

## **Make Room: The Story for All**

### ***A Special Time of Year***

Good Morning, my name is Darrell, and I am the Director of Family Ministry here at FUMC| Bakersfield. All that means is that it's my job to make sure the youngest of us here learn just how much God loves them and the impact that he can have on their life. This morning, it's my privilege to share that same truth with all of you as well.

Everyone knows what happens this week, right? Christmas. How do we know that Christmas is coming? The decorations come out. The lights go up, the music starts, the cookies get baked, the parties begin to happen, relatives, you haven't seen since last year become part of your life, you get to watch movies that only seem appropriate for about six weeks every year. Christmas is a unique time of year where many of us alter the current state of our lives for the observation of a particular event.

### ***What "Christmas," tells us***

**We are all told that Christmas is a unique time of year.** Our culture seems to focus on the external trappings of the season with an emphasis on spending money on friends and family. Everything is shiny and bright, with ringing bells and baking smells, red satin bows and Ho Ho Hos. 'Tis the season: to be jolly. In fact, billions of dollars are dedicated to telling us that Christmas only happens once a year and that we have to do our part to make it what it is. At Christmas, our world doesn't just sell us stuff; it sells us the idea that we have to do our part to bring joy, hope, peace, love, and all other kinds of positivity into the lives of those around us.

This focus on what on the world's view of Christmas is not a bad thing. Lots of good can come out of this season. But, it does pose a question: Is it our job to do all that? **Is it our responsibility to bring joy, hope, peace, love into our world?** In some ways, this question serves as a double-edged sword for many of us because the answer is both yes and no. We do feel we have an obligation to serve those needs, but we also all know people whose needs are too big for us to meet. After all, Who can bring joy to a widow who is experiencing her first Christmas alone? Who can provide peace to the single parent who is experiencing Christmas apart for the first time? Who can bring hope to a terminal cancer patient who may be experiencing their last Christmas here on earth? Who can fill the void of a child whose parent will be absent for the first time this Christmas? None of us can.

Now you're probably thinking, "Well, Darrell, Thank you for killing every ounce of Christmas Spirit that was present in this room. Here we are enjoying positivity, and you've got to come and throw a wet blanket on all of it." I understand where you are coming from; it is a frustrating thing to realize that no gift, Charlie Brown Christmas Special, or a perfectly cooked

Prime Rib will rid our world of brokenness and pain. However, we need not lose hope. The bible tells that even when our feeble attempts fail, there is something and someone that can bring about joy, hope, peace, and love into even the darkest places. His name is Jesus, and he was sent to this earth to bring healing when nothing else could.

### ***The Good News***

I want to quickly draw your attention to the passage that was read in service earlier today. This passage appears in two different places in the bible: The book of Isaiah and the book of Luke. Today we heard the passage from Luke, and while this may not seem like a “Christmas” passage, I believe that no scripture has more meaning at Christmas than this one. **In this passage, the baby who was born in a manger in Bethlehem announces what he has come to earth.** Luke 4: 18-19 states,

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”**

**Luke 4:18-19**

Five things. Good news to the poor, liberty for the captives, sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed, and proclamation of the Lord's favor. Do you know what those five things represent? Hopelessness, sin, brokenness, loss, and the destruction of evil. **By taking those five things, head-on Jesus is announcing to the world that he is the Messiah, the one who God has sent to save the world.** See, Jesus isn't quoting a meaningless Old Testament prophet here; he is quoting something called messianic prophecy. This proclamation means that Jesus is the reason we can celebrate. **Jesus is the reason we can believe that when our attempts to bring joy, hope, peace, and love to others fall drastically short, they can still be found, not just at Christmas, but all day, every day.** Why? Because Jesus is that baby we celebrate on Christmas, that baby who was born in that manger, THAT baby grew up to be a man who came to earth with no other purpose than to be the most significant expression of love the world has ever seen. Jesus makes love a reality. Jesus makes peace a reality. Jesus makes hope a reality. Jesus makes joy a reality. Jesus makes CHRISTMAS a reality.

### ***Do You Have Room?***

Jesus makes Christmas a reality. That's a simple truth. **All that stuff you love about Christmas, that stuff that makes this time of year unique, those themes exist because of what God has promised, and Jesus has done.** Today, you have a choice. You can make room for God to impact your life, or you can continue to try and find joy, hope, peace, and love from

somewhere other than the source. Do you have room in your life to embrace God's story? Do you have room in your life to embrace his love for you? That's all he wants.

Has Christmas lost its magic? Are you in a place where joy, hope, peace, and love seem absent? Has Christmas lost its meaning? Are you finding that despite your best efforts, you can not bring joy, hope, peace, and love to someone who needs it most? Maybe it is time you created space for Jesus to come in and show you the true meaning of Christmas. It is all about him and what he offers to you. It is in him that we find a reason for joy, a reason to hope, a reason for peace, and a reason to love. He is inviting us into the most excellent story of all time. All we have to do is "Make Room."

## **Pray**