

Emmanuel (God With Us)

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- [0 : 00] Well, it's good to be back. It's been probably three weeks or more since I was here. And this sermon is going to be a little different than what I've normally done.
- It's more of a topical approach. And it's kind of funny because this morning I heard mom mention she's like, Oh, Ryan's probably not going to use much scripture at all this morning as a joke.
- Now, in that joke, I have probably the most scripture that I'm going to use this morning that I ever have. And so it's on the topic of Emmanuel and taking the meaning of that which means God with us.
- And we see this brought up in a few different places in scripture. But it's talked of from Genesis to Revelation. And this is what Christmas is about.
- And I think sometimes we forget it. Now we hear it and we're reminded of these things. But do we really dwell on it? And I'd say Satan's done a very good job of distracting us from the truth.
- [1 : 18] We think of Christmas as family time or opening gifts or the good food or many different things, these traditions.
- And they're not bad things. But if we're not careful, they distract from what it's actually about. And sometimes we become numb to what the Christmas story is actually about.
- We just become dull. When we hear it, we're like, Oh yeah, Jesus came. He was born in a manger, born of a virgin. He lived. He did ministry.
- He died for us. He rose again. And I hope that what I just said bothers you. Because it should. Because I said it in a very mundane, plain way.
- We forget the hope and who Jesus actually is. And I want to do a run through from Genesis to Revelation.
- [2 : 27] But I want to start in Isaiah 7. And it says this. Isaiah 7 verse 14. Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son.
- And shall call his name Emmanuel. This was given hundreds of years before Jesus came. But it's a prophecy of the Lord saying this will happen.
- And I don't want us to miss many important factors in this verse alone. It's like, one, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. Now as adults knowing, it's like a virgin does not just conceive and bear a son.
- But here we see God's hand at work. And she will. And they shall call his name Emmanuel.
- Which means what? God with us. And do we often forget who God is?
- [3 : 35] What does that mean? God with us. Jesus being fully God and fully man. And let's just take a moment to go back to Genesis. It says this. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- The earth was without form and void. And darkness was over the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light.

And there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day. And the darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning.

The first day. And it continues on. And it says, God says. And it happens. Again, verse 6. And God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters.

And let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse and separated the waters. And that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse.

[4 : 32] And it was so. God speaks and it happens. He says, let there be light and there is light. God says, let there be light. Let there be light.

Let there be light. Let there be light. And I was reminded through one of my fourth year mods. We watched a video by Louis Giglio. And he's going through the different stars in the universe.

And just as he continues, there's bigger and bigger and bigger and grander. And more massive stars that we can't even compare in size.

We don't even understand the size or the magnitude or the power within these things. Yet, he ties it all back to say that God says, let there be light.

And it happens. And this is the same God that says, I will be with you. The same God that came to earth as a baby born of a virgin.

[5 : 36] And he speaks life into what is dead. And we'll get into that more. And going now, in my devos, I've been reading through Exodus.

And it says, actually before I go to Exodus, I'm going to go back to Genesis. There's still some more I want to pull out here. Genesis 2.7. After God had created all things, he had put man in the garden, Garden of Eden.

And 2.7 says this, Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And the man became a living creature. And we see that God is the one that has formed us.

That took the dust and breathed life into that man. And we all have the breath of life because of what God has done.

It's a gift from him. And then chapter 3, verse 8, it says this, And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

[6 : 50] And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Now at this point, Adam and Eve had sinned. They disobeyed God.

But we see this concept of God being with them. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. We see this right from the beginning that God is with man.

He's walking with them. And as a result, their sin, it separates us from the Lord. But God doesn't leave them from there.

But he continues to walk with them. But it's going towards a purpose and a plan that God has planned beforehand. And we see it starting to take place here.

And in my devos, I've been reading in Exodus. In Exodus 13, 17 to 22, it talks about the pillar of cloud and fire as the people are being led out of Egypt.

[7 : 54] And when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near.

For God said, lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt. But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

But then we go on and it says, And the Lord went before them, verse 21, God is with them.

And he's leading them and guiding them as they walk along. And we see this again, Exodus 14, verse 13 to 14.

