

# God With Us

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I occasionally get to speak on Parliament Hill and I went to speak on Parliament Hill on Friday to some of the staff for the MPs, some of the staff are the senators and some of the permanent employees on Parliament Hill and I was there on Friday and of course for many of them they were in complete and utter shock because even those who worked on Parliament Hill were caught completely and utterly by surprise with what happened on Thursday with Andrew Scheer resigning as leader of the Conservative Party. You know you can think you know how things are going to unfold and how what's going to be happening next and when there'll be reviews and you just think you can know the future but in fact you really can't. Monday night of the same week I met with the council of the church and one of the things we did was look at the first draft of our budget for 2020 and at the heart of looking at a budget of course is trying to have a bit of a sense as to how much money you're going to receive in the coming year. If you don't have any idea about the money that's going to come in it's sort of hard to hard to make some type of a budget. This church doesn't make any money from rentals or sales or anything like that. We're completely not really dependent upon the support of people who who make this their church home and of course you don't really know. It's a very human problem on one hand or very human part of the human condition to want to know the future. It's part of the human condition to sort of think you do know the future in some way but the fact of the matter is is that we don't know the future and every single one of us when we have coffee after the service we can probably tell often in tragic terms how you think something's going to happen or something's going to unfold only to be completely and utterly blindsided by something that you had not anticipated had never dreamed would happen and completely and utterly changes how your afternoon your day your week that next month is going to be. It's a very very human aspect that we both want to control think we can control but reality keeps showing us we can't control the future and we don't know the future. The text that we're going to look at in a moment is actually a text that in an odd way speaks into this human condition in a very very powerful way. I'm beginning a new sermon series if you go and listen to the whole of Handel's Messiah there's four different passages from the book of

Isaiah that talk about Jesus in the book of Isaiah and I'm going to look at one each week. In this particular week I'm going to look at a prophecy made some somewhere between 735 or 734 BC about the birth of Jesus. 735 years, 735 before Jesus was born a man by the name of Isaiah living in Jerusalem made a prophecy about his birth. We're going to look at that this morning. For Christians it's a very very well-known verse. So if you have your Bibles, those of you don't have your Bibles I'll put it up on the screen and here's how Isaiah chapter 7 verses 1, how this sort of how it gets into this particular type of prophecy.

And just before we start to read it, just a couple of things. Some of you are maybe aware of the fact that there's a couple of huge controversies around this. One of the controversies is whether or not Matthew, when he quotes and talks about Matthew, I'm sorry, when Matthew talks, when the early Christians talk about Jesus and the virgin birth, whether they get it right. Whether in fact Isaiah did talk about a virgin birth.

There's a big controversy about that. There's whole books written on it. I'm not going to talk about it other than to say that I'm aware of it. I've studied it. I think at the end of the day, those who hold to the traditional interpretation of it meaning virgin, I think they won the exegetical argument. I think they won the argument in terms of the ancient documents and the meaning of the ancient words, but I'm not going to get into it. There's also a big controversy as to whether Isaiah would have written this in 735 or 734 BC. There's a whole pile of people who think that it wasn't written until the 400 BCs, but I'm not going to address that either other than to say that if in fact, on one level for our topic, if in 430 BC they predicted a virgin birth, that's still a pretty big prophecy 430 years in advance. So I'm not going to get into those dating issues. I'm just going to take it as it's been traditionally understood. If you went to a traditional Jewish family, they would understand that this text was written in 734 or 735 BC, and we're just going to look at it. And here's how the text begins.

It starts like this. I should be better if I actually had it in my Bible. You folks can see it. Isaiah chapter 7 is where it begins. Isaiah chapter 7. Here's how the text begins.

[ 4 : 48 ] In the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Hermaliah, the king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it. When the house of David, that's the royal family, was told, Syria is in league with Ephraim, the heart of Ahaz, that's the king, and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. And I'm just going to pause there for a second. You know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, names, names, names, right? Well, this is, interestingly enough, this is all historical stuff. These are people who, outside of the words of the Bible, there's lots of historical records that all of these people existed, and the events which are being talked about here are events which are talked about in many pagan and other sources.

