

This Is God's House; We Are His Family: There's Still Room!

A sermon based on John 14:1-4

The snow blanketing the ground had finally melted. The temps were on the rise. She knew what all that meant...garage sale season was about to be in full swing!

But this year, she was going to start things off a little differently. You see, over the years, she'd been starting to accumulate a few items from those sales. Ok, so that her house was getting a little cluttered was a bit of an understatement. It was borderline "Hoarders" TV show material. Stuff needed to go!

So, she was going to have her own garage sale. A couple of weeks later, she had her tables all set up...all of her treasures neatly laid out, generously priced. 9 o'clock rolled around, and the potential customers started pouring in. It was looking like it was going to be a great day. But there was just one problem. "How much are you willing to sell this for?" one person asked. "Oh, that's not for sale." To another customer, "I don't know how that got on the table. I'm definitely keeping that." She just couldn't seem to let anything go. They were all so precious to her.

It was looking like she wasn't going to complete a sale, that is, until her husband stepped out, and gently, or maybe not so gently reminded her, "You can't get new stuff if you don't get rid of the old. There's simply no more room for anything else."

Maybe you've had situations like that before. Maybe cleaning out the closet, and "oh, but my mom bought this for me. I'm sure I'll wear it sometime." Or, downsizing your tool collection, "But this was the one that I used on that one project, and it's never let me down..." Or, looking to donate some of your toys, "But this stuffed animal has been one that I've had since I was a baby." It's hard sometimes to downsize, isn't it?

But, often times, to be able to make room for the new things, you have to get rid of the old. Our houses can't store everything we want to keep. There's always simply never enough room.

Now, when we started this sermon series a few weeks ago, we said in God's house and in this family, there was simply no more room. Do you remember what that was in reference to? Fighting, gossiping, anger, hatred, loveless acts, they are not wanted here. They don't belong there. As much as our sinful nature desperately longs to hang on to these sins, there's no room here for that.

There's only room for love. Being kind, compassionate, patient, humble, loving as siblings, living in harmony with each other, that's what belongs here. Everything else needs to be tossed into the trash.

Well, today, I want to alter that statement, that there's only room here for love. I want to slightly modify that statement. The truth is, there is still room. There is still room in this family. There's still room, especially in God's house, for more souls.

That was the encouragement Jesus gave to his disciples in our sermon text for today. He had just given them some tough news. He had told them he wouldn't be with them much longer. He was going to a place where they couldn't follow. In more or less words, he telling them he was going to suffer and die. It was the kind of news they wouldn't have wanted to hear.

Jesus knew it, and so he told them, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.” Amongst the harsh realities of Jesus’ upcoming suffering and death, there was a silver lining. It was all for their good. It was all for their eternal good.

And that comfort is for us as well. We know Jesus lived. We know Jesus died. We know Jesus lives again. And right now, he’s in heaven, preparing our rooms. You know, the King James, in place of that word rooms, uses the word mansions to describe the dwelling place for us in heaven. So, these are not five by five cells that Jesus is hastily putting up for us. No, there is room for us in heaven, in God’s house, and we get to fill it.

I’m not talking about filling it with toys, or all the clothes you could ever want or that 100 in. flat-screen TV you’ve had your eye on. No, there’s room in God’s house, and we get to fill it with souls. Right? Isn’t that what Jesus was getting at when he said, “Go and make disciples of all nations”? Isn’t that what Jesus was talking about when he said, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation”?

It most certainly was. As members of this family, it’s our privilege, it’s our duty, to fill God’s house with more children. It’s our privilege, it’s our duty to proclaim the gospel, the good news of Jesus’ death that comforts troubled hearts and souls.

But are we always eager to do the work, to do God’s work? I mean, I’m already good with God. You’re already good with God. We’ve got our room in heaven already scoped out. As far as our eternity goes, thankfully, we’re sitting pretty right now.

But do we sometimes become content with that being the extent of our concern for eternity? We know Jesus is the only way to the place where we’re going but not everyone does. Are you ok with that? Are you ok with just leaving it at that?

“Well, I think she’s a Christian. She’s kind and courteous to others at work, always seem eager to volunteer her time to help wherever she’s needed. She seems to be on the right track, so I’d like to assume she’s a believer, but I guess I’ve never really taken the time to ask her.”