And Moses said to the people, Fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.

[9 : 10] We see that God is with them. When God is with them, their salvation is there. He's the one that delivers them.

And we see God's presence come down at Mount Sinai in Exodus as well. God comes down on the mountain, and he's with his people. And we see this same concept in the tabernacle, where the tent of the Lord is among the people.

He's with them. He's leading them. Then it continues further yet.

And we see in Joshua, chapter 1, verse 5 to 7. It says this, Only be strong and very courageous, Again, the Lord makes clear, I'm with you as I was with Moses.

Emmanuel, God with us. And we see this continues on and on through Judges. We see Samson being an example of this.

[10 : 54] And Samson's one story that always catches my attention, because he picks up a donkey jawbone and kills a thousand men with swords, and he uses a jawbone.

It's impossible. And the only reason he can do that is because God is with him. And I'm reminded of another story.

Jonathan and his armor bearer. They're going, it's just the two of them. And there's 20 or 25 trained soldiers of the Philistines, and they're like, If they call us up this hill, we know that God is with us.

Okay, if you know military, going up the hill is probably the worst decision you can make. But they say, If they call us up there, we know that God is with us and will deliver us.

And they said, Come up here. And they go up, and they kill them all. God was with them, and he delivered them. He's their salvation.

[12 : 00] And to continue on, we see in Psalm 100, I'm just going to read the whole thing.

And that what should our response be? Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence with singing. And we can come into his presence because of what Jesus has done on the cross.

Because of why he came. He came to restore that relationship with him. Know that the Lord, he is God. It is he who made us, and we are his.

What did we just see? We read in Genesis, it's God that breathed life into our bodies. He formed us. He created us. We are his pasture, and the sheep of his pasture.

What a blessing that is. Like, that we can come before the Lord that said, let there be light, said, let this come to play by speaking.

[13 : 06] Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him. Bless his name. For the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

I think of the many Christmas songs we sing. At Christmas, joy to the world. And do we sing that song with joy?

Do we enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise? Give thanks to him and bless his name. For the Lord is good, and his steadfast love endures forever.

Remember, when Adam and Eve sinned, that could have been the end. God could have started over. He could have said, this is enough.

I'm not doing this again. Or I'm going to do this a little differently. But we see his mercy and his love. As we see in Genesis, God actually makes the sacrifice for Adam and Eve, and clothes them.

[14:07] Covers their nakedness. And he forgives them of their sin. Then as we read Isaiah 7, 14, that the promise of Emmanuel is coming.

But then we see in Isaiah 9, 1 to 7, it says this, but there will be no gloom for her who is in anguish. In the former time, he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali.

But in the latter time, he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness on them has light shone. You've multiplied the nation. You've increased his joy. And they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

For the yoke of his burden and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle to malt, and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

[15:25] Then verse 6, For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness.

From this time forth and forevermore, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. And we see this and the heading of this chapter is for to us a child is born.

Who's Isaiah talking about here? Now there is multiple fulfillments here, but ultimately it's looking towards Christ and what he will do.

And this is why we see when Jesus comes as Messiah and is teaching the people, they're like, sweet, Rome's going to be overthrown. And they're pulling from this being one of the passages, and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end in the throne of David and over his kingdom.

And so we see they're in hopes of he's coming over, he's coming to take over the government. He's going to take over the world and reign. But Jesus makes clear it's the kingdom is, my kingdom is not of this world.

[17:07] He says I'm coming to make a way and this will be fulfilled and we're going to get to that still because there's a promise of it still coming.

It's Christ's second coming, he's coming and he will reign on earth. But his first coming when he was born in the manger was not to establish this yet. But as I read this passage, I look and it's the names that are given.

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, these are just a few of the names given.

And even as we have and we just celebrated a new baby being born into the world, Sophie, she's not given any of these names.

But Jesus was and is these things. then we can continue going moving forward and this is it's just so exciting.

[18 : 27] I don't know, I'm so excited right now. As Ezekiel 36 says this and I'm reminded I look back and we read these stories and we see the Israelites and God saying if you do these things I will be with you.

