

Sermon Title: **New Years – Do You Have Room for Jesus?**

Written: December 30, 2017

Preached: December 31, 2017

Scripture Reference: **Luke 2:1-7**

Thesis: **Luke records the incarnation of God coming as a man in the form of a little baby;**

Purpose: **In this message we will discover the importance of making room for Jesus.**

Key Word: "Time"

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Luke 2:1-7** (Black 58 / Red 71)

A) The Setting:

- 1) Well, here we are, another year has passed.
- 2) **All week we have seen news agencies recalling people & events that made news during the previous year.**
 - (a) Many magazines also include articles by experts predicting what they expect to see happening in the years ahead.
 - (b) **The new Farmer's Almanac has come out making predictions for the next year's weather cycle.**
 - (i) Some of these predictions have proven to be amazingly accurate,
 - (ii) While others couldn't have been more wrong.
 - (iii) So, take it or leave it; tomorrow we will begin a new year.
 - (c) **As we approached Christmas there have been a flurry of ads claiming how all the latest electronic devices will make our lives easier.**
 - (i) What I see is that most of us seem to be busier than ever.
 - (ii) We're always in a hurry... we walk fast, talk fast, & eat fast.
 - (iii) And after we eat, all too often, we stand up & say, "Excuse me. I've gotta run."
- 3) **So here we are, at the last Sunday of 2017.**
 - (a) I wonder how we'll do in this new year?
 - (b) Will we be as busy?
 - (c) Will we make good use of our time?
 - (d) In 365 days ahead, when this year is over, will we be looking back with joy, or with regret?
- 4) **In Luke's gospel he gives the best report of what happened at the time of the birth of Jesus.**
 - (a) Remember it was Luke who investigated and reported so that all could know HIS STORY, the history of Jesus.
 - (b) It was Luke who explained how a Nazarene could be born in Bethlehem and how He could be born in a stable cave.
 - (c) **Therefore, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Luke 2:1-7.** (Black 58 / Red 71)

B) Sermon Prayer

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **So, as we bring an end to this year and look forward to the next, I thought this would be a great time to take stock on our priorities as we look forward to the New Year.**
 - (a) I thought an approach for us to do this is to take a little play on the wording of our scripture today covering the birth of Jesus.
 - (b) Jesus was born in with the cattle because they had no room at the inn.
- 2) **Because of the census order by the Emperor everyone had to return to the town of their ancestors.**
 - (a) Because Joseph and Mary were of the lineage of David, they had to go to Bethlehem.
 - (b) It had to be a difficult journey for many; but to take a 3 day walk with a wife expecting a baby at any moment; had to have been even more arduous.
 - (c) For those of you who have traveled with someone so far along in their pregnancy you know that you have to make frequent stops because of the child sitting on their bladder.

- 3) **Since they could not make good time, Joseph and Mary must have been one of the last ones to arrive.**
 - (a) No hotels, space a premium, and what few inns a small town would have were full by the time they got there.
 - (b) Don't be too hard on the innkeeper for he must have taken pity on this young couple offering them the only space available.
 - (c) At least they would be out of the weather.
- 4) **Did he really have no room? Why not give up his bed? Maybe he already had?**
 - (a) We don't know but the sad statement here was that there was no room left available in the inn.
 - (b) Do you think he would have made room if he knew that this baby was the Son of God?
- 5) **The question is ... have you made any room for Jesus in your plans for 2018?**
 - (a) We don't have any excuse to say we didn't know who He is.
 - (b) So, are we making a room for Jesus in our plans for the New Year?
- 6) **There is another passage of Scripture that I believe can be of help to us as we look forward to 2018 if we'll listen to it.**
 - (a) That passage is **Ephesians 5:15-17**, listen as I read it;
 - (b) **"Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."**

TS: **I think that in this passage the Apostle Paul presents some important lessons that we need to consider.**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **OUR TIME ON THIS EARTH IS VALUABLE BECAUSE IT IS LIMITED¹**

