

Being Wise:
“Be very careful, then, how you live -
not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity,”
Ephesians 5:15-16a

CREATING SPACE – *NO VACANCY*

STARTER QUESTIONS:

What is your favorite part of the holiday season?

What is your least favorite part of the holiday season?

On a scale of 1 to 10 how busy are you during the holiday season as compared to the rest of the year? (Answer honestly...)

MAIN IDEA:

We are currently in a series titled “Creating Space”, and discussing how we can make room for God in our lives.

On Sunday, Pastor Hank discussed how we often make Christmas about everything except Jesus’ birthday and how busy we get around the holidays. Hank asked us some important questions that may have many people re-thinking their holiday plans and traditions this year, and we are here to talk about that and what we can do to put Christ back in the center of our Christmas celebration and back in the center of our lives, where he belongs.

To recap the message or in case you missed it; Pastor Hank made three important points about why people might miss out on Christmas and what you can do to prevent that from happening in your life.

1. Hectic vs. Holy. Don’t have your life so busy that you miss God speaking to you. Make time for reflection and to listen to God. Psalm 46:10
2. Familiarity vs. Fascination. Don’t be too familiar with the Christmas story, be fascinated by it each and every time. Matthew 2:1-5
3. Independence vs. Dependence. Make your life dependent on God to enjoy the life he created for you. John 10:10

If you find that you are one of those people who often get overloaded during the holidays and find that you may not always have the right attitude this Christmas season you’re probably human.

Read Luke 2:7

and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NIV)

Pastor Hank talked about being busy or not having space in our schedule during his message and made a point about how the inn keeper didn't have room for Mary and Joseph and had no idea of who (God) was trying to use the inn.

Can you think of a time when you were busy or in a hurry and didn't always listen to or make time for someone?

Hank's point about the inn keeper was that when we are busy we can miss out on God trying to use us in creative ways.

What are some practical ways that we can make sure we make room for God in our lives this holiday season?

Read Ephesians 5:15-17

Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (NIV)

Pastor Hank discussed being too familiar with the story of Christmas and the birth of Christ. Hank discussed instead of being familiar with the story we should be fascinated by it, not taking it for granted. Realizing that the reason for the season is to celebrate Jesus' birth, life, and gift of salvation.

What holiday traditions do you practice in your house or with your family during the holidays?

Have you ever found that holiday traditions take away from the meaning of Christmas?

Read Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The last point that Pastor Hank made was about finding dependence on God instead of trying to stay independent. Pastor Hank discusses the life choices of King Herod and how Herod killed anyone near him to ward off any threat of being overthrown. Herod also ordered the killing of all of the boys, 2 years and younger, hoping to kill Jesus out of fear that Jesus would overthrow him and take Herod's power away. The point was that King Herod wanted, needed, to be in control. Many people are much more like Herod than we probably want to admit. We all want to be in control. We all know that we should surrender our lives to Christ, and many of us have at one point or another, but surrender is a decision that we face each day, with every action, every minute of our lives. Surrender is one of the hardest things humans do, give up control. Becoming dependent on God will enable us to live fuller, happier lives; the way God intended that we live.

Read John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Read Psalm 139:3-16

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them."

Read John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

FINAL THOUGHTS:

We were made by God, to be connected and dependent on God. Ask God to help you not miss the meaning of Christmas this year and enjoy the season to its fullest.

CLOSE IN PRAYER**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE:**

1 Corinthians 3:16

John 1:1-51

Genesis 1:26

James 1:17

NO VACANCY
“Creating Space”
December 3, 2017

Why do some people miss Christmas?

1. Hectic versus Holy

“(Mary) brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:7 (NKJV)

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

Psalms 46:10 (NKJV)

2. Familiarity versus Fascination

“Some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, ‘Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.’ When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, as were all the people in Jerusalem. Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law and asked them where the Christ would be born. They answered, ‘In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures.’”

Matthew 2:1-5 (NCV)

“Some people have missed the most important thing in life--they don't know God!”

1 Timothy 6:21 (LB)

3. Independence versus Dependence

“Some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the newborn king...?’ King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this... called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he... told them, ‘Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!’ ...When it was time to leave, they (the Wise Men) returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. ...Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance.”

Matthew 2:1-16 (NLT)

“The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.”

John 10:10 (GNT)