

A Weary World Rejoices Pt. 4

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Preacher: Anthony Parrott

[0 : 0 0] I know we have our kids in the room. Hello kids. Can you say hello kids? Yes, so I tried to keep this sermon under an hour just for you. So let's get started.

I want to tell three stories this morning, a personal story, and then two Jesus stories and try my best to tie them together. When I was six years old, I was living in a car with my biological mother, Toni, up in Seward, Alaska, a tidy little port town sometime in the fall, late fall.

It was cold. Our car was our source of home, transportation, heat, shelter. And my mom had made a mistake in the way that she cared for the car, and so the car had stopped working.

We had all of our belongings in there. It's where we lived. It's where we slept. It's where the heat came from. And I don't know how. I was six at the time. I have some memories, some distinct, some less distinct.

But somehow a family had come up to our car and sort of asked what was going on and how we were doing. And Toni, my biological mom, explained what had happened.

[1 : 1 1] And so this family invited us into the earth. And we stayed there at least one night, maybe two. I remember that there was a baby younger than me, very, very small, with this big, bushy head of hair that I would just brush and brush and brush.

As my mom talked to this family that took us in, give us a meal, give us a place to stay. Now, my story goes on from there. I'll eventually be put into foster care in Alaska, a little bit to Nat and Uncle be adopted.

But there were that day or two, these liminal moments, these in-between moments. The car had died. There was no more heat. And a family whose name I will never know, this side of heaven, took us in and provided care for us.

So that's story number two. Story number two comes from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 22. We're talking about the last week of Jesus' life, and I'll tell you why in a little bit.

The last week of Jesus' life, we read this in Luke 22, starting in verse 7. Then the day of unleavened bread came, Passover time, the time that the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

[2 : 2 3] And so Jesus sends Peter and John, two of his disciples, ahead of him and says, Go, prepare for us to eat. Which I love interjecting here for a moment.

I love that Jesus is subversive to the very end, because it was typically the lady's job to do all of the preparation for the holiday, for all the festivities that were going to happen at Passover.

And Jesus has female disciples. There was a gang of women who followed him around, financially provided for him, would be the only ones who would follow Jesus to the cross.

But Jesus doesn't turn to the women and say, Go prepare the meal. He turns to Peter and John and says, Go get ready. Maybe that's applicable for you today. I don't know. But here's a word. So Jesus says, Peter and John, go get ready for the Passover meal.

And Peter and John are like, Jesus, you are famously homeless. You have no place to lay your head. We don't have any property. We're not real estate moguls. Where do you want us to prepare?

[3 : 24] Jesus says, when you enter Jerusalem, you're going to see a man carrying a jar of water, and he's going to meet you. So you're going to follow him to the house that he goes into, and you're going to say to the owner of the house, the rabbi asked, Jesus, where is the guest room?

Pay attention to that word, the guest room. Where can I eat the Passover meal with my disciples? And the owner of the house will show you a large upstairs room with furniture already in it. Prepare for us to eat there.

So there's Jesus being subversive to the last, sending the men to go prepare the meal. Go find a place to stay. It's very like espionage, spy movie. Enter the city. You'll see a man carrying a jar.

That's the sign. Follow him. He'll tell you where to go. Okay? Jesus sends Peter and John. They find the man, and they go to the guest room. Now, the guest room is a Greek word, kataluma.

Let me hear you all say kataluma. Kataluma. It's related to the Greek word, luo, to loose. And the idea is that it's the place where you let loose, where you let down your hair, where you relax.

[4 : 25] In the guest room, the kataluma. And so Jesus sends the disciples. They find the man who leads them to the big house, who leads them upstairs. There's kataluma, the guest room where Jesus will have his final meal.

And I say this quite often when we do communion, that when you picture the Last Supper, where Jesus institutes communion, do not picture Da Vinci's painting of Jesus and 12 men posing for a portrait on one side of a table.

No, it's Passover. It's a big family meal. There's men and there's women, and there's children running around. It's a little bit wild. It's a little bit crazy. And they all settle in together. And they hear the stories of God's redemption and the life of God's people.

And so Jesus sends the disciples. They find the kataluma, the guest room, to prepare. And that's Jesus' last meal with his friends before his resurrection, surrounded by friends, men, women, children, all in a borrowed guest room that Jesus doesn't own.

John, Peter, the disciples don't own. Just some connection that Jesus made along the way during his life and ministry during his 30-some-odd years on planet Earth.

[5 : 35] Some friends who he knew who lent them a guest room to stay. Now, why do I bring up this story on Christmas? Well, you have to go back to the beginning of Luke's Gospel in Luke chapter 2.

And this story might make more sense to bring up today. It says this, I like to lovingly call Joseph the Virgin Gypsy.

She was expecting a baby. And while Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. So she gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, a feeding trough for animals.

Because there was no place for them in the guest room. The kataluma. Now, you may have grown up hearing the story a little bit differently. Maybe Charlie Brown Christmas presented as something a little bit different than what I just read to you about there being no room at the, what's the usual word?

The inn. Maybe the children's play of the grumpy innkeeper kicking out pregnant Mary and the Virgin Joseph away from the hotel where they were supposed to stay.

