

The Saviour King

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[0 : 0 0] It's good to see you all. And I wonder whether you had a bit of fun just then! when you were saying hi to each other and discussing the meaning of your names. I don't know whether your parents ever told you why they named you as such! and what the meaning of your name was.

But parents normally, maybe they didn't tell you, but I'm pretty sure that they would have put a lot of thought into it. And there would have been a reason. That's certainly true for me.

I, many reasons, but one of the reasons for me picking the names of my children was to make sure that their names were relatively short.

Because I knew that one day, they will be sitting exams and the teacher or the examiner would ask them to write their name on every page of the exam.

And so I was just thinking of them and making sure that they did not have to write such a long name every time they started a new page on their exams. So hopefully they are thankful for that.

[1 : 0 4] And yeah. Well, that's certainly true as well with some of the recent births that we've had in our church.

Maybe not here. There's only been one. But down at St. John's there has been a bit of a baby boom. And every time, and you might have read it on your weekly newsletter that I send out, but every time there's an announcement of a child's name, often it comes with an explanation.

So I'll just give you the most recent two. Firstly, a few weeks ago, it's on the slide there, Evangeline was born to Matt and Esther Edwards.

And it says there, Evangeline is the bearer of good news. And the middle name, B, as well has a meaning to it. The daughter that was born just before that was Sophia Joy on the next slide.

That's Rachel and Tim's daughter. And they said Sophia Joy. God's wisdom, which is Sophia, leads to joy.

[2 : 1 6] And there were other examples as well. Well, I don't know whether you realize, but actually all of them have simply been following God's example, right? Because as we read here today, when God named His Son for His birth on earth, He also explained His choice of name.

So I can imagine if Mary was a member of our church, we might have something of a notice like this. Jesus, Emmanuel, Son of God.

And by the way, the meal train doesn't work, okay? So, yeah. Don't try and put your name down. Besides, Jesus has already come and gone.

So He doesn't need our food. But what I want to do today, then, is look at those two names, which are in your outlines, which Matthew explains quite plainly to us.

There was a bit of detail at the start of that reading. But I'm going to skip over it because, as I said, I want to spend more time on the significance of Jesus' names. And there are two, aren't there, as the slide says.

[3 : 31] And both are given by God. The first, Jesus, was revealed by an angel, God's messenger, to Joseph. And the second was revealed or given to us through a prophecy by Isaiah many, many years before.

So, let's look at the first one, Jesus. And that is in our passage today, verse 20 and 21. And so we're reading, And so we're reading, But after he had considered this, that is Joseph, and that this is the fact that Mary became pregnant, even though she was a virgin, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. Now, the few things that Matthew focused on here, one of which is to explain the virgin birth.

And he says, Being conceived by the Holy Spirit and not Joseph means that Jesus is divine. Hence, Joseph's dilemma in verses 18 and 19.

But the angel assures Joseph that even though it seems incredible, it is true. Mary, a virgin, is with child. And it's the work of God through his Spirit.

[4 : 54] Nothing to be suspicious about. It is all part of God's plan and purpose. And then the angel goes on to reveal what the name is to be given.

Jesus. Or if you look at your footnotes, in Hebrew it's Joshua or Yeshua. And then the meaning which we are to focus on.

Because he will save his people from their sins. And as I've been saying over the last few weeks, there was heightened expectation in Israel for a Messiah.

So, throughout the Old Testament there have been promises to Israel, to Abraham, to David, of this seed. Remember last week I said of the offspring who will restore Israel with a king in their promised land.

And so Israel was indeed waiting for a savior. But their vision was of one who would deal with the enemies in the land or restore law and order to the nation through wise and righteous government.

[5 : 57] Now the name Jesus or Joshua simply means the Lord saves. But here the angel adds a little more detail. He reveals what the people are to be saved from.

And the answer is from their sins. This Jesus will do on the cross because what he saves us from is God's righteous judgment for our sins.

It is right, isn't it, that there should be consequences for wrong done. When there is evil, there should be justice. And we've seen that even this week, isn't it, on Sunday after Sunday, that we want justice to be done when evil is perpetrated.

And so when it comes to us, we too rightly deserve, don't we, God's wrath because of our own wrongs. And these sins are not just individual acts of disobedience, right, doing the wrong thing, but also the general condition of our hearts, which is filled with pride, rejection, and rebellion against God as our ruler.

Now often as we look around the world, there is a tendency for us, isn't it, to absolve ourselves from the wrong that is out there, right, out there. We are not the ones who are doing those things.

[7 : 19] It's other people. It's the government that has failed us. But ultimately, the way society is, is the accumulation of all our individual actions, isn't it?

We contribute to the culture that we live in, whether as a country, or in our community, or even here in church, or as a family.

When we turn a blind eye to evil, for example, we are promoting evil, aren't we? And so whether it's acts of commission, that is, we do the wrong thing, or acts of omission, failing to do what's right, the collective result is the world that we live in now.

We're all responsible, one way or another, for this world. And especially for those of us who have authority and influence in decisions in this world.