And what's going on is this. First of all, you have to remember that, I mean, we talk about a two-state solution nowadays for Israel. Back at this time, there was a two-state solution to a big problem, but that two-state solution was that there were two Jewish nations. There is a Jewish nation in the south whose capital was Jerusalem, and Ahaz is the king of that. That's usually referred to as Judah at this time period. There's another Jewish nation in the north. That's sometimes called Israel.

Sometimes it's called Ephraim. That's what it's called here. And the king of that northern kingdom in their capital was a city called Samaria. That's mentioned here. He's the son of Hermalia. He's Pekah, the son of Hermalia. That's that king.

So what's going on is this. Assyria has started to arise with a desire to be an empire, and they're conquering nations all over the place as their empire expands. And so as the power of Assyria is rising, the king of Syria and the king of Israel get very worried. And they come and they want to invade Israel. They want to invade Judah. They want to take over Jerusalem. And the reason is this.

It's a very simple reason. They think that a three-nation alliance might be able to resist the growing Assyrian power. And Ahaz is terrified of Assyria, and he's also terrified of fighting Assyria with Israel and Syria. And that's why he's torn. And because the king of Jerusalem doesn't want to join the alliance, the other two countries, say, listen, all we do, we go, we take Jerusalem, we kill the king, we put in our puppet, and he's in charge of the armed forces. We have a three-nation alliance. We go and fight Assyria. And that's what's going on. Ahaz has rejected the offer to join an alliance. He's terrified of being invaded by the Assyrians and Israel. And he's terrified of the Assyrians. And that's the context. So what happens?

[ 7 : 52 ] What happens is next in verse 3. Now, one of the things you need to understand is in those days, Jewish people had prophets. And if you read through all of, for our Jewish friends who might be here today, it's called, they would refer to it as the Tanakh. And for Christians, we would refer to it as the Old Testament. And if you read through that, you'll see that there's this phenomenon in Israel known as prophets. And a way to understand what a prophet is, is a prophet is God's mouth.

That's a simple way to understand what a prophet is. A prophet is God's mouth. God speaks through the prophet, and he speaks usually in one of two ways. He speaks directly into the situation that the people in front of him are dealing with. And sometimes he speaks about the future and something which is going to happen down the road.

And in this particular case, Isaiah is a prophet centered in Jerusalem, the southern kingdom. And here's what happens. And the Lord said to Isaiah, verse 3, Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shir Jashub, your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the washer's field. And just sort of pause there for a second.

Isaiah's son is sort of like a walking prophecy. His name, the name means a remnant will return. And that means it's on one hand, he's a bit of like a warning of God's judgment, because a remnant happens when everybody gets, almost everybody is destroyed and there's only a remnant left.

But it's also sort of an oracle of hope that the remnant will return to what Jewish people call the promised land. And so Isaiah's son, he would have introduced him to Ahaz, and Ahaz would have thought, Oh, that's like a bit of in my face type of way to name your son and to bring him.

[ 9 : 51 ] And Ahaz is studying the water supply because he's worried about the invasion and he knows there'll be a siege. And he's studying the water supply and he's worried.

But Isaiah has come because God wants him to say something to the king. And here's what he says. Verse 4, God says to Isaiah, Say to him, that's Ahaz, the king of Jerusalem, Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands at the fierce anger of Rezan and Syria and the son of Remaliah.

Because Syria with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah has devised evil against you, saying, let us go up against Judah and terrify it and let us conquer it for ourselves and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it.

So that's the first part of this message that Isaiah comes to deliver to Ahaz. And the first part of it isn't so much don't worry. Those odd little bits about, in the original language, be careful, be quiet, is really don't do anything.

Like in a sense he's saying to Ahaz, you can go back in, don't look at the water supply, don't worry about it. And then he uses a very, God uses a derogatory way of referring to the northern kingdom, Israel, and to Syria.

