

## No Room

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I am truly blessed. My wife is a good innkeeper's wife. She has found a place for every single person who has come through the door. She just informed me people are so packed in the inn, not even a newborn baby would fit.

As it is I will be sleeping standing up. If I sleep at all. Family from out of town, strangers, and people we haven't seen in a many years have invaded our small town. All thanks to Caesar Augustus wanting a census. What is God thinking? We get stuck with this guy in charge and look what happens.

Was that a knock? Please say it wasn't. Who travels after dark anyway? It is far too dangerous. All manner of evil is out. It was a knock.

I'm going to have to oil that hinge, it creaks something terrible. Oh my! She is with child.

"Please, come out of the night. I am rather full but let me see if I can find a place for you. Stay here. I will be back."

What am I going to do Lord? I cannot throw them out into the streets. Bethlehem is a small town. I would be forever remembered as a cranky old man who didn't want to be bothered with the trifle things. My reputation is on the line. But there is no room in the inn! What will I do?

Yes. I know. I shouldn't be bothered with idle talk. Be content in all circumstances? How can anyone be happy with this sort of problem? Alright. Alright. Alright. I will try.

I am happy Caesar Augustus only demanded a census and not internal plumbing in every house. With this many people the commodes would be overflowing. Ha!

"I am sorry. I realize you are both tired. I don't even have a chair for your wife to sit on. Here is some water. Excuse me."

"Yes Jonah. Ah! I'm glad you got all of the animals parked in the stable. You're right. There were many of them. How did you place them? Nose to tail? Not bad. How much room is left?"

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Two oxen could fit in? Excellent! Reposition them with their noses toward the feeding trough.

Yes, I know that only leaves ten percent of the stable for use. Oh! Take care of any new messes.

Put fresh hay in the manger!”

Lord, you have a sense of humor. For which my wife may kill me when she finds I have put a pregnant girl and her husband in the barn.

“I have found a place for you. It is the worst room outside of the house. It is warm and has some privacy; as long as you don’t mind the stench. Let me help you to the stable. No. No. It is free of charge. I cannot image the journey and the room is terrible. If you stay long enough I have a bit of property with a house on it. After the noses have been counted, the cousins will leave and they will no longer require it. Unfortunately, I have had no time to keep it in good conditioning. You’re a carpenter? Fix it and I will not charge you rent. Excellent! It is settled.”

“Here we are. Warm. I do not have blankets to offer. The last guest to arrive took my own. What I have to give you is appalling, but it is all I can provide. Hmm. I might have something you can use. I will have it brought out.”

“Abigail! I want you to go upstairs and get the last of the cloths you can find. There is a pregnant woman in stable that is in need of them. I don’t like it either. Where else was I supposed to put them?”

Now maybe I can sleep. Huh. Standing up.

“Your back soon Abigail. Slow down. I can’t understand you. She’s what! Now? Go do something women do. I know nothing of this. Okay. Okay. Go get my wife. I will have to face her wrath sooner than I thought.”

I do not know what you are up to Lord, but this is one crazy night. I would go cry in the corner if there was one to be found.

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Did music come out of the hills? I must be hearing things.

“The baby is born! Wonderful! How is the mother? Exhausted. Naturally. The baby is healthy, yes? Hallelujah!”

“Jonah! Go change out the hay again. Why? A woman had a baby in the hay. I don’t care right now if it means you are unclean. My job is to make sure the guests are comfortable. I will personally buy the sacrifice. No! It isn’t too big of a task. And don’t run away from it. I’m checking in five minutes.”

I knew naming that boy Jonah was a bad idea. He’s afraid of fish, water, and big jobs. Always too overwhelming.

“Abigail, is Jonah.... Good.”

“Benjamin! My brother. What brings you out of the hills tonight? I thought the sheep weren’t due down for at least another week. They are still up there. A what? One at first but more came later. More what? You saw an angel? A whole multitude of them? No wonder you are that color. One angel slew 186,000 people with sickness in one night. Yes. I know you know that story.”

“My stable? What about it? They said to come worship a child in my stable. Oh no! How embarrassing. Yes. There is a baby in my stable. Yes. You can go. Wonderful? You are excited? A Messiah. Pardon me. The Messiah?”

Lord, everyone knows the Messiah is to come like a warrior and rid us of the Romans. He will be King over Your people. Yes Lord, Your way is not everyone else’s. What have I done to be the one to house such a treasure? A willing heart. Then I too will go worship the Messiah. This is one outrageous night!