And so, Jesus' primary work and mission and goal for coming to earth is to rescue us from what we actually deserve.

[8 : 29] Spare us the punishment that should be ours because of our sins. So, yes, when He walked the earth, He did heal, He did drive out demons to show us who He is and to give us an earthly taste of salvation.

Along the way, He led and taught so that we would understand why He is doing what He did. But ultimately, His end goal, and what is most paramount, is that He would be born in order to give His life on the cross.

To take the punishment so that we don't have to pay for it with our own lives. That is the meaning of the name of Jesus, right?

He came in order to save His people from their sins. And so, you know, I would encourage us that every time we call out the name of Jesus, whether we're singing carols or songs on a Sunday, or we pray, or we share His name with others, I would encourage us to keep reminding ourselves what this name means.

That every time we say Jesus, we remember, He has come to save us from our sins. And then, let us put our faith in that name for salvation.

[9 : 53] For as the Bible also says, it is by faith that we are saved. Now, to the second name of Jesus, that's in verse 23, right? So, if you follow with me, Matthew goes on to say, All this took place to fulfill what the Lord has said through the prophet.

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means God with us. Now, interestingly, if you look at all the Gospel accounts, and indeed, I think, the rest of the New Testament, there is nowhere apart from here that Jesus is referred to as Immanuel, right?

So, it doesn't seem like Jesus had a second name, that Immanuel was His middle name, or His nickname, or anything of that sort.

Because as far as we can tell, no one actually called Him Immanuel while He was on earth. So, here's what I think possibly happened with Matthew, right?

He was writing his Gospel, and you know, we all know that he wrote this Gospel many years after the event, kind of when Jesus already ascended to heaven. But you know, Matthew, as he was studying the Old Testament, and he saw all the promises and prophecies that were being fulfilled, had been fulfilled in Christ, he comes across this passage in Isaiah, right?

[11 : 17] Chapter 7, verse 14, And the virgin will conceive. And he goes, Oh, wait a minute! It says here that a virgin will conceive. That must be Jesus, because it's never happened before.

And then he goes, Wow, look what the prophet just said. That He is to be called Immanuel. So, it didn't matter that Jesus wasn't called by that name while He walked on earth.

It's the meaning of that name that strikes Matthew as again being fulfilled in Jesus, because in Christ, God is with us. While Jesus was walking on the earth, God was physically with us, with them, walking, talking, eating with His disciples.

And I know you've heard this before, but I wanted to just slow down and just consider how mind-blowing this fact really is, right? Because the Creator of heaven and earth, someone who is outside this whole universe, created it, has now come into it to be touched by human hands, right?

That woman that was ill and touched Him in order to be healed, she touched God, right? Mary, holding the baby Jesus in her arm, feeding her, feeding Him, she was carrying God.

[12 : 51] The disciples and everyone else, they saw the face of God, right? The same way that you look at the person next to you and see their face, that's what they did.

They saw the face of God. They heard His voice, audibly, right? And they looked straight into the eyes of God. That's what happened when Jesus walked this earth.

Now, which other nation could claim such intimacy with their God? None. It's not an idol sitting on a shelf there, immobile.

But this is God in flesh and blood, isn't it? Living and breathing among them. Now, of course, the people of Israel had a glimpse of this already, right? In the Old Testament, there was a foreshadowing of God's glorious presence.

At Mount Sinai, right? With the pillar of cloud and fire as they're wandering the wilderness. Then afterwards, at the tabernacle. And finally, the smoke and the cloud at the temple.

[13 : 58] And that's why when they were sent into exile, that was a very big and traumatic event, right? Because in judgment of their sins, God withdrew His presence symbolically.

But now in Jesus, God has returned. And not only they, the people, returned to the land, but so has God. And not only as a cloud at the temple, but in the tangible and bodily presence of the person of His Son.

But Matthew then takes this one step further, isn't it? Because in this single passage, he combines both names together and says that it is applicable and residing in the one person.

That here we have the Son of God, Jesus and Emmanuel. Because it is in Jesus that God is with us in order to save us from our sins.

So even though it's true, God isn't with us just to give us comfort, right? He's not like a mother holding a child and saying, Oh, there, there, you know, you're upset, you're afraid, don't be afraid. Yes, God does that, but He's doing more than that.

[15 : 13] He's more than just a king who is in the midst of His people and His army trying to protect them from the enemies physically. No, God is with us in order to save us from our sins.

And He's only able to do this because He's one of us. He has to become a human in order to take God's punishment on our behalf, upon Himself.

And in that other reading today in Jeremiah chapter 30, we find here in a single promise, in a single prophecy in the Old Testament, both of these aspects being brought together.

And I don't know why you picked up on it, but it was in verse 11. Because there the Lord declares, I am with you and will save you. In that very one sentence, God has both of it there, right?

I am with you, Emmanuel. I will save you, Jesus. And this promise is given, of course, as we read in the context of verse 8 and 9, where God brings them back from exile, gives them security in the land, restores to them a king from David's line.

[16 : 26] But verse 11 tells us that this salvation is not complete because God has to save them by being with them. And why?