[ 11 : 18 ] He compares them to a force which is spent. It's as if you had a log and the log burned, and now everything in the log that is burned has been burned up, and all you have left is just the remnants.

This has a little bit of a heat left to it. It's just smoldering, but it's a completely and utterly spent force. And God says to Ahaz, that's how you have to understand.

Don't do anything. And Ahaz is probably thinking, well, you know, this is very easy for you to say just to do nothing, but Isaiah has a bit of another message for him.

The reason he's to do nothing is seen in verse 7, which is this. Thus says the Lord God, it shall not stand, it shall not come to pass. In other words, it's not going to happen. Now, remember, this is being written in 735 or 734 B.C., and Isaiah says, God has said to you that you aren't going to be invaded, and so all of your preparations are worthless, and even part of your fear is worthless because they're not going to invade.

Now, he predicts that there'll be no invasion. He continues on with his prediction in a very, very interesting way in verses 8 and 9. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin.

[ 12 : 40 ] And within 65 years, Ephraim, that's the northern kingdom, will be shattered from being a people. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Hermaliah. If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.

Now, in fact, what we know from history is this. Shortly after this, of 735 or 734 B.C., shortly after this, Assyria invades Syria.

And because Assyria invades Syria, the alliance between Syria and Israel breaks, and they don't, in fact, invade the southern kingdom.

And, in fact, we know from history that in 732 B.C., the Syrian nation falls to the Assyrian Empire and is completely and utterly gobbled up.

And in that same move of gobbling up Syria, they gobble up the northern part of, large parts of the northern part of Israel. But northern Israel was able to keep fighting for a little bit of a longer time, even though they were constantly harassed with battles by Assyria.

[ 13 : 50 ] And in 722 B.C., the capital of Israel falls. And the nation of Israel falls to Assyria. And Assyria was a very, very, very, very brutal empire.

And one of the things that the Assyrians did to trouble some nations is that they would start to have these forced marches to force the people to migrate to different parts of the world where they weren't native.

And they would also take another area, and they would take some of the people from that, and they'd have a forced migration, a forced march. And, of course, the Assyrians wouldn't care if many, many people died in the way.

And they'd force them to relocate in another land. And shortly after Assyria took over the northern kingdom, they began these forced migrations of the Jewish people living in what we now know of as northern Israel.

And, in fact, these were to go on in waves of forced migrations and waves and waves and waves. And by the year 670 B.C., all the Jewish people in northern Israel were gone.

[ 14 : 59 ] And, in fact, not only were they gone, they completely vanished from history. If you have a Jewish friend, not a single one of your Jewish friends is descended from the northern kingdom of Israel.

Not one. Every one of those Jewish people completely vanished from history. And every Jewish person that you know is descended from the southern kingdom of Judah, whose capital was Jerusalem.

In fact, if you know a little bit about Mormons, one of the Mormon beliefs is that all those lost, what they're sometimes called as the lost tribes of Israel, ten and a half tribes, they somehow got to North America, became what we now know of as First Nations people.

And there's a whole pile of Mormon mythology around that. And those of us who are older might remember there used to be a weird religion in England called British Israelism.

And they believed that all of those northern tribes ended up in the British Isles. And so those of us who are English and Scottish and Irish and Welch are really Jewish. And that's an old, weird thing that died years and years ago but was held for quite a while.

[ 16 : 09 ] But the northern kingdom completely vanishes. In other words, this prophecy ends up happening. Assyria doesn't invade. Assyria no longer becomes a threat.

And within 65 years of this prophecy, the northern kingdom doesn't exist at all. It's quite a remarkable prophecy.

So, how does Ahaz react to this? I mean, one of the things which is very surprising to people when they start reading the Bible for the first time is you expect that the Bible is going to be talking regularly about faith.

It's going to be talking about people following God. It's going to talk about people following the Lord and paying attention to his word and obeying it. And that's sort of what we think is going to happen. But actually what happens regularly when you read the Bible is that that's not what happens at all.

People do the opposite. So, what happens is if you look at the next few verses, if you start reading again at verse 9, at verse 10, there's a period of time which passes and God says to Isaiah, you've got to go speak to Ahaz again.