“Well, my neighbor, I’m pretty sure he goes to church. I mean, he’s always coming over with questions about Jesus and what the Bible says about this and that, but I try to change the topic because I’m not comfortable talking about my faith. But hopefully he’s already good with God, so I don’t have feel like I should talk religion with him.”

“My friend’s been going through a rough time...lost his job recently, got dumped by his girlfriend, his dad’s in the hospital. I’m not quite sure how to comfort him. I don’t want to seem too pushy or like one of those holy rollers who are always talking about praying for others, so I just tell him I hope everything will get better.”

We know what those are. They’re excuses. There’s a lot of times where we avoid talking about our faith and, even more importantly, avoid talking about our Savior. We let those excuses hold us back from having some potentially, yes, awkward conversations but probably the most important conversation you could ever have with a person.

You see what we’re doing by our inactivity, don’t you? Whether it’s our intent or not, sometimes we show that maybe we’re just not that concerned about their souls. Jesus says to us, “I’m preparing all the

rooms here in heaven, there's plenty of room here, now go and let people know that." And we're quick to put up the "no vacancy" sign. "Oops, there's no more room for you. Sorry, but it's not worth telling you about what Jesus has done for you."

Now, when you have to part with something that means a great deal to you, doesn't it cause you pain? Well, it troubles Jesus to see people, precious souls, being lost for eternity because they haven't heard the gospel and believed in him. And so, too, it troubles us to see people missing out on the greatest thing that's truly out of this world. And it troubles me when I'm to blame for that. It troubles me when I miss out on opportunities to share Jesus with others. And I hope it troubles you, too.

If it does, here's the gospel's comfort. "Do not let your hearts be troubled." That's God's message to us when we sin. That's God's message to us when fail to be his messengers...Do not be overburdened by your sins. Why don't we need to be? Because we have the antidote for our troubled hearts. We have the healing balm for our sin-sick souls. We have Jesus.

You see, we human beings, because of our sinful natures, we have no place in God's house because sin has barred the way. Sin was locking us out of God's house.

Something needed to be done. Something was done. Jesus came. His perfect life, in spite of all the troubles and temptations he face, that life opened the door of heaven to him, but his death, which paid for our sins, which cured our trouble souls, Jesus' death is what unlocked the door to us. Jesus' resurrection is the reassurance that heaven will stay unlocked for us, that we will have life there because Jesus lives!

And because Jesus lives, there's room for us in heaven. We have a room. Do you know what that means? The word for room literally is "dwelling place." It implies permanence. Any of you who have moved before know how hard it is to pick up your life, your possessions, your family and go to a new place and start putting down your roots all over again. But that won't be the case in our heavenly home. Because Jesus lives, he's preparing our rooms, and when he's done, he's coming back to get us. And, once we get there, we're never leaving. We'll never want to.

That's the good news that assures us of our place in heaven. That's the good news our hurting hearts yearn to hear. And now, there are other souls out there who are hurting, who need to hear this gospel comfort. And the good news is, there's still room.

So, how can we get that message out? Here is certainly one place where the good news of Jesus is proclaimed week after week. There's always more room here. Even if we had to go to three of four worship services, there'd always be more room here for people to come and find that comfort Jesus' death brings. But it doesn't have to be just here. You have opportunities every day to advertise for heaven, to share your Savior with the people who matter to you most, at work, at school, with family, with neighbors, with friends.

And why do we share this good news? It's not because we're so concerned about filling this house. No, we want to fill God's heavenly house. And, the simple message you share could have an eternal effect on that person. You may never even know it. If I talked to five people this past month about Jesus, and I shared the gospel, invited them to check out our church, and not one showed up...yeah, I might be bummed. But if they never came to our church but were brought to faith by the Holy Spirit because of that conversation we had, the victory is even sweeter! That's what it's all about.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, in this family, there's no downsizing needed. We don't need to push out the old to make room for the new. There's always room here for souls, but even more importantly, there's still room in God's house. And we get the best job. We get to share our loving Savior, and when we do the work, our Savior works the results. He's prepared the rooms. He will fill them, and when we finally get to our room, we will rejoice forever. Amen.