- 1) **This is a warning that we must be very careful how we live.**
 - (a) The Psalmist wrote, **"Show me, O Lord, my life's end & the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life"** (**Psalm 39:4**).
 - (b) And again, **"The length of our days is 70 years or 80, if we have the strength...they quickly pass, & we fly away"** (**Psalm 90:10**).
- 2) **Now, I realize that when some of you were younger ... 70 or 80 years sounded like a long, long time.**
 - (a) In fact, I can remember when I thought anyone over 40 was ancient.
 - (b) **But no longer. It is all rather relative, isn't it?**
 - (i) ILL. For example, for teenagers in love talking together in the car, an hour or two seems like a blink of an eye.
 - (ii) But for mom & dad worrying about what's going on out in that car, an hour or two seems like an eternity.
- 3) **The Psalmist also tells us to number our days so that we will develop a heart of wisdom.**
 - (a) **ILL. A few years ago People Magazine published an article entitled "Dead Ahead" telling about a new clock that keeps track of how much time you have left to live.**
 - (i) It calculates an average life span of 75 years for men & 80 years for women.
 - (ii) So, you program your sex & age into the clock, & from then on it will tell you how much time you have left.
 - (iii) It sold for \$99.95.
 - (b) **I didn't buy one; but it is an intriguing idea.**
 - (i) Isn't that what the Psalmist told us to do to; number our days?
 - (ii) When I heard about the clock I calculated that if I lived to be 75 years old that I have just about 4,860 days left to live.
 - (iii) **That's all, less than 5,000 days left to live, sobering thought, isn't it?**
 - (c) **But wait a minute; if you think about it, neither you nor I have a guarantee of even one day more to live.**

- (i) To put this in perspective, that means I have already used up over 22,000 days of my days on this earth.
 - (ii) Don't laugh; some of you are running past the average expiration date.
 - (iii) Are you on borrowed time?
- 4) **Ill. When John Lennon of the Beatles fame gave his last interview;**
- (a) He said that he hoped that he could live the rest of his days loving people.
 - (b) Little did he know that he was only minutes from the end of his existence on this earth . . .
- 5) **The Bible tells us not to count on tomorrow because tomorrow may never come for you or for me.**
- (a) All we have guaranteed is right now.
 - (b) **So, our time on this earth is valuable because it is very limited.**

TS: The second lesson for us to learn is that because our time is limited we must . . .

B) Key Point #2: MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY²

- 1) Paul tells us that we must make "***the most of your time.***"
 - (a) And he gives a reason, "***because the days are evil.***"
 - (b) **Jesus said that Satan is a robber & a thief, & one of the things he tries to rob from us is our time because time is a very precious possession.**
- 2) **But it is not just sin that makes demands on our time; sometimes, even good things can make demands.**
 - (a) ILL. Jesus went to the home of Mary & Martha & Lazarus.
 - (b) He sat down to teach, & Mary was sitting at His feet just soaking in every word.
 - (c) Meanwhile, Martha was out in the kitchen preparing dinner.
 - (d) **Now, you know the story; it is found in Luke 10.**
 - (e) Martha gets upset because Mary is not in the kitchen, too.
 - (f) So, she complains to Jesus, "***Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!***"
 - (g) "***Martha, Martha, Jesus answered, You are worried & upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, & it will not be taken away from her***" [Luke 10:40 42].
- 3) **Now was Martha committing a sin by fixing a meal in the kitchen?**
 - (a) No, of course not!
 - (b) But here's the problem.
 - (c) She was so preoccupied with what she was doing that she didn't realize that God was in her living room.
- 4) **APPL. That's the same mistake you & I make almost every day.**
 - (a) We get so caught up in the here & now that we fail to deal with the eternal,
 - (b) The things that will last forever & ever.
- 5) **ILL. Richard Swenson, a medical doctor, wrote a book in which he discusses one of the major maladies of our time . . . anxiety & stress; he calls it "overload," & says that people are just plain overloaded.**
 - (a) **We're overloaded with commitments.**
 - (i) We've committed ourselves to go here & there, to take part in this activity & that social function.
 - (ii) As a result, we soon begin meeting ourselves coming & going because we have overloaded ourselves in the area of commitments.
 - (b) **We're also overloaded with possessions, he says.**
 - (i) Our closets are full, & our garages are overflowing.
 - (ii) We've gone into debt to pay for all of these things that we "simply must have."
 - (iii) And now we're so afraid that someone will steal them.
 - (iv) We are overloaded in the area of possessions.
 - (c) **Thirdly, some of us have an overload in the area of work.**
 - (i) We get up early, fight traffic, & experience intolerable working conditions

- (ii) Because we have to if we're going to pay for all those possessions that we've accumulated.
- (d) **We are also overloaded because we are on a fixed income and trying to survive in retirement.**
 - (i) Many have to take a job or go without.
 - (ii) You don't have the energy you once had; and yet still find it difficult to live.
 - (iii) Or if you are lucky enough to be okay it seems your children are struggling and you want to help them out.
- (e) **Then today there is also an information overload.**
 - (i) He said that as a doctor he has to read 220 articles a month just to keep up with all the changes in his profession.
 - (ii) And now with the internet there's an information superhighway.
 - (iii) The problem is that we can't possibly absorb it all.
 - (iv) So, we feel an overload in this area, too.
- 6) **SUM. I could go on & on, but you get the picture.**
 - (a) There are so many demands on our time,
 - (b) So many good things that need to be done.
 - (c) But there are just 8,760 hours in this year.
 - (d) Well if we want to make the most of every opportunity, what are we to do?

