

Sermon for Sunday, December 20, 1970 by Andrew A. Jumper, Pastor  
Central Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri

## "NO ROOM IN THE INN"

Text: "And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

The event had its beginning in Bethlehem when the inn-keeper hung out his sign that said, "No Vacancy." And the event came to a wretched conclusion in Jerusalem on a hill called Golgotha, which meant, "the place of the skull." It ended like it began with a man hanging up a sign, only this time the sign read, "This is the king of the Jews." When the man on the cross was limp and still, some friends came to take the body away. Back there in the beginning at Bethlehem there had been no room for him to be born. Now that he was dead there was still no place for him, so they buried him in a borrowed grave. And between the Inn and the borrowed grave he had once said there was no place even for him to lay his head.

It seems to me that on that ancient day the busy, bustling inn there in Bethlehem was the world in miniature. You see, we have to ask ourselves why there was no room for Jesus. And the problem is, that whatever answer we give is the answer by which our world today must be judged. Or, to put it another way, is there any room for Jesus today? Is there room in your life for Him? As you look at the world in which you live, do you see much place for Jesus--is there any room for Him?

For one thing, the people in Bethlehem were too busy for Jesus. From all across Judea the people whose ancestral home was in Bethlehem were returning to register for the census so they could be properly taxed by the Romans. And Bethlehem, usually so quiet and sedate, dozing away the centuries, was bustling now with the press of the throngs as they came to register. Most of the visitors were anxious to get their business done and return home. The residents of Bethlehem were just as busy and anxious to make the greatest possible profit from this sudden influx of visitors. So everyone was busy.

So, when a pregnant woman and a travel-weary man came to the door of the inn, they came to a place and they came to a people who were simply too busy for them. Life seemed to have thrust more upon them than they could possibly do and there just wasn't enough time to do everything. In a case like that, people do the expedient thing--they push God out of their lives.

That busy little inn, filled with its busy people. . . .people anxious and troubled, people occupied with duties, people hurrying about their assigned tasks, engrossed with their affairs, is the world in miniature. Is this not true of your life and of mine? It isn't that we don't care. It isn't that we are not concerned about Jesus and about religion and about God. No, it isn't that. It's just that we are so busy right now. If Jesus would come some other time when we did not have so much to do, surely we would be more receptive and gracious and receive the Lord with honor. Yes, most of us this morning have the best intentions about our religion, but we are so busy--so engrossed with the affairs of life and living, so occupying with our duties and responsibilities that there simply is no place for Jesus in our lives.

One is reminded of the parable Jesus told about the sowing of the seeds. Some fell on