

Make Room #1 – Make Room for PEACE!

Isaiah 2:1-5

Announcements:

Psalms 27:13-14 - PRAY!!

Opening: Today we are starting week 1 in this season of Advent! Advent is the 4 weeks that lead up to Christmas. It comes from the Latin word *ADVENTUS* which means arrival. In the season of Advent we take time to wait, to remember the waiting that took place before Christ arrival. At the same time we live in a present where Christ has come so we live in a present reality of God's presence with us in Christ. Yet we long for Him to come again, we look forward to a future of hope as we wait.

-This Advent we are doing a series mainly in the book of Isaiah which we are calling, Make Room! To make room is about creating space in our lives for that which we deem important. It's the image of pushing other things aside to open up our lives for God's presence.

-Have you ever had to make room in your life for a new addition, for something that was important to you?

ILL – Foster Children Invite

-Years ago, our family started this journey of becoming Foster parents. We went through the training, got our certifications and we had hosted some kids with us for short periods of time. Life had progressed a bit, at this moment in our life our oldest son had just turned 1 when the phone rang from our foster agency.

-They called and said, we know your son just turned 1 and we were wondering if you'd be up to host a foster child. We said, sure! They said, well it's not just a foster child, it's actually foster children. We said, hmm tell us more. They explained how it was actually 3 siblings ranging from the age of 4 all the way to newborn. That is was an emergency situation, they needed to be all placed together, quickly!

-Here's the thing, at this point in our life we were living in a 1 and ½ bedroom apartment. Our son had the small ½ bedroom while we had the other one. We were presented with this option - We had to Make Room!

-Our foster rep came out, we said, Ok here's the thing, we think we might be able to do this if we gave the big bedroom to the 3 siblings, our son took the ½ bedroom, and we'll sleep in the living room. He looked at us and with a smile said, Yeah – SOUNDS GREAT! We looked sheepishly at one another and wondered if this was the best idea...

-We make room for what we care about! When something is important to us, we make room for it in our lives. We make room because we are convinced that it is vital we have space for this thing, for this person, for this job!

-The question we are asking in this series is, 'Are you making room for God's presence in your life?'

-It is hard for us to make room in our lives for God because often our lives are over stuffed with activities, meetings, and distractions. How can we open up our lives to God's presence?

-To Make Room for God occurs when we open our life to an alternative future of peace amongst a present time of 'war' or conflict!

-This week my sermon is entitled – **Make Room for PEACE!**

Text

-Advent is a season of looking at the past, reflecting on how Israel waited for their savior. It's a season of reflecting on our present – are we living in Christ's presence now? It's a season of looking at the future – believing in hope that Christ will come again. The now but not yet!

-This is about how we live in light of time! James KA Smith says it this way, "Christians are futural people. Every day we pray for God's kingdom to *come*. But as long as we are praying it, it hasn't yet arrived, which means we are also a *waiting* people. Christians keep time differently because we are citizens of a kingdom that will arrive from the future. We need to know *when we are now*, it's a recalibration of our present."

-What Smith is summarizing is that we live our lives in the present by believing in a future that is to come! Christ has come but we long for Him to come again! We live toward the King returning.

-Psalm 24:10 summarizes, "Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!"

-Through this series we are mainly looking at the book of Isaiah, a book about waiting! The people in Isaiah are waiting on a Savior, waiting on God to show up anew – Isaiah writes poetically pointing toward a future of hope, to create an urgency in the present.

-Our text today is Isaiah 2:1-5, through this text we are asking, are we making room for God by believing in His Peace?

-We start today by saying, in order to make room for God's presence in our lives, we have to make room to see!

1. Make Room to SEE! – VV.1-2

-Isaiah 2:1-2 "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz **SAW** concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be **established** as the highest of the mountains, and shall be **lifted** up above the hills;"

-Isaiah 2 begins with a coming sign! It says the Word of God came to Isaiah. An image of God's word creating an image of what is to come. Isaiah SAW!

-V.2 begins, "It shall come to pass in the latter days..."

-This is Advent language! Words that speak to us in the present, the present of turmoil, the present of hardship, for some the present that may seem hopeless and full of discouragement. It speaks to us in the present by pointing toward a future that is to come! Look ahead!

