

Make Room-3
“Make Room For Seekers”
Matthew 1-12 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment and welcome our first-time guests and those worshipping with us online!

We're in week three of our Advent series called “Make Room.” Now if you're unfamiliar with Advent, the word Advent means “coming.”

Advent is celebrated as a time of expectant waiting and preparation leading up to the celebration of Jesus' birth, which we celebrate on Christmas Day...

It's a time for us to look back and remember with wonder and amazement the incarnation...

The fact that God became a man...

Jesus the second Person of the Trinity...Jesus our Immanuel...which means “God with us” Steps into the world He created...to rescue and deliver us from sin and death...

So we look back and we remember, but we also look forward and we anticipate and prepare for His second coming...

So in week one the big idea was that we need to “make room” for Jesus...Those who don’t know Him as Lord and Savior, need to make room in their hearts for Him...those who do know Him as Lord and Savior, need to make more room for Him...

Last week the big idea was that Advent reminds us that we need to “make room” for others...God loves the world...and He wants wants all who are willing to be with Him for all eternity...But the time is running short...

His return is imminent and so we as His church should be preparing the way for the Lord by being His hands and His feet...By being a light so that they can find their way home...by following His example and being a friend to those who are far away from God!

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi[a] from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

6 “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’[b]”

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.-Matthew 2:1-12 (NIV)

The title of my message this morning is “Make Room for Seekers”

Pray

Before we get into our text today, I have a confession to make...I am constantly misplacing things...I drive my wife absolutely crazy...I can walk into a room and lose my keys in about 30 seconds...

One year she got me a device to put on my keys and it connects to an app on your phone and the device beeps so you can locate your keys...Yeah I lost the device before I could put it on my keys...

Jacob's Wedding/Lost Keys

In the midst of all of this chaos I was searching for answers...How am I going to get my family home safely?

You see, we only seek after something when we are in need...

When I found those keys...I was overwhelmed with joy...I was praising God

Advent reminds me that the good news about Jesus brings true joy to the hearts of those who are seeking spiritual truth...

In our text, Matthew tells us about these magi, or some of your translations may say "wise men"

They were most likely descendants from the ancient Persians and Babylonians...

They were a religious group who were skilled in philosophy, astrology, and natural science...and they were known as “wise men” because they were often used as advisors to kings...

Matthew isn't the only one to mention the magi...In fact they show up hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus in the O.T. book of Daniel...

The Magi were spiritual advisors to King Nebuchadnezzar...

If you're not familiar with the story...God's people Israel turned their backs on God, and so God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to conquer Jerusalem...

Nebuchadnezzar brought many captives with him back to Babylon including a young teen named Daniel...

Daniel kind of gets his start because God gives him the ability to interpret a dream for Nebuchadnezzar...a dream that the magi (the “wise men”) of Babylon could not interpret...and because Daniel did that, he was placed as the chief of the magi in Babylon...

Why is this important?

Well it helps us to understand why the non-Jewish magi in Matthew chapter two are looking for the King of the Jews...

Why would people from what is now modern day Iran & Iraq travel all the way to Jerusalem to inquire about a Jewish King?

The answer has to be Daniel...

Daniel a Jewish Prophet...becomes the head magi and He not only stays true to God while in captivity, He speaks to the other Jews and magi through prophecies that there would be a Messiah born...

...A King who would rule over Israel and the whole world

As time goes by the magi still had access to all of Daniels writings as well as other OT scriptures like

A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter (a King) will rise out of Israel.-Numbers 24:17 (NIV)

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. -Isaiah 9:2 (NIV)

So the magi see this star...we don't know exactly what the "star" was that they followed...but here's the point...

It was significant enough to make these non-believers take notice of their own beliefs and ideologies and start asking questions...

Hey what if there's more than what I believe? They started searching for answers...What if these ancient prophecies are true? What if there is a coming King?

The first thing that I want you to see today is

God makes room for **SEEKERS**

God has always made room for seekers...This idea is throughout the whole Bible...

In the very first book of the Bible in **Genesis chapter 3:9** God calls out to Adam & Eve After they've sinned and asks "Where are you?"

It's in the very last book of the Bible in Revelation chapter 3 Jesus says...

20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.-Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

It's in the writings of the prophets...

13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity.[b] I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."-Jeremiah 29:13-14 (NIV)

15 I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. 16 I will search for the lost and bring back the strays.

I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.-Ezekiel 34:15-16 (NIV)

God makes room for seekers because He loves them! Think about this...God chose to reveal the birth of His Son to non-believers who only believed in science...who practiced things that God said were evil and demonic...

They were into astrology, they practiced divination and witchcraft...and God revealed His truth to them because they were searching for the truth!

You know who wasn't searching? The religious people...the chief priests and teachers of the law...They knew the scripture...they knew that the Prophet Micah said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but they weren't hungry enough to go and look for Him...

We live in a time where spiritual hunger is at a high...people are searching for the truth...And they're turning to mysticism, spiritualism, paganism, humanism, relativism...

They're putting their trust in their own ability, or in crystals or their looking to the stars for the answers...Why?

Because they have a God-shaped hole in their hearts that only Jesus can fill!

Maybe you're here today and you're asking the same question that the magi were asking...
"Where is He?"

My life is so dark right now...

I feel so alone right now...

I'm trying everything that the world has to offer, and nothing's working...