Follow me, trust me, allow me to lead. And Ezekiel 36 gives another promise and verse 26 and 27 it says this and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

And we see the Israelites going through this pattern and judges especially we've talked about it as a sin cycle and as the sin cycle starts in judges you can see it continually get worse and worse and worse and it talks about this judge came ruled for this many years and the people returned to sin and it says the people went back to their old ways and continued and we see this cycle over and over and over and over and I'm sure we've seen it in our own lives but Jesus comes and we're gonna get to this as well but he sends his spirit to dwell in us it's no longer where we're told over and over and over these are the things but he says I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Jesus has come to set us free as Paul would put it from this body of death and we're gonna get there as well but before we do I wanna read through Matthew Matthew 1 21 to 23 says this she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which means God with us where was that taken from Isaiah 7 behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which means God with us and we see this is where it's being fulfilled

Jesus has been born this is the promise that was given hundreds of years before he played out and we see right from the beginning God with us and he's continuing this on he's got this plan right from the start and we could go back to Genesis and talk about this very thing of what Jesus does on the cross for after the fall it says this the Lord said to the serpent because you've done this cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field on your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life verse 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel looking to Christ and what happens on the cross Jesus dies on the cross for our sin he takes the wrath of God upon him

[22 : 24] Jesus was a sinless man perfect in every way yet died as if he was the worst of sinners and he did that for us and for what purpose that God will be with us sin separates us from him and it's only through him that we can have reconciliation that we can come before him and we see after Christ's death he says this this is where we see part of why Jesus came Matthew 28 verse 18 to 20 says this and Jesus came and said to them this is already after his death and resurrection

Jesus came and said to them all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you and behold listen here I am with you always to the end of the age Emmanuel God with us he will be with us always and he's given us power he's given us his spirit to live this out he's giving us a new heart that we can actually walk in his ways and Jesus in John 16 33 also says this I've said these things to you that in me you may have peace in the world you will have tribulation but take heart

I've overcome the world he's with us who can stop the Lord no one as in Romans if God is for us who can be against us no one we see this continues in Ephesians 2 1 says this why does Jesus coming born of a virgin born in the manger why does this Christmas story mean so much why is it so important why should we rejoice knowing that Christ has come why should our hearts erupt in praise of what

God has done and doing it's because we are dead in our trespasses and sins and when he says I will put a new spirit within you I will give you a heart of flesh it's because we're dead it's not just that we're lost or confused it's there's no life in us Christ is coming to put that life in us put his spirit within us to teach us and to lead us and to give us new life and we see this in Ephesians 2 4-10 but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ

Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus for by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing it is the gift of God not a result of works so that no one may boast for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them it's of nothing we have done it's Christ work on the cross that we are saved and we see this through the Old Testament as well they had this process in the temple the tabernacle of making sacrifices doing sacrifices for their sins and many other things but sin being one of them and each year there was a sacrifice made for their sins for the sins of the whole people the whole congregation and year by year they had to make these sacrifices but

[27 : 56] Jesus dies on the cross and there's no longer any need for sacrifice to be made now there's still need for confession but Christ has paid the price there's still need to walk in godliness it doesn't give us a green card or a green light to go keep on sinning we're to grow in him we're to walk in him and he's given us all that we need to be able to do that and we see that played out pretty clearly in Ephesians the immeasurable riches of his grace and later on chapter three that according to the riches of his glory and now to him who's able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think according to the power at work within us to him be glory in the church and in

Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever amen he's given us all things we need to walk in godliness we can keep going Hebrews 4 14 to 16 since then we have a great high priest who's passed through the heavens Jesus the son of God let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin 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 Jesus came as a man and lived on this earth he was tempted in every way as we are tempted yet he did not sin he's able to understand he knows what this life entails sometimes

I think we're like well God you don't understand it's like no if anybody understands it's him he is with us and he's gone before us and he's going before us but there's a call we see that that what Christ has done it's a gift that he holds his hand out and says here this is what I've done for you but we have a choice to make we have a choice to receive that gift or to turn it away in the gospels Jesus says as he's living come and follow me pick up your cross die to yourself and live for me surrender your life and when I think of what Christ has done when I look back at the gospel and the truth and the price that

