

## Will there be Room in your Inn?

*Mary gave birth to her firstborn son.*

*She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger,*

*because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)*

Let's imagine an innkeeper in the tiny town of Bethlehem. Let's call him Ezra. Imagine that he's a devout Jew and praying loudly and pleadingly in the bedroom of his little inn. He's begging the Father to send the long-awaited Messiah. He has prayed for this all of his life and is now bitter because God has not answered his prayer. God has not kept his promise. Right in the middle of his bewailing, he hears a knock at the door. He ignores it, but the pounding only grows louder. Finally, he angrily stomps to the entrance only to find at his doorstep the most pitiable young couple he has ever seen. They are poor, smelly and dirty from the long journey. They are exhausted and desperate. The girl (*Did she call herself Mary?*) is terrified and in much pain. Her husband (*What was his name? Maybe Joseph?*) is barely able to hold her up as he begs the innkeeper, "Please sir, we've come a long way and her time has come." The innkeeper barks back, "You've disturbed my prayer and there's no room left in my inn anyway." Joseph, responds "But sir—" But the innkeeper slams the door shut. He goes back to his prayer and cries aloud to God, in the words of Psalm 13:

*How long O Lord?*

*Will you forget me forever?*

*How long will you hide your face from me?"*

This has been a difficult year and more than ever you and I are longing for a Savior to come and rescue us. Like the innkeeper we are frustrated that God has not answered our prayers—that God has not come to us in our misery. But the innkeeper's problem was not that the Messiah had not come, but that he unwittingly rejected him when he came. What if our problem is not that God has remained distant but that we, too, are slamming the door in his face because he is unrecognizable or unattractive to us? Christ came to the innkeeper in an unusual, small, and seemingly insignificant way. Might Christ be coming to us in some small, wholly unexpected, and seemingly insignificant way? Christ came to the innkeeper in a disturbing and demanding way. Might the same be true of how Christ is coming to us right now—right in the midst of our pleading for him to come and rescue us?

What would it mean for us to make room in our lives for Christ to come this Christmas? Perhaps to open up to him, we must first recognize his presence in the unusual and perhaps even disturbing way that Christ is knocking at our door. Perhaps to make room for Christ this Christmas would require us to let go of our demands and expectations of him and to humbly and gratefully accept him in whatever way he chooses to arrive.