[ 17 : 28 ] There's been a period of time that's taken place. The siege of Jerusalem never happened. The invasion doesn't happen. But what did Ahaz do when God spoke, even as he sees these prophecies being fulfilled?

We'll look at verse 10. Again, that's later on. Some of your translations might say later. The Lord spoke to Ahaz. And this is what he says.

Do I have the right text up here? Yeah, again, the Lord spoke to Ahaz. Ask a sign of the Lord your God. Let it be as deep as Sheol or high as heaven.

But Ahaz said, I will not ask. I will not put the Lord to the test. And then the Lord says through Isaiah to the king, here then, O house of David, is it too little for you to weary men and women that you weary my God also?

Now, there's lots of things which are very, very curious, you know, about this text. Some of you, your ears might have pricked up.

[ 18 : 42 ] Or if you look up there again, look at verse 11 again. It says, Ask a sign of the Lord your God. Let it be as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven. I've had many, many, many, many, many people over the years tell me they're not a Christian and at a very, very low time in their life they ask God to give them a sign.

And they've said that if you just give me a sign and I know you exist, then I'll believe in you. And they'll tell me, and I asked for that and I asked very, very sincerely and nothing happened. Like, if God wants me to be a Christian, why didn't he give me a sign?

Like, I've had many, many, many people tell me that. And many Christians as well have asked over the years for some type of a sign from God and often nothing happens when they ask for a sign from God.

And so there's a very, very curious thing here, isn't it? That here God actually says to the king, I'm going to give this, I'm going to give you an opportunity. Ask me a sign and I'll give you the sign so that you know that I exist.

And then it's really funny because Ahaz says, no, no, it sounds very, very pious. No, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no, no. I'm not going to ask you of a sign of you, Lord. And it sounds very pious.

[ 19 : 59 ] But then there's this surprising response where the Lord, through Isaiah, says, why are you wearying me and wearying men? Like, why is it that Ahaz's pious response makes the Lord angry?

And that's because there's something significant. And if you read the other different historical accounts, you know what it was as to why it is that he didn't want to give, ask the Lord for a sign.

It's because the king of, the king, Ahaz, has already made a deal with Assyria. In other words, even though the Lord said, you don't have to worry, the invasion is going to happen, and even though Ahaz could see that the invasion didn't happen, and even though he starts to have a bit of a sense of Assyria attacking Syria because he would have had spies and messengers, even at all of those times, he doesn't believe the Lord, even though he's Jewish.

He doesn't trust his word. He doesn't believe his prophet. He says, I'm going to solve this problem myself. And what I'm going to do is I'm going to take a whole pile of money and I'm going to go to Assyria and I'm going to offer to be their vassal so they don't invade me.

And so Ahaz has put his faith and trust in power politics. He's put his faith and trust in his ability to manipulate events.

[ 21 : 27 ] He's put his faith and trust in having Assyria as his Lord. And now, Isaiah goes ahead and asks Ahaz a very, very, very, very uncomfortable question.

You see, what happens if Ahaz asks for a sign and the Lord keeps his word just like he kept his other word and actually gives the sign?

And then the fact of the matter is that he has not trusted the Lord before, that he's given a whole pile of money to Assyria, that he's put his faith and trust and hope in Assyria, that will come out.

And it will come out in a very awkward way. Like, you see, what would actually happen if Ahaz had asked for a sign and had come? Does that mean he's going to go back to Assyria and ask for the money back?

Is he going to have to reveal to everybody that he's made Israel, Judah, a vassal state of Assyria? He doesn't want a sign to be true. Because a sign to be true would actually screw up his life.

[ 22 : 47 ] Now, I can't speak for all of you who are here and there might be very many of you who are here who have asked the Lord for a sign and the sign didn't come. But I want to just say a couple of things about it if we just want to be really honest about it for a second.

Like, first of all, there's a very, very general problem. Let's say that you were in a plane going up north and a storm comes and the first blast of the storm knocks out your radio and it drives you way, way, way and you know that you're with the pilot.

