

IMMANUEL -

THE GOD WHO IS NEAR

It's Christmas! For some it means parties and presents and being together with family and friends. For others it means overspending, overeating or the dread of being alone. And in all the hype and the busyness, the true gift is often neglected or ignored. That gift is God Himself, confining Himself to the vulnerability of a baby and living among us in order to meet our deepest need: forgiveness and restoration. And this gift keeps on giving. For those who will receive Him and accept Him, He comes to stay with them for ever.

Matthew 1:18-23

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name **Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

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

Ephesians 2:12-13

¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

READ Matthew 1:18-23. Mark "Jesus" including synonyms and pronouns with a

V18-20 What are the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus? How was He conceived?

V21 What was the first name He was to be called?

How does this name explain His purpose?

V22-23 What other name was this baby to have?

How does this explain His identity?

"WITH" -3326- denoting association, union, accompaniment

V23 What was God's intention for coming?

READ Ephesians 2:12-13. Mark "you" with a

V12 What was our situation when we were born?

V13 What is the contrast in this verse?

How was this change in our condition possible?

How do these verses tie together the two names of the baby born - "Jesus" and "Immanuel"?

REFLECT: We could not know the reality of God being with us if we had not been saved from our sins. God's desire for us is so great, that He takes it on Himself to be our Saviour.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶For 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 Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and 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.

John 14:16-18

¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Psalms 32:8

⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.

Isaiah 40:28-31

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
²⁹He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases
strength.
³⁰Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;

What does it mean for us that God is with us? In the prophecy of Isaiah we discover four more names given to this Child who was born that can help us to answer that question.

Read Isaiah 9:6-7. Mark references to the child including pronouns with a 

V6 List the four names given to this Child.

V7 How will all of this be accomplished?

ZEAL -7068- ardour, zeal, jealousy, passion

What does this confirm about God's desire for us?

WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR - HIS ROLE

READ John 14:16-18. Mark "Helper" including pronouns with a 

HELPER -3875- counsellor, consoler, comforter

As Jesus prepares to leave the disciples what does He promise them? Note all He says about the Helper.

V18 Who will this Helper actually be?

READ Psalm 32:8. Mark "I" with a 


What does the LORD promise He will do? How?

READ Proverbs 3:5-6. Underline the instructions.

How are we being invited to respond to having this Wonderful Counsellor with us? What instructions do these verses give us?

Who is this Wonderful Counsellor? Read on!

MIGHTY GOD—HIS POWER

READ Isaiah 40:28-31. Mark "the LORD /He" with a 

V28-29 What do we learn about God?

How would these qualities make Him a Wonderful Counsellor?

Isaiah 40:28-31 (continued)

³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.

Ephesians 1:4b-6

In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Romans 8:15-16

¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

John 14:27

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Philippians 4:5b-7

The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

V31 How can we appropriate God's strength and help?

WAIT -6960- look for, hope, expect, bind together

How does knowing that this mighty God is with us help us to wait on Him?

EVERLASTING FATHER – OUR RELATIONSHIP

READ Ephesians 1:4b-6. Mark "he/his" with a 

How did God become our Father?

ADOPTION -5206- the placing as a son

What was it according to?

READ Romans 8:15-16. Mark "you/we" with a 

V15 Describe our relationship with the Father.

V16 How is this relationship made real? How does this relate to John 14:18 (p.2)?

PRINCE OF PEACE - HIS GIFT

READ John 14:27. Mark peace with a 

What do we learn about the peace he gives us?

What should its impact be on our lives?

READ Philippians 4:5b-7. Underline instructions and mark peace with a 

V5 What do we learn about the Lord?

V6-7 How can we experience the peace of God?

How is this peace described and what will it do?

Reflect on the truth that God is with us... now. Each of these names reflect how He is with us. In what way do you especially need to be reminded of the truth that you are not, and never will be, alone. This is His gift to you and it is not just for Christmas.