Verse 12, we are reminded. It's not referred to explicitly, but we are reminded that it is because of their sin that has brought this need of salvation. So, I will discipline you, but only in due measure.

Why? Because of their sin. I will not let you go entirely unpunished. Why? Because of their sin. And so, God is with us. God came to be with us when Jesus was born at Christmas.

And God was also with us when Jesus died on the cross. When Jesus laid down His life for His people, those who submit to Him as King, in order to save them.

And that's why, as the title goes for today, He is our Savior King of Christmas. Not just the baby Jesus, but looking forward into the Savior King on the cross.

[17 : 32] And so, my friends, if you have not given your life to Jesus, then please, can I encourage you to think about Jesus as your Savior King.

Consider and recognize your own pride and sin in life. We all have them. And that we are helpless by ourselves to save.

And that's why we need the Lord Jesus to do that. And having done that, that is the only way when we will have God's real presence, God with us in our lives.

To know not only the great comfort and security of our Father, our Creator, but also the comfort and joy of knowing that our sins are truly forgiven.

Now, I want to go a bit more, as the ad says, you know, but wait, there's more. Because Jesus was not only with them at that time, Jesus is now still with us.

[18 : 35] God is still with us. This Emmanuel is still true today. Even though Jesus is no longer physically present, God is still with us.

Well, by His Spirit, isn't it? And Matthew has actually considered this, because he doesn't just begin his Gospel with the promise of God being with us at Jesus' birth.

That's the verses that we saw today. If you go all the way to the end of his Gospel, he also ends it with Jesus' promise to be with us, doesn't he?

To the end of the age. So, many of you will know the Great Commission, chapter 28, verse 18 to 20. Well, Jesus said this, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. And that is how Matthew finishes the Gospel, isn't it? With the promise of God being with us in Jesus.

[19 : 47] Surely, always, to the very end of the age. Triple lock guarantee, isn't it? Iron clad. But wait, there's more.

Because, midway through Matthew, Jesus also promised this, in chapter 18, verse 19 and 20. He says, Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them. Friends, if you look around, I think there would be more than two or three of us right now, isn't it?

So friends, God is with us. Now, of course, we're talking about Jesus' spiritual presence, not physically. But it's important to distinguish this from God's presence with His people in the Old Testament, right?

Again, I mentioned that in the Old Testament, God dwelt among them at the temple. But at that time, God's presence was external to the people, isn't it?

[21 : 02] Now, when the Bible talks about God being with us, God is talking about His Spirit dwelling in us. And that's why Paul says that we, His people, are God's holy temple.

And Paul also says that we, individually, as Christians, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, isn't it? God is in us, and God is also among us.

He's not out there at some temple with a cloud. He's literally with us by His Spirit. And that means God is at work in us to help us to do what's right, to be holy.

We have the intimate counsel of the Spirit, so that when we open the Bible, we can understand what it means. We have the power and the strength to grow in the fruit of the Spirit, because the Spirit is at work in us.

So, we've already been saved from the punishment of sin, right? Because Christ's work on the cross is finished, complete. But now the transformational impact of that work on the cross is being applied to our lives by the Holy Spirit to remove the power of sin in our lives through sanctification.

[22 : 26] God with us enables us to stop sinning. And then, of course, one day, when Jesus comes again, what will occur for eternity is that we will be with God.

And then finally, our salvation will be completely finished in the sense that we will be taken away from the presence of sin, right? And our very last enemy, that of death, will be defeated.

As it says in Romans 6, verse 23, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. So, friends, to finish, I want to say that as we look around, there are many sins in the world, isn't it?

Evil abounds. And we only have to say, see what happened last Sunday, right? With the massacre at Bondi, which is horrible and unspeakable. And I think it's right that finally, it's grabbed the attention of the world, what has been going on for the last two or three years.

And so we should rightly, we should rightly call those things out. But do you know that there are actually many, many, many more sins, isn't there? That goes unreported.

[23 : 45] Much evil that goes unnoticed. In Doncaster, isn't it? In Melbourne. And there I say, in our own private lives, as ordinary citizens.

But the good news is that, one person has come already to save us from our sins. Only this person can do so. His name is Jesus.

Why? Because He will save us from our sins. And His name is Emmanuel. Because He became one of us. He was with us.

He is with us. In order to save us. So this Christmas, as we go into the coming week, please allow your heart to fill up with joy at the knowledge of Jesus.

And if you put your faith in Jesus, keep rejoicing in that fact, that God has saved you. And if you have not already, then take the time out from the business to consider Jesus your Saviour King.

[24 : 54] Only He can save us from our sins. Let's pray. Father, thank You that You sent Jesus to save us from our sins.

Thank You that, by His Spirit, He is with us, to lead us, and to rule as our King. One day, we pray, may we enter into Your eternal presence to be with You forever.

Give us joy in our hearts this Christmas. For those of us who are suffering or in much trial, please comfort us to know that all will be made right because of His death on the cross, and that all will be made right in our lives and in this world because of His victory.

In Jesus' name we pray.