He lets you know you're being driven way, way, way, way off course and then finally the plane succumbs to the storm and there's a forced landing in the water and in the process of the forced landing in the water the plane is destroyed.

You're battered and bruised but you survived the plane crash and you're able to swim even though it's in you know the late spring or something like that and the water is cold you're able to swim to shore and you huddle on the side you had some waterproof matches you make a fire and you just worry about how long you'll have to be there on this piece of land before some help will come and you're there for 24 hours you're there for 36 hours you don't want to leave and nothing's happening and so you make some type of a sign you think to yourself well you know who knows we could be stuck here on this beach and if we maybe just walked a couple of miles like maybe somebody even lives a couple of miles away and it would be so dumb just to be here on the beach when there's help just a little while away and so you make some type of a note on the side so that if rescuers do come they could see that you'd been there and you start going along and everything you see just lets you know that the island is completely and utterly uninhabited but all of a sudden you come to a spot right by the water and you see two stones on end and on top of it you see a stone and on top of that you see another stone balanced and on top of that stone you see another stone balanced five stones balanced now what every single one of us would know is this human beings have been here human beings have been here because who other than a human being could have five stones so clearly set and balanced on top of each other and designed we would all know that that was created by human beings that human beings have been here and instantly your hopes would be lifted that this isn't maybe a completely and utterly unvisited island up in the north or a piece of land that maybe if I keep walking along the beach

I'll find the kids who did it or the teenagers or the adults who did it or maybe I can just trust that fairly soon there'll be some hunters or some fishermen or something like that who are going to come here but a second you see five stones just five simple stones by the water you instantly know that human beings are here you instantly know that every one of us would know that well how can how how is it that we look at the universe how is it that you look at a cell which is vastly more complicated than five stones balanced how is it you look at DNA which is vastly more complicated than five stones balanced and don't see design how can that be and if you as a human being can look at the all of the miraculous things in nature and how it's so unbelievably interconnected in ways that the adaptation of genetic changes can't account just everything from the gravity the atmosphere everything about human life on this planet just screams design and how could

[ 26 : 52 ] God give you a sign if you can't see design like how would that work and that that fits in with an even deeper problem how in many ways even though we're 2800 years 2900 years after Ahaz there's still something very very very serious in our lives you see the fact the matter is is that if Ahaz had asked for a sign and God had given them the sign then that would just mess up his life because the last thing you want is an untamed God messing around in your affairs you see the fact the matter is is that when a person asks that God would give them a sign so they would believe and I'm not maybe you're all different for those of you who've gone through that but I think for many many many people they do it knowing that it will fail so they can say people like me to people like me why doesn't

God give me a sign that I will believe and I think that often many other people even though they might on one level be emotionally very very distraught and they might on one level really think they want a sign from God that will help them to know that he's real and exist and you have to ask yourself is that what you really want like if that happened does that mean you're going to tell all of your friends that you've become a Christian does that mean you're going to tell your family that you've become a Christian does that mean you're going to change your life as if the Christian faith is true like do you really think you would do all of that stuff if the sign was answered and I think many times we don't actually want to have anything like that happen we're actually sort of almost relieved that God doesn't give us a sign and then we have a reason for unbelief and for many of us if we even had the sign it would just be one of those curious things that we would talk about over beer with our buddies but that there's in fact a deep part of a human being that doesn't want God to give them a sign and is quite happy with having eyes closed to design in the world so God goes ahead and does something which is very surprising he says well I'm not going to you didn't want to choose a sign I'm going to give you a sign and here's where we're going to wrap up with this very just brief examination of what the sign actually is look at verse 14 therefore the

