

Hello Everybody.

Well Christmas is almost upon us again! - do you enjoy this time of year?

It's usually the case isn't it? - That Adults usually say NOooo - Children say YEAH to Christmas.

It's a great time for Children.....

And for many this is a very difficult time of year – being on their own - having no family. – And if you know someone why not drop around or give them a phone call in this Christmas season.

It can be a very Positive time also though! - Most people appear to be in a generous mood – it's a time of giving – good will etc.

However It does appear that Christmas has being hijacked - doesn't it?

I was reading a story the other day about a mother taking her young son around the shops – dragging him from one shop to the other - suddenly in one shop the young lad sees a nativity scene with baby Jesus lying in a manger – look he said ! Its little baby Jesus! – To which the mother replies “you don't want to be bothered with that nonsense we haven't got the time”.

In fact as you probably know - they are even trying to rename Christmas due to 'political correctness' - to remove the Christ out of Christmas and rename it “Winter Festival” or Winterville (B,ham) it does seem to be indicative of our times – political correctness and all that – and we do seem to have lost the 'reason for the season at Christmas'. But more fundamentally their appears to be **no room for Jesus in people's lives today. – No room in our schools – in our politics and even incredibly - no room for Jesus in our Churches!**

But it's nothing new - if you look at the Christmas story from the very outset there didn't appear to be room for Jesus. There was an attempt to sideline him – make him out to be insignificant and unimportant - I am sure you all know the story of Mary and Joseph who went up to Bethlehem so Mary could give birth to Jesus - looking for a place to stay.

And in Luke 2:7 says “And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn”.

There was no room for him (I guess if it was King Herod or some other political figure at the time they would have found some room at the Inn)

It reminds we of someone who was looking for a room in a hotel at Christmas and the receptionist told him there was no rooms left – hang on a minute he said tell me this ! If the Queen was coming would you find her a room? – Yes of course the receptionist said – Well she's not coming so I'll take her room he replied!

But there is a danger for us all - for Christians - for those that have a belief - **that we don't make enough room for Jesus - we are too busy or too distracted by 'other things'** but more

importantly for those who don't have a belief that they make **no room for him at all** - close the door in his face - tell him to move on! To find another place of lodging.

But Jesus is continually knocking on our door - revelation 3:20 says "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".

In truth - There is no excuse for not making room for him because his voice is always audible. Calling out to us to move over to make room for him in our lives.

All of life is there to remind us of the reality of Jesus – **To make room for him in our lives**

Have you noticed how often Children ask questions - incessant streams of "Why?" and "Why not?" and they persevere until they get an answer.

We seem to lose that skill as we get older - and it's a shame – and we seem often to get self-conscious about it, prefacing our questions with phrases like "this might be a stupid question, but..."

But life seems to throw up an abundance of questions - it not a smooth ride is it? Things happen to us and those around us that make us ask questions about our own personal world - our beliefs - it often shakes us out of our comfort zones.

For me it was when my father died – he had a heart attack and died quite young and I was with him when it happened - I was a teenager at the time but it made me stop and think and ask questions - like how could this happen ? - Where has he gone? What if it happened to me it put me on the road of searching for answers. –

The death of someone has a sobering way that makes us ask questions!

But it doesn't have to be a traumatic event like that - it could be everyday things all around us.

Babies - How can anyone not consider the reality of God when they see a baby - a unique set of chromosomes and genes that no other human being that ever lived will share? The amount of information encrypted in just **one cell** in the human body is equal to that of 1,000 books.

Or take flowers **Flowers**. There are more than 400,000 species of flowers in the world; their job is to simply make the world beautiful. Did they just haphazardly evolve over time, or did a loving God create each individual shape and colour scheme for our enjoyment?

Romans 1 says this: "They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them.
²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

See, I believe God has given us overwhelming evidence - from that 'space' within us that can only be filled by God, from things that happen to us - those good and bad things in our lives - to

the things all around us in creation and in nature – There really is no excuse for not making room for him in our lives - for rejecting his voice for not turning to him.

