

December 15, 2016

## Room In The Inn (Based on two true stories)

Sandy Lockerby was nervous. It was Christmas Eve evening, and his promotion was not working. They had advertised that any couple who could prove that their names were Mary and Joseph could stay there for free over Christmas this year, but it had not seemed to make any difference in their holiday reservations.

He remembered what he had said to the television reporter a few days ago. “We are trying to make up for the bad reputation the hotel industry got on that first Christmas, over two thousand years ago.” Sounded like a good idea at the time.

“Our hotel is much more comfortable than a stable,” he added for effect. “I just hope they don’t bring their donkey!”

Mary and Joseph were running much later than they had planned. The old Mercedes was running smoothly, and hummed along like it was brand new.

The traffic was heavy on the day before Christmas. Traffic was bumper to bumper, and the road was slick, with snow piled high along the shoulders. London was just 60 miles away, but it was near midnight, and the baby was due any time.

“Did you make the reservations, honey? I really don’t want to have a repeat of that Christmas in Bethlehem.” Mary took a deep breath as another contraction made its appearance.

“Of course, dear. They have a nice suite with two queen beds. And it’s right across the street from the hospital. We’ll be there soon.”

Joseph reflected on the people who may not have room for Jesus, after all the people God had blessed since that day in Bethlehem. He gave a silent prayer that many would find the child as their savior during this Christmas season.

Sandy looked out the front window, and a car pulled up. Then another and another, until the cars spilled out into the street. The first couple came into the lobby.

“Could I have your names, please?” Sandy waited a moment.

“Mary and Joseph. We’re here for your holiday special.” Their credentials checked out, so he gave them a room.

Next couple. Mary and Joseph. And the next one. The process was repeated again and again until all the remaining rooms were filled. This was going to play well in the media, but his bosses were not going to be happy with the night’s balance sheets.

The TV reporter pulled in, and began to interview the couples. They reflected on how they received their names, how they had met each other, and were given free appetizers and drinks in the dining area.

Another car pulled in. He had not yet put the “no vacancy” sign to flashing. It was an old Mercedes. The man helped the obviously pregnant woman out of her side of the vehicle. “Oh my Lord!” he thought. “Please tell me where I am going to put them!”

Sure enough, the names were Mary and Joseph. “We are here for the Mary and Joseph special. What a great promotion you are having! We are headed to the hospital tomorrow.”

“Well, I can’t believe I am saying this. I really don’t want to say this. And maybe we can find an answer before you go. But, there is no room in the inn!”

All the Marys and Josephs turned toward him. The television reporter hustled over for a great story. And the very pregnant Mary and Joseph looked at him expectantly.

“Um... Um... You don’t have a -- reservation, by any chance?” He could barely speak the words.

“Well, yes we do. It’s the honeymoon suite.”

Here was a chance! Sandy remembered. The honeymoon suite was in a different section of the computer program! “Do you have your reservation number?” he asked.

“L as in Luke, 2567.”

“Well this is your lucky day! We have that room available. So let me retract the words I said a few minutes ago and I am glad to say that we indeed do have room in this Inn, and we are very glad to have you as our special guests!”

The room erupted in applause. The reporter with a great smile gave one of those you are not going to believe this live reports, and the happy couple was finally installed in their room at around midnight.

As all the Marys and Josephs in the inn made history once again, the couple with the impending birth had a quick conversation before they fell asleep.

“I’m glad they had room for us tonight. I was about to think it was going to be Bethlehem all over again.” Joseph smiled at his lovely wife.

“Yes, it’s wonderful. I do hope and pray that someone new will find room for Jesus in their heart this Christmas.” Mary fell asleep, exhausted.

Once again the angels sang from heaven, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will to men.” And many did believe. Maybe you will too!