Christ paid for me there's nothing that I can give in return that would equal that amount so what's my response but to give my heart to him to give my life to him and say Lord here it is take it and use it for your glory and now revelation 21 verse 1 to 8 this is still to come says this then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more and I saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from

God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband 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 he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away and he who is seated on the throne said behold I'm making all things new also he said write this down for these words are trustworthy and true and he said to me it is done I am the alpha and the omega the beginning and the end to the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment the one who conquers will have this heritage and I will be his God and he will be my son but then there's a warning here but as for the cowardly the faithless the detestable as for murders the sexually immoral sorcerers idolaters and all liars their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur which is the second death we see this promise of what is coming that God behold the dwelling place of

[33 : 42] 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 he is coming and he's coming to dwell with us he has come first and he sent his spirit to come live within us to make us a new creation but yet he'll come again and this time to conquer to reign to rule that he may dwell with us and verse six and he said to me it is done I'm the alpha and the omega the beginning and the end does that ring a bell when Jesus was on the cross he said it is finished and yet again here he comes again and he says again it is done but verse eight but as for the cowardly the faithless the detestable as for murderers the sexually immoral sorcerers idolaters and all liars their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur which is the second death if you're in that category there's still time to come to Christ because at one point we all walked in that way you might say no

I didn't murder but did you hate your brother or sister and that doesn't mean immediate family that means anyone say it well I didn't I haven't been faithless did you doubt God have you ever doubted him the cowardly have you been afraid to do something that God has asked sexually immoral lust idolaters raise something higher than God and I can assume we've all raised ourselves at some point higher than him have you lied yes and Jesus says if you commit one of these you've transgressed the whole law this is why there's such hope with Christ coming because apart from him we're dead but he's come and given us life he said

I'm taking the wrath of God he paid the price so that we may have new life so that we can live in him so what is Christmas all about it's about the story of God with us from the beginning and he's going to be with us in the end it's about Jesus who is fully God and fully man lived a perfect sinless life which is impossible for any other man to do and died as if he had committed all the sin as he took it upon himself for us if he wouldn't have come we would remain dead in our trespasses and sins as we went through in Ephesians 2 so what is our response how should we respond we should respond with hearts full of praise for it is celebrating the first coming of our savior who came to deal with sin and we look ever so expectantly for his return when he returns in glory to bring judgment and in this we see both his love and his justice being poured out and those two go together but the psalmist responds in awe and I hope we do that not just at Christmas or Easter but each time we pick up his word and spend time with him and I want to close with

Psalms 111 which says this praise the Lord I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart in the company of the upright in the congregation great are the works of the Lord studied by all who delight in them full of splendor and majesty is his work and his righteousness endures forever he has caused his wondrous works to be remembered the Lord is gracious and merciful he provides food for those who fear him he remembers his covenant forever he has shown his people the power of his works in giving them the inheritance of the nations the works of his hands are faithful and just all his precepts are trustworthy they are established forever and ever to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness he sent redemption to his people he has commanded his covenant forever holy and awesome is his name the fear of the

Lord is the beginning of wisdom all those who practice it have a good understanding and his praise endures forever and my prayer as well as a question for you is is this our hearts response to the Christmas story to the gospel because it should be the psalmist cries out praise the Lord I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart in the company of the upright in the congregation great are the works of the Lord studied by all who delight in them and he continues to go on full of splendor and majesty as his work and his righteousness endures forever let's not forget what Christmas is about it's about Emmanuel God with us and not forget who

[40 : 11] God is not belittle him in this little box of our lives that we place him in he's the God of the impossible the God that speaks and it happens that same power that rose Jesus from the dead is given to us to walk in him to live in him and so I hope and pray that this Christmas we will stand in awe of what God has done and the gift that Jesus is to us and as the church as the body of believers we need to be sharing this truth this gospel the work that Christ has done with those around us because there are many in this town alone that are dead in their trespasses and sins and maybe they've heard the gospel but they need to hear it again so go from here rejoice in the

Lord but also share the good news thank you now