Lord himself will give you a sign behold the virgin shall conceive a bearish son and you shall call his name Emmanuel and you shall call his name Emmanuel now the word for virgin usually means virgin but it can also mean young maiden and I'm not going to read the rest of the stuff that goes on with the rest of the context of it because we just need to sort of focus in on this it's very interesting that the rest of the prophecy and most of the other prophecies in the book of Isaiah it's very clear how they were fulfilled in this time this would be one of those things that's even said in a very very odd way it said in Hebrew you're not sure whether in Hebrew it should be translated in the present tense or the future tense but it's very very telling that about 250 years after this Jewish scholars were translating the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek and the Jewish scholars would have looked and seen all of the different ways that the book of

Isaiah had been the prophecies had been fulfilled and fulfilled and fulfilled and fulfilled and fulfilled but when they came to this particular one they would have said to themselves that we've never particularly seen how that particular prophecy was fulfilled and therefore it's something that still has to be fulfilled in the future and they understood that it was referring to a virgin which is how it's translated into Greek which is how it makes it into our New Testament but it's a very very very very interesting prophecy that a day will come when a virgin while remaining a virgin will give birth to a baby boy and he will be known as Emmanuel which means God with us God with us and Christians believe that an angel came to Mary and asked Mary on God's behalf whether she would be willing to be that virgin whether she remaining a virgin would be willing to let God do a miracle within her womb so that a baby would be born and Christians believe that Mary said yes to that and then because

Joseph understood how babies are made was going to divorce his fiancée and so an angel came and spoke on God's behalf and spoke to Joseph and made clear that in fact God had done a miracle within the womb of Mary and that that which was in the womb of Mary that little zygote was actually God himself coming to live within among us and the reason that Christians believe that anything like this is true is all because Jesus changes everything I mean those are just weird stories and most of us would just discount them but the thing which is so unique and powerful about Jesus I talk about a little bit in the blog which is in your bulletins today is that Jesus lived a very very particular type of life where he did undeniable miracles even as enemies and opponents even the pagan writers who wrote about Jesus afterward acknowledged that



[ 33 : 15 ] Jesus is a man who was supposed to have performed miracles and he comes and he predicts that he's going to die a death by crucifixion he predicts he's going to die a form of death that he can't control he could have said I'm going to kill myself or I'm going to jump off of a cliff or something like that but actually predicting that he's going to die in a way that only the Roman authorities can kill him is part of his prediction and he predicts that he's going to die by crucifixion and he predicts that he's going to rise from the dead and he says that my prediction of my death by crucifixion and my true and real resurrection will vindicate everything that I have said it'll vindicate who I am and what I've come to do and there is very very very very very large and significant evidence in fact if there's one thing which even the most skeptical atheist scholar accepts is that Jesus died by crucifixion under Rome and there's very very very strong evidence that Jesus really did rise from the dead on the third day and if a man is able to predict such a thing and in fact rise from the dead surely he's a man who's completely and utterly trustworthy to listen to and so it is completely and utterly valid to believe that

Jesus in fact was the fulfillment of this prophecy made 735 years earlier that a virgin would give birth to a son and that he would be God with us and it's very interesting because one of the reasons that we don't want to have God with us is we think that God will mess up our lives but the way that we actually see God with us isn't the way that we fear he would be with us he's born of lower working class parents he lives a working class life he has virtually no possessions he lives amongst a conquered people he has no particular academic credentials or beauty or wisdom or power or privilege that would draw us to him all we have is the depth of his teaching and the insight into human condition all we have is his miracles that heal people and deliver them from demons and deliver them from sickness that give people life and purpose he comes to people and comes to us in the midst of all of the mess of our lives and he is with us in the midst of normal human life and he's even with us to the point that we he himself said that he would be with us so closely and so intensely that the death he dies would be the death that we deserve and and that in his dying the death that we deserve in a sense taking upon himself the doom that we deserve he would offer us the destiny that he deserves that he's with us even to the point of the evil in our lives and the failure of our lives and he's with us even to our death and he's with us he's with us he's with us and he dies with us that we might be his children that he might live with us and this is how an ending I'll circle around to the beginning of the story the fact the matter is is we as a church when we make a budget I try to remember it remind the council this we have the vaguest idea in the world how much money will come in in this coming year not the vaguest I mean we have some ideas about trends and all that but we don't know we don't know we can pray and make the best attempt that we really can but you see here's the thing which is really the most significant thing about every single one of us who wants to know the future who wishes that we could know the future who are the fact have lots of experience why about things that will come completely not really out of the blue is that for us as a church what matters is is that Jesus is with us that every single day that comes before me is not a day that I have to live and try to deal with all on my own and that he knows the future and that whether there will be things that come next week next month next year which are a very very severe blow because