I need to know where is God in all of the chaos and violence and sickness and injustice...

I want you to know that we celebrate that question, because we've all asked it, and Newsong is a church that believes that if we keep asking that question, just like the star led the magi to Jesus, the Holy Spirit will lead you to Jesus!

In fact, Jesus said...

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.-Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)

God makes room for seekers...

The second thing we see from the text is

We can **RECEIVE** or **REJECT** King Jesus

When the magi finally found Jesus verse 11 tells us that they received Him as King...They bowed down and worshiped Him as King...

But King Herod rejected Jesus as King...Was actually jealous of the thought of another King other than himself...Matthew tells us

16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: 18 "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."-Matthew 2:16-18 (NIV)

So I'm curious, and I ask sincerely...those of you who have found Him...what's your response?

Don't need Him?

You got this?

You don't realize it but you're rejecting Him...

Maybe you're like some people who say
Yeah...it's a good story, but I'm not ready for all that...Or I did that whole church thing when I was younger, but you know...

Maybe like Herod, you're the only king you want in your life...There's no room for someone else calling the shots...So you furiously oppose even the thought of Jesus...

Maybe you're watching today and like the religious leaders, who actually knew where the scriptures about Jesus were, but they wouldn't go and see Jesus for themselves...

You don't have a church home...

You don't get involved with fellowship...

You don't worship Him...you just know about Him

It's not too late to make room for Him...

Make Him the King of your heart...It's not too late to let Him sit on the throne of your life...

Because whether you want to believe it or not...whether you want to accept it or not...

Jesus Christ is King, He's the King of kings and the Lord of lords and one day the Bible tells us that every knee will bow to Him, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord! That's our prayer for every person who is seeking Him!

As I said last week, Advent isn't just about us looking back and remembering Jesus' first coming...

It's about us looking forward to His second coming with wonder, hope and joy! We the church should be preparing the way while we're watching for His return!

So if God makes room for seekers...Then we His church should make room for seekers too...

How do we do that?

Well it goes back to last week's message, and asking God to help us be a friend to those who are far from God...

Just before we officially launched our church in 2014, I was interviewed by an online Christian news publication called The Christian Post...

They were interested in why we chose to start NSC in Co-op City when at the time it already had (and still does have) many houses of worship...

I remember the reporter was intrigued when I said that our vision is to reach people who are far away from God and help them become fully-devoted followers of Jesus one step at a time...

In order to do that...

We want to be a church where you can **BELONG** even before you fully **BELIEVE**

The reporter was like what does that mean exactly? What was clear 10 years ago is even more clear today...

That is we live in the largest city in the world, and yet people feel alone...People are longing for relationships...they're looking for meaning and purpose in life...they're looking for a place to belong...a community to be part of...a place where they will be accepted...

Family, the only way for us to make room for seekers is to continue to be a church where our doors are open to everyone...

That you can find acceptance and community while you're still asking questions...while you're still having doubts...while you're still seeking...

Now this raises some eyebrows because it goes against a religious mindset that says you have to believe before you can belong...

Again, our model is Jesus...

He was a friend of sinners...He welcomed them to follow Him...He invited them into community...He met them right where they were and He simply invited them to be part of something...

He said "follow Me" But He never watered down His message...He never lowered the bar...He raised the bar, by telling the them the truth

See, that's hard for many people to wrap their brain around because our world says that if you don't agree with me you can't possibly love me...

If you don't affirm me then you can't possibly care about me, you could never be my friend...

Our world teaches us that if you accept me that means that you have to approve of everything that I do and say...that's a lie

Jesus accepted everyone but He didn't approve of or condone their sin. Many walked away from Jesus, but others followed with their fears and doubts, and eventually believed that He is the Savior of the World!

As I look out at your beautiful faces, I know that many of you came to our church seeking the truth...and you found a safe place to land...

A safe place to figure it out...To bring your questions and look to the Word of God for the answers...And the Spirit of God drew you to Jesus...

For some of us, that was a long time ago...And we forget what it feels like to have doubts about faith and God...

We forgot what it feels like to “lose our keys” so to speak...to be searching...but we have to ask the Holy Spirit to help us to always make room for seekers in our church!

That NSC will always be a safe place where everyone from everywhere is invited to join our community where they can

8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.-Psalm 34:8 (NIV)

That our church will always be a place where
it's okay to not be okay but it's not okay to stay
that way...

That our church will always be a hospital where
people get a chance to meet Dr. Jesus who is
able to heal them every place that they are
hurting...

Advent reminds me that I should be making
room for Jesus...Making room for others...And
making room for seekers no matter how
imperfect they may be...

Because God made room for me...
When I was seeking after the truth...
Jesus met me right where I was...
And I discovered that God

Isn't distant or angry...
He's not out there somewhere...
Uninterested...Uninvolved...Unloving

No He's Immanuel...
He's God with us...
We are never alone...
He seeks after us...
He is patient with us...
He stands ready to save us...
He will pull us out of the darkness...
And place us in His glorious light!

What's the Holy Spirit Saying to you?

Maybe you need God to help give you a love for those who are lost in their sin...Ask God to give you patience and wisdom...

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you talk with people and not at them...to walk with them and not run away from them...

Maybe you're here today and you've been searching for the truth...Jesus stands at the door and knocks...Let Him in!

Altar Time