-It's the image of speaking to kids who are tired of walking and pointing toward the destination – it's right up there, can you see it?

-Walter Brueggemann defines it this way, "It is a vision, an act of imagination that looks beyond present dismay through the eyes of God, to see what will be that is not yet."

-This speaks to us now in a delicate way. It's a proclamation of hope that beckons to our lives that reside in a present of despair. It's a recalibration of our sight not to only see in the now but to see in the not yet.

-Isaiah 2 begins with the prophet pointing up ahead toward a coming day of hope and asking, 'Do you see it?'

- For us to make room for God's presence we have to have eyes that see!

-Isaiah is pointing up ahead. What is he pointing at? V.2 continues, "It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be **established** as the highest of the mountains, and shall be **lifted** up above the hills;"

-Look up ahead, do you see it? Look at the mountain, it's rising, it's emerging as a sign for us to see!

-Isaiah is a book full of poetic imagery and right away in this passage we see this poetic image of a mountain emerging that is to catch the eyes of all people to see God's presence appearing!

-The mountain is a sign – it's a visual to say things aren't the same here, it's a visual to show us that God is showing up here!

-The question we must ask ourselves is, do we see it? Are we looking in the right direction? Are we aware of God's presence emerging?

ILL – NYE Ball Drop – Story about Rae

-Our friends were telling us a story about how years ago they visited NYC during New Years Eve. They got bundled up and made their way to Time Square to watch the annual tradition of the ball dropping to start the year.

-As they waited, they looked up and them and their friends all were saying, Oh there it is, there is the ball, there in the sky by the buildings. My friend turned toward his wife and asked, do you see it? She looked up toward the buildings, say something round and said, yeah, yeah I see it.

-The big moment came, 10, 9, 8, the ball was dropping to signify the start of the new year. As all these friends celebrated, my friend's wife stood looking confused, he asked, what's up, she said, look the ball isn't dropping. He pivoted and looked and discovered, she wasn't looking in the right place, she was just looking at a construction crane in the distance – she didn't see it!

-I think many times in our lives, we can get caught looking in the wrong direction. We can operate our lives with God in this way. I think at times if you grew up in the church, you can assume you are seeing something, but in reality you haven't ever really owned your relationship with God, so you stand with others and shake your head, yeah I see it, but you aren't really seeing it! You've got to invest in your own spiritual life to get to that point!

-We miss God's presence in our life through distraction, through misplaced priorities, and honestly through sorrow and disappointment, doubt, and unbelief.

-Seeing is believing but believing is what leads us to seeing!

-Are you instilling times throughout your day to stop and try to see God showing up in your life?

-Prayer is a practical aspect to this. Because when we pray for specific things, for specific people, we are slowing down to see if God is showing up in these areas.

-Isaiah points toward the mountain and says, LOOK! Look at the Rising Mountain, it's a visible sign, God is here!

-How are you seeing?

-To make room for God's presence we have to create space to see, second though we have to make room to GO!

2. Make Room to Go! – V.3

-Isaiah 2:2-3 continues, "and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob."

-What begins with a sign to see, continues with an invitation to GO! The rising mountain isn't just a spectacle to observe, it's a sign that initiates movement in our lives to go toward it.

-Isaiah says all the nations shall flow to it. Like a river that is flowing and rushing towards its destination.

-What is this mountain that is rising? Well in v.1 we see that this vision is about Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the great city of God, it's built on a mountain, 2,474 feet in the air. It was the city of God's temple – His dwelling place. What we see in this poetic image is Isaiah is saying, the great city of God, the place of God's temple is rising as a gathering place for all people to flow to it.

-It's at this sign that people are proclaiming, "Come, let us go!"

ILL – Sandhill Cranes Migration

-This past week if you were outside at all during the day, you most likely heard the loud chirps and birdcalls of the Sandhill Cranes migrating for the winter. It was reported that some daily counts of those migrating were 10,000! Every year in November, these birds see the signs of winter, seeing the signs causes them to GO!

-It's not enough to see God's presence in our life, the seeing has to lead to the prompting to respond to it, to go toward it!

- For us to make room for God's presence we have to be willing to go!

-The restoration of Jerusalem, the rising of this city, is what leads to people flowing to it.

