

25 Days of Advent

Seeing Jesus Through the Eyes of the Christmas Story Characters

ADVENT DAY 9: Dec. 9 – Innkeeper, the Unlikely Host

Devotional

In his book, *An Angel's Story*, Max Lucado imagines the scene at the Inn in Bethany when Mary and Joseph arrive.

"But don't you have just one room?" Joseph pleaded

"To be honest, I did. But only moments ago a large delegation arrived and took every last bed. I don't have a place for you and your wife."

Joseph tried to be patient, but his jaw was tightening. He leaned forward so his face was inches from the innkeepers. "See that lady in the cart?" he asked through his teeth. "She is my wife. She could deliver any minute. She nearly had the baby this afternoon in a wagon. She is in pain right now. Do you want the baby to be born here in your doorway?"

"No, of course not, but I can't help you. Please understand, I have no more rooms."

"I heard you, but it is midnight and cold. Don't you have any place for us to keep warm?"

The man sighed, looked at Mary and then at Joseph. He walked into his house and returned with a lamp. "Behind the Inn is a trail which will lead you down a hill. Follow it until you come to a stable. It's clean, at least as clean as stables usually are." With a shrug he added, "You'll be warm there."

Have you ever wondered why God didn't make a room for Mary and Joseph? Did He forget? Was He unable to change the circumstances? For crying out loud, He can do anything; why can't He make provisions for His child to be born in warmth and cleanliness? Lucado posits that God engineered the overbooking at the Inn to ensure they were out of sight and protected from enemy attacks. We don't know because Scripture doesn't tell us.

Lucado imagined the angels surrounding the stable, protecting Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

We were a wreath of Light around the stable, a necklace of diamonds around the structure. Every angel had been called from his post for the coming, even Michael. None doubted God would, but none knew how He could fulfill his promise.

Just stop and think about it for a minute. If you were the innkeeper, would you try to find some small space within the building? What about later that night after Jesus was born? I'm sure the shepherds didn't waste any time spreading the good news. Would you feel like a heel knowing you refused to find a place for the Son of God? Or would you be proud of yourself for having the foresight to offer the stable as an alternative?

It was certainly a night to remember!

Look Up – Connect with God

Read: Luke 2:1-7

Key Verse: “And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.” (Luke 2:6-7)

Pray: Lord, thank you for stories like this of the innkeeper that show us how the way we behave in all circumstances can have eternal consequences. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear you at work in and around us each and every day. May we not push you away because we have “too much to do;” may we always find room for you.

Look In – Family Memories

Discuss: Ever go on vacation and forget to make reservations? Then fail at finding a place to stay? I have, it's miserable! Relive those memories or talk about why you try and plan out vacations with accommodations ahead of time. Ask each other what you think the innkeeper was thinking that fateful night.

Activity:

- Advent Tree: make or select an ornament of a hotel or stable and put it on the tree. [Download Ornaments](#) or [Ornament Ideas](#)
- Advent Garland: put the key verse on a paper/card, assign #9, and attach it to the garland twine. [Key Verses](#)
- Advent Cards: select a card and see what the activity might be (i.e., go shopping for dad). [Family Activities](#)

Look Out – Connect with Others

Does your church have any missionaries who are coming into town that may need a place to stay? Consider opening your home so they won't be left out in the cold.