overwhelming
    - People had not made room in their lives for this child
    - This was unexpected, impossible, bigger than any one person could handle; it was God!
    - And yet, because it was God, it was all the reason to make room and be excited!
  - Herod
    - Herod not only had fear, but his fear turned to anger
      - He was afraid that someone who steal his position of power
      - His desire was to see the child, not so he could worship, but so he could kill the threat
    - Anger can wrap our heart to a degree that worship is impossible
      - Anger does not allow room for Jesus
      - Anger is the opposite of hope, love, joy, and peace
  - Fear and Anger are just two examples of what our lives can get wrapped up with that fills our hearts and does not allow room for Jesus
- What will you allow your life to get wrapped up in this Christmas?
  - Despite how cluttered your life might be, the invitation is to allow Jesus to come in and change the scene
  - Jesus can realign your life to restore you to the purpose you were created for.

### Are We Willing?

- There came a point as we moved into our house that something had to be done with all the clutter in the garage.

- Little by little, we began to decide what we wanted our house to look like.
- We decided where we wanted things to go
- We emptied out one box and at time
- With each box, we found a place for the items inside, and the garage began to clear space
- Eventually we had room for the cars
- Periodically, clutter will fill the garage again, and the process of clearing things out has to be done again.
- This is a process that we not only experience in our physical lives, but in our spiritual lives as well.
  - We have a choice, we can continue to allow the clutter to fill our lives up
  - We can try and ignore the mess until it becomes “The Elephant in the Room”
  - Or we can face what is there, and decide to do something about it.
- **Matthew 23:37b, “How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and *you were not willing!*”**
  - The invitation was extended, the opportunity was there
  - Yet, they were not willing
- Are we willing?
  - Yes, the clutter is great
  - No, we may not know where to start
  - But, are we willing?
    - How does a baby make such a dramatic impact in Bethlehem despite all the other distractions?
    - The baby was the Son of God
    - It’s no different from your life
      - The clutter is great, you don’t know where to start
      - BUT, just the presence of God in your life, can make all the difference!
      - You have to be willing
- Examples
  - Mary’s Response to the Angel, “**Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.**” (Luke 1:38)
  - Joseph’s Response to the Angel, “**When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.**” (Matthew 1:24-25)
  - Both Mary and Joseph were willing, despite the circumstances
  - Are you willing?

### Conclusion

- Christmas reminds us that nothing is going to stop God’s purposes from being fulfill
  - Israel, who was suppose to be the light to the world, did not stop God’s Salvation
    - Jesus became the light of the world
    - Those who believed became Children of God
  - Herod tried to wipe out Jesus

- He had every male baby in Bethlehem two years or younger killed
    - Still Salvation came into the world
  - The Scribes and Pharisees crucified Jesus to the cross
    - On the third day, Jesus rose from the grave
    - Crucifixion could not keep God's purposes from being fulfilled
  - What God is doing, is greater than you and I, or any other obstacle that might try to stand in the way
  - God's purposes are going to be fulfilled, because God is greater than all of it!
- Brings us back to the invitation- There's no room for doorkeepers
  - What will we allow ourselves to get wrapped up in?
  - Are we willing to make room for Jesus?
  - One day Jesus will enter the world again, but this time he won't be offering an invitation. He's coming back to receive those who have believed in him, repented of their sins, and been faithful to the call.
  - Accept the invitation, make room for Jesus now, be a witness to the world.