But as I said earlier - there is a danger also for those of us that do know God that we don't make **sufficient room** for him in our lives.

I went on one of those speed awareness courses a few years ago now. You know the ones where you have exceeded the speed limit and you're caught on camera – (I'm not a serial offender just one of those lapses in concentration you sometimes have)

Anyway, they give you the option of paying more money to go on the course than you would with the fine - but of course you don't have the stigma of 3 penalty points on your license

In fact, I found it quite beneficial – and it involves a practical training and assessment

Firstly, I took the wheel and after 20 minutes or so the instructor asked me to pull over, he then took the controls and drove the same section through a busy town I had previously negotiated, giving an analysis of my driving strengths and weaknesses along the way (more of the **latter**, I fear!) As we drove on I was amazed at his awareness, pointing out hazards and road signs I was not even aware of.

His final comments to me were (more or less) **“all these things are there, but you need to increase your awareness of them. Think outside the box “!**

I was so involved in the road ahead that I missed many of the things I should have been aware of - and sometimes it's like that in the Christian life – we are preoccupied - even in what we think are good things - and we can miss what God is trying to do - but **God** is active all around us, and sometimes we are not quite tuned in or aware he is even there.

I am reminded of the story of Mary and Martha from Luke 10 - I will read it to you:-

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one.^[a] Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

You see Jesus central message in this story was: make room for me – Don't get distracted by these “other things” no matter how good or noble they seem.

For me recently it was Brexit...

But also have we made room for Jesus for God in the ordinary / everyday things of life – Can God be **there also** without us recognising him - and It's is easy to put God in compartments – you know Sunday Services, meetings, events - even quiet times – **A God slot** - but never to include him in the everyday things of life. – But God wants us to make room for him there also.

And the truth is most of our lives is just an ordinary existence - Getting up – washing – working - eating –driving – it is what we have to do.

If that's where we are 99% of the time the ordinary – So, is it that God is not interested in meeting us there? Does God say to us - Those things you are doing are so mundane, so boring they couldn't possibly hold my interest - no not at all - this is what he says

Proverbs 3.6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths

In all your ways? – You mean all those ordinary things? **Yes**

Or what about this from Philippians 4.6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God – in every situation? **Yes**

Here again from 1 Corinthians 10:31

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” – whatever I do? - You mean when I eat and drink? – Yes what a challenge for us Christians to include God in every area of our life. To make room for him – he doesn't want part he wants all.

But as I said earlier Many today have crossed the Christ out of Christmas (Xmas) this is tragic but the greatest tragedy of all is they have crossed him out of their lives altogether they have no room for Jesus and the real Christmas is lost.

I came across a poem the other day that expresses this tragedy:-

On that holy night when Christ was born.
There was no room for Him in the inn.
In a lowly manger lay God's only Son,
The great Redeemer and Saviour of men.

When Christ started His ministry here,
He was rejected by His own **race**.
They had no room for His teachings.
They rejected His message of **grace**.

They crucified the holy Son of God

On a cruel cross on Mount **Calvary**.
They thought they would end His life.
They had no room for Him, you see.

Jesus Christ arose from the dead.
Many still just would **not believe**
That Jesus Christ was God in the flesh.
His message they would **not receive**.

Today many still reject our Lord.
They have no room in **each heart**
For the holy One Who shed His blood,
For salvation of souls **to impart**.

Many even say "Happy holidays."
They seem to display no shame
As they take Christ out of Christmas.
They leave out His holy name.

Do you have room for Jesus Christ
Who died to save you from sin?
Make room in your heart today
And let the precious Saviour come in.

My friends & those that are walking with him - I say this Christmas have you made sufficient room for Jesus in your life? Remember the reason for the season – Don't get too distracted by the Christmas attractions. Look to see that you are focused on him.

And for those here tonight who don't know Jesus – I say – “ make room tonight for him in your life” .

For The Good news that was bought by angels to the shephards at the birth of Jesus is still true today.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

This is the Christmas message – This Christmas you can start a new life with Jesus as saviour and friend.

Amen.