[7 : 17] But that's not actually what Luke says. Kataluma is used two times in the Gospel of Luke. Once in Luke 22. About go find the guest room where the Last Supper is going to be had. And then here in Luke chapter 2. So I know we're pushing back on like hundreds of years of biblical tradition, like translation tradition, church tradition. I want to paint a different image in your mind.

So the story is that imperial bureaucracy makes everybody's lives go upside down and you have to go back to your hometown to get your name put on a list, probably for tax purposes.

Joseph and Mary, their lives are already turned upside down due to an unexpected pregnancy, are forced to travel. They get to Bethlehem. Joseph's family's there.

They get to Cuz's house. Hey Cuz, how's it going? Yeah, we're here for the same. Federal bureaucracy is like everything else that goes on. But the guest room is full.

[8 : 15] The Kataluma is full. Most places had some place where family could expect to be able to stay. But there's family there already, most likely, because everybody has to go to their hometown.

So the guest room is full. But the family doesn't kick them out. The family says, it's okay. Come on in anyway. We'll make room. Now, the place where they have to make room is at the center of a Mediterranean home.

So a Mediterranean home, if you go look at like, you can see some of them today. You can go look at archaeology. You have it built around a courtyard. You have a gate, an initial place where you would enter in.

And then you keep going back outside. There's no roof and there's a courtyard where you might keep a goat to milk or a couple hens for eggs. And that's where it is in the middle of your home.

If you're rich, you've got two stories that you can look down into the courtyard. Or if you're, you know, probably just subsistence living, you've got one story with a little courtyard in the middle where you're a goat and your hens.

[9 : 16] So the family sees Joseph and a very pregnant Mary and says, yes, we know about the census. We know about the list making that the empire is making us do.

We already have family here. But please come on in. We will make room for you. Is it glorious? No. It's a baby who has to be born into a feeding trough for the goat.

But is it radical hospitality? Absolutely it is. This month we've been asking and attempting to answer the question, how does a weary world rejoice?

From that hymn, O Holy Night, a weary world rejoices. It admits our weariness and yet there's something joyful in the air. We've talked about singing songs of hope together.

We've talked about finding joy in community. We talked about naming our weariness, not ignoring it, not pushing it, shoving it down. And so today's final Advent sermon, how does a weary world rejoice?

[10 : 19] We make room. We make room for our weariness and for our rejoicing. We make room for our grief and for our gladness. We make room in the large guest rooms provided to Jesus at the end of his life, surrounded by family and friends, even one friend that will deny and one friend that will betray and another friend who knows that death is near.

We make room for the stranger, for a son and a mom whose car is broken down. We make room for the people that we knew were coming and yet we had lots of people come and so we're shoving things aside to make sure that they have a place to say.

We make room for the grief of what we thought Christmas would be like and what it actually is. For the Christmases that we remember with such fondness and the Christmases that we have now.

We make room by shunning, rantic busyness. We make room by betraying our culture as gluttony of being too full for anyone else or any other emotion but exhaustion.

Sometimes making room means we cast everything overboard except what is essential. Sometimes making room means standing room only, awkwardly leaning against the wall with a plate and a cup full of wine because every table is full.

[11 : 43] Sometimes making room means we cast every belief aside except the one that really matters. Yes, Jesus loves me.

Sometimes making room means embracing a friend who hurts you and wants to make amends. Sometimes making room means saying farewell to those who want to keep living.

Making room means making room. Making room takes wisdom and conversation. It takes an attempt and a failure. Messiness and serendipitous accidental beauty.

Making room means giving up perfection. It means it's better to have a Messiah born into a manger than out in the street. When we don't make room, we risk too much.

We risk cauterizing those still fresh part of ourselves that are able to experience joy. When we don't make room, we risk leaving something out in the cold that belongs in our lives.

[12 : 46] By making room, we risk. And every once in a while, when we risk, it's worth it. How do we find weariness?

Or how do we find rejoicing in a weary world? Finding weariness is easy. How do we find rejoicing in a weary world? We do it together. We do it singing songs of hope from time, age's past.

We do it by making room. I want to conclude with a poem by Jan Richardson calls, As On a Day. She writes, Call it the waters of salvation, or the garlands of madness.

Call it the grave clothes falling away, or call it the loosing of the chains. Call it what binds us together, fierce but fragile, but fierce.

Call it, he will rejoice over you with gladness. Call it, he will renew you in his love. Call it, he will exalt over you with loud singing, as on a day of festival. Call it the thin, thin place where the veil gives way.

[14 : 00] Or call it this. The path we make when we go deep, and deeper still, into the dark, and look behind to see the way has been lit by our rejoicing.

And that's why I said you left behind, because we're not trying to■■■ Chaoto, one of the things that I'm sure it makes for you ■■■■. And there is a being a heart that what brings me back to you guys, that the other half■■■ý minutes has gone 2off to see the Romeo and then whoår Quadro, that the remains the sí■■■■■■■, the tail will be küçé.

He or NObub turns the strain that the moon più Szoyói Gamino, it is the dream of the miracle he Çaçoui G officers very recently who qua Shirovma Hall.