-Often when we see God showing up in our lives, we have to respond to it, will we go? Will we move toward it? In other words, are you willing to let go of the control and the grip you have on your life and entrust it over to God?

-The image in Isaiah is people seeing God's presence, saying, come let us go! It's seamless, no debate on whether it's worth it, they grab their essentials, and make their way to it.

ILL – Spirit Airlines

-Many times when I fly I look for the cheapest deal, which is usually Spirit Airlines. Now this is only the cheapest flight if you somehow can fit all of your belongings in a small bag that doesn't need to be checked or isn't considered

a carry-on. So when I fly Spirit, I'm cramming everything into my small backpack, only the essentials make it in!

-Is God's presence an essential to your life? Is the visual of seeing Him, leading you to grab your essentials and move in obedience toward His call to Go?

-The people declare, 'Come let us go!' Why?

-V.3 "that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

-The movement to go is to learn God's ways, to walk in God's paths.

-The truth is that we won't be willing to go, to move in obedience to God's calling unless we discover the value and vitality of it to our lives!

-Every year in Advent we are invited to reflect on our lives and ask, are we looking for God to show up? Are we living lives that are waiting on Him?

-I know waiting and watching isn't attractive invitations. To wait and watch is about slowing down, about asking before deciding, about seeking before going, but it's vital to how we rely on and live in obedience to God!

-Are you going toward God's presence in your life?

-We see which leads to going. Lastly, to make room for God's presence, we have to make room for transformation!

3. Make Room for TRANSFORMATION! – VV.4-5

-The rising of the mountain leads to the going of the people and it ushers us into a new way of living!

-V.4 "He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

-Here is where we discover the emphasis of Peace in this passage. Isaiah gives us this image of transformation. The transformation occurs as weapons that were used for war are transformed into tools that cultivate life. That which was used to harm is transformed into tools for peace!

-Peace isn't an ideal to shrug and eye roll away, in God's presence it's a reality that is to be lived into.

- For us to make room for God we have to be willing to transform how we live!

-This image of transformation is asking us, are we willing to transform our lives?

-The image of weapons being transformed into gardening tools is a contrast to how Isaiah's book began. In Isaiah 1:21-22 we see the wrong kind of transformation. "See how Jerusalem, once so faithful, has become a prostitute. Once like pure silver, you have become like worthless slag. Once so pure, you are now like watered-down wine." NLT

-It's the wrong kind of transformation that is taking place!

ILL – Home Alone Plan

-One of our families favorite Christmas movies is "Home Alone". The story of a young boy home alone taking down thieves.

-There is a part of the movie where it shows Kevin's plan, a transformation of his house into a trap for the robbers to fall into.

-I think of this image of transformation, but what Isaiah is saying is the opposite, God is going to take that which brought harm and transform it into that which brings life!

-Isaiah says, 'neither shall they learn war anymore.' NO MORE WAR!

-God is a God of transformation! The transformation of the city, leads to the transformation of the population in it, which leads to the transformation of peace!

-This is a visual to discover the transformation that takes place in God.

-TRANSFORMATION ONLY TAKES PLACE IN CHRIST!

-Are you making room in your life for transformation in God's arrival?

-The arrival of Jesus, the presence of God with Us, is the announcement, the sign that God is here and the invitation is to draw near and receive His transformation in our lives! To let it change who we are!

-Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world, but be **TRANSFORMED** by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

-Transformation occurs when we stop trying to hold on to our ways of life that have been formed in the rhythms of culture, the ways that lead us to cling to our 'weapons of war' instead of letting go of them and receiving the transformation of peace!

-Isaiah 2:5 concludes with an invitation, "O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord."

-Seeing, leads to going, which leads to walking in the light of transformation.

-Paul writes in Colossians 2:6-7 "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so **WALK** in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

-That's my invitation to you this Advent season, see, go, and walk in the light of Christ!

-How? This Advent season pick a specific stopping point to seek God! Maybe it's in the morning before the busy of the day, stop and pray, God help me see you today! Maybe it's during your commute to work, God lead me to the right place? Maybe it's being honest with Him about a burden you are carrying, God lead me to transformation.

-Make room for God's presence this Christmas!

Conclusion

Prayer of St. Francis.