

March 1, 2026

Once upon a time...

Characters:

- God is the Source of everything, the sovereign King, and a good and loving Father.
- Human beings are the crown of God's creation made in the image of God to be his representatives in the world.

Setting:

- The garden is full of God's glory, and everything is very good.
- The pattern of the kingdom is established. The kingdom of God exists perfectly as God's people in God's place under God's rule.

But then an evil serpent...

The Fall:

- The crafty serpent introduces doubt concerning who God is.
- Adam and Eve sin through their disobedience, and the sovereign King rightfully issues a curse that affects humanity's relationship with God, man, and the earth.
- Adam stands as our representative, which means we are born as sinners and bear the consequences of the curse.

The Promise:

- The sovereign King acts in sovereign grace by promising to send a Savior who will crush the serpent's head.

The heart of our King...

The Heart of the King—Love:

- Sin makes us guilty before God, and God's holiness does not allow him to overlook our sin.
- God's love compelled him to fix the problem of our sin and his holy need for justice.

The Way of the King–Covenant:

- The Noahic covenant gives us a foretaste of both coming judgment and coming salvation.
- The Abrahamic covenant gives us a foretaste of the gospel in that it highlights righteousness through faith, salvation through substitution, circumcision of the heart, and a longing for the heavenly city.

A kingdom of priests...

A Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation:

- God's people are to intercede on behalf of others and actively proclaim the excellencies of the Lord so that others may come to know him.
- God's people are to walk in a manner worthy of their calling.
- God's people are to represent their heavenly home by reflecting the holiness of God.

The Floor and the Ceiling of the Law:

- God's law gives us a firm foundation on which to stand and a high ceiling upon which to cast our eyes.

A dwelling place for the king...

I WILL DWELL AMONG THEM

"I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God" (Exodus 29:45-46).

1. Tabernacle

"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34).

Question: What is the purpose of the curtain?

2. Temple

"And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:10-11).

"[Solomon] said, 'O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart. . . . But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!" (1 Kings 8:23, 27).

3. Jesus

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us)" (Matthew 1:23).

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Questions: Was Jesus as a man omnipresent? Where is Jesus, who is still fully human, positioned right now? Why did Jesus tell his disciples that it was better for him to leave?

4. Hearts of Believers

"I will put my Spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:27).

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

5. The New Heaven and the New Earth

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God'" (Revelation 21:3).

PREPARE HIM ROOM

The King has gone to prepare a place for us, but right now we have the privilege of making room for him—in our hearts, in our homes, in our spheres of influence.

Questions: God wants to dwell with us. Do we want to dwell with him? What would it look like for us to prepare him room this week?

Make Room

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Not too long ago I spent some time in my girls' playroom clearing out old toys to make room for the new items they would be receiving for Christmas. My daughters were not at all happy with me when they walked in and saw the large pile of items that would be donated. They couldn't believe how mean their mom was! However, once they saw what awaited them on Christmas morning, they realized why I needed to make room. Their mourning turned to joy when they began to play songs on their new keyboard and turn flips on their new gymnastics equipment. They understood the purpose of shedding some of the old in order to make room for the new.

I recently heard a song called "Make Room" that stopped me in my tracks. It's a simple prayer of commitment that I want to carry into the new year. Here are some of the lyrics:

*I will make room for You
To do whatever You want to
To do whatever You want to*

*Here is where I lay it down
Every burden, every crown*

*This is my surrender
This is my surrender
Here is where I lay it down
Every lie and every doubt
This is my surrender*

*I will make room for You
To do whatever You want to
To do whatever You want to*

While it may be a simple prayer of commitment to say or sing, it's not necessarily an easy action to take. Making room for God to do what he wants to do involves removing things in our hearts that have become comfortable to us. It involves changing habits and thought patterns that have been a part of our routine for years. It involves surrendering the deepest parts of us.

Just like my daughters were not happy about saying goodbye to some of their possessions, we might not be happy about shedding some the things that need to go in order to make room for God to work. But also just like my daughters were filled with joy when they saw why it was necessary for certain things to be removed, we will be filled with joy when we see what God wants to do with us. So what does it mean to make room for him?

Make Room for Him Through the Reading and Study of Scripture

Time is limited, but we always make room for the things that are important or enjoyable to us. Trust me, we all have time to read and study the Bible. The question is: *Are we making time for it?* If Scripture is important to us, we will have no trouble making room in this area. Maybe it means picking a Bible reading plan for 2023. Maybe it means getting up a few minutes earlier each day. Maybe it means asking a friend to go through a devotional book with us. Maybe it means cutting back on watching television or scrolling social media so we can have structured time in the Word. Let's do whatever it takes to make room for God in this area. It is time well spent that will not return void.

John Owen says, "The glory of Christ is the 'pearl of great price' which we should make every effort to find (Matt. 13:45, 46). And the Scripture is the ocean into which we dive to discover this pearl, or the mine in which we dig for its precious treasures (Prov. 2:1-5). Every sacred truth that reveals something of the glory of Christ to our souls, is a pearl or precious stone which enriches us." Let's dive into that ocean. Let's dig into that mine. We must make room for the reading and study of Scripture every day.

Make Room for Him in Your Thoughts, Words, and Actions

We all have places to be, people to see, money to make, and lists to check. We are already committed to those things, but how can we make room for God in all of those areas? How can we more faithfully serve the Lord and allow him to use us and change us in what we are already doing? We need to ask for his wisdom as we plan our days, talk to others, and provide for our families. We need to be intentional about sharing Christ. We need to look up from our routines and see God's purpose in whatever we are doing. If we don't see his purpose in it, maybe it is something we shouldn't be thinking, saying, or doing. Owen says, "It is sad...that many can find time to think much on earthly, foolish things, but have no heart, no desire to meditate on [the glory of Christ]." We must make room for him in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Make Room for Him in the Midst of Your Trials

Making room for God to work is not a magic wand to make everything better and easier. We won't always have that "a-ha" moment of understanding exactly what God is doing in every circumstance. The Christian life is not a calling to prosperity and ease. It's a call to die to ourselves and follow Christ. Some days are easy, but some days are downright hard. We have limitations and frustrations and disappointments in this life. We have certain thorns of the flesh, as Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 12:7, that are meant to keep us humble. We have a battle to fight in terms of spiritual warfare. We must make room for God to work in the midst of our trials because he is working all things – not just the pleasant things – for our good (Romans 8:28).

Charles Spurgeon, known as one of the greatest and most influential preachers of all time, dealt with debilitating bouts of depression, but he made room for God even in his deepest struggles. He wanted his trials to go away, but he said God had 3 reasons for them: to keep him humble, to teach him to have sympathy for others, and to prepare him for larger blessings in ministry. Speaking of God's sovereignty over his trials, Spurgeon said, "It would be a very sharp and trying experience to me to think that I have an affliction which God never sent me, that the bitter cup was never filled by his hand, that my trials were never measured out by him, nor sent to me by his arrangement of their weight and quantity." He firmly trusted in the "granite promise that he rules over my circumstances and means it for good no matter what anyone else means." Making room for God in the midst of our trials means trusting in that "granite promise" of his sovereignty over our lives.

We can continue to make excuses, or we can make room. Let's make room for him as we start this new year. Nothing else – *nothing* else – can truly satisfy us.