TS: **Well, to answer that, Paul tells us, "... not to be foolish, but. . .**

C) Key Point #3: **UNDERSTAND WHAT THE LORD'S WILL IS**

- 1) **Do you think you have any idea what God's will is for you in this New Year?**
 - (a) Do you think He wants your mind so saturated with worries & anxieties that you can't think spiritual thoughts?
 - (b) Do you think He wants your calendar so crowded that you don't have time for the important things?
 - (c) Have you made a plan to make sure you have room for Jesus in your day?
- 2) **Let me make a couple of suggestions for you to consider. First of all, establish your priorities.**
 - (a) I'm assuming that since you're in church this morning that you believe God should be a part of your life.
 - (b) But when you begin to establish priorities, you have to decide just where He stands in your life.
 - (c) So, ask yourself, "**Who or what is most important in my life?**"
- 3) **And I'm hoping that your answer will be, My MOST important relationship is first with God, through Jesus and His Holy Spirit.**
 - (a) **If this is true, then put that at the top of your list of priorities,** and say, "**This will affect ALL my decisions,** My scheduling, My relationship with others, and My whole outlook on life."
 - (b) **Therefore, when Sunday rolls around I will make my time of worship with the Lord a priority.**
- 4) **Another priority for us is the need to schedule some quality time each day to pray and read God's Word.**
 - (a) We need to pray for ourselves and for our families;
 - (b) We need to pray for people around us that God lays on our hearts.
 - (c) We need to pray for the other members of the church.
 - (d) **Pray for our missionaries.**
 - (i) Sometimes they feel so alone and far away.
 - (ii) You will never know how much your prayers will mean to them.
 - (iii) But you will be blessed as you grow in your faith and trust in the Lord!
 - (e) Pray that God will give you opportunities to talk to others about Him; and of course, **pray God will give the right words to say when He answer's that prayer.**
- 5) **Make time to spend with your family.**
 - (a) Every husband and wife ought to have a date night.

- (b) I'm serious; you ought to have a date night, a time when just the two of you get away and try not to let anything else interfere.
- (c) **A time without interruptions where you can just talk.**
 - (i) It may be at a nice restaurant or even a quiet dinner at home.
 - (ii) Wherever it is, spend some time together.
- 6) ILL. **Someone said, "Life is what happens to you while you're making plans to do something else." True, isn't it?**
 - (a) Another year has come and gone and now we have a new year stretching out before us.
 - (b) Lord we ask that you help us to redeem the time well.

TS: **So, to summarize;**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

- A) **Like most of you the days are fewer ahead of me than are behind me in this life.**
 - 1) I want to live the rest of them as unto the Lord.
 - 2) I want to finish strong and well.
- B) **Do all you do as if you are doing it for GOD!**
 - 1) BECAUSE WE ARE!
 - 2) We are Ambassadors for Christ.
 - 3) Others are watching how we conduct our affairs to see if we back up our beliefs with our actions.
 - 4) I know we cannot be perfect; but, it is all in how we deal with our mistakes that people will notice the most.
 - 5) Some think it is a sign of weakness to admit our faults; but, it is really a sign of strength.
 - 6) When we show true humility; people are more willing to forgive our shortcomings.
- C) **And I have to tell you that God isn't interested in getting you to a destination in this life.**
 - 1) It is not about getting to the point where you can just retire, "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry!"
 - 2) **Jesus called the rich man who built bigger barns so he would be set for life a fool.**
 - 3) His life was over that very night.
 - 4) **God is more interested in the process of our learning to walk each day depending on HIM.**
 - (a) It's not about the religion; **it's about our relationship with the creator** who made it possible to be reconciled with Him through the sacrifice of His SON.
 - (b) All we are asked to do is accept Jesus and surrender our lives to His Control.
 - (c) **So, make sure you have room for Jesus in your life this year.**
 - 5) **I want to wish you all a very Happy New Year and close with this blessing; During the New Year may you have:**
 - (a) enough happiness to keep you sweet - enough trials to keep you strong,
 - (b) enough sorrow to keep you human - enough hope to keep you happy,
 - (c) enough failure to keep you humble - enough success to keep you eager,
 - (d) enough friends to give you comfort - enough wealth to meet your needs,
 - (e) enough enthusiasm to make you look forward to tomorrow,
 - (f) and enough determination to make each day better than the day before.
- D) Invitation: **Let us Pray:** **Lord, please help us to use the 8,760 hours of this coming New Year in the wisest way possible for You, and Your glory.**

IV) Bibliography

¹ New Years - NOW IS THE HOUR! by MELVIN NEWLAND, sermoncentral.com, January 2009.

² Ibid