Jesus is with me through faith I don't face it alone and the language of God being with us is not just a language of him being with us just to be with us but it's also part of the language of God having a call for us that God has a purpose or a plan for us and God is with us Jesus is with us to fulfill that purpose or that plan and the wonderful wonderful wonderful wonderful thing about us is that Jesus came and lived amongst us to die for us in such a way that when we put our faith and trust in him he comes to live with us again even in the midst of whatever pain we might have to face whatever disappointment we might have to face whatever setbacks we might have to face whatever triumphs and good things we might have to face that he is he is with us is he is with us as part of us entering into the fact that God has called us to be his children and that when Jesus is with us and we are with him the final word about any human being who is with him is never failure it's never disappointment it's it's never loser it's never hopeless it's never any foul word that when we are with Jesus and he is with us we are with him because God's call is being made real in our lives and in him the final word about any human being is welcome home child my beloved child whom I love for any person in Jesus that is the final determinate word about you and with Jesus we can live and face the things that come our way day by day knowing that he will never abandon us and that he is with us so that that call that final word about us can become more and more real in our lives as we are gripped by the wonder that Jesus is with us as Savior and Lord and friend I invite you to stand for any single one of us for those of us who are in Christ it's a very very appropriate Sunday morning to say Jesus help me to know that you are always with me make the gospel more and more and more real to me make those final words that God will speak over me more and more and more real to me so that I am able to face the things which I need to face today and tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that make who

Jesus is so real to me and what he did for me so real to me and those final words so real to me and his presence more and more real to me that I might live each day well in light of that and if you were here and you've never asked Christ into your life there's no better time now than just in your own words to say Jesus I want you to be with me I want you to be with me as my Savior I want you to be with me as my Lord I want you to be with me in my plans I want you to be with me in all my undertakings and not just be with me as a pet or an adornment but to be with me as my Savior and my Lord there's no better time than today to just say that to Jesus in your own words Jesus be with me as Savior and Lord and because of this prophecy 735 years before the birth of Jesus that a virgin will be give birth to a son and his name will be Emmanuel which means God with us it means that God gave a sign that he wants to be with you and if you say to

Jesus be with me he will never say no and if you think does he know what I'm like the answer is yes if you say how on earth could he want to be with me if he really knew what I was like then all I can say is he made that prophecy 735 years into the future he knows perfectly all about you and he God would not make any promise like that if he did not want to keep it he kept that promise and he will keep the promise to enter into you and to be with you he will keep that promise he will never say no he will be your Savior and your Lord let's bow our heads in prayer father we've seen the glory of the dance we've heard the glory of the music we've heard Andrew Peterson saying that Jesus is worthy we've heard of your scripture we've heard of your promise we've heard of this spectacular prophecy that you would cause a miracle within the womb of a virgin so that a boy would be born and that he would be known as God with us and we have been told how he comes to be with us not to punish us not to destroy us not to unmake us but to actually die our death for us that he is with us even to the point of the evil in our lives and the death in our lives to make us your child by adoption and grace father we have been told those things and we ask that the

[ 44 : 50 ] Holy Spirit would move with might and power and deep conviction within us that we might be gripped more and more by the truth of the gospel that every day we will remember what your final word will be over us when our days are over not because of anything brilliant or wonderful or powerful about us but because of Jesus and that he is with us and he will help us and guarantee that that call that you have to come home and be with you and know that we are your beloved child by faith and adoption that that will be the final word spoken over us father grip us with the gospel that we might be gripped with your final words about us when we put our faith and trust in Jesus that we might live every day and face every problem and every opportunity in light of that profound truth and all God's people said amen you