

Chris Murphy

December 3rd, 2023

Scripture: Isaiah 7: 14 and Isaiah 9: 6-7

Sermon Title: God with Us

Prayer...

Introduction:

Advent is here. A time of waiting and expectation for the coming of the Messiah, the birth of Jesus, Immanuel- God with us.

I love the Advent Season because it invites us to slow down and truly grasp the meaning of Christmas. The meaning of Christmas is that God became one of us by sending God's son Jesus to reveal more fully than ever before who God is and to join us in the joys and struggles of what it means to be human.

To appreciate the gift of Jesus' birth more fully, we normally take time on the first Sunday of Advent especially to remember the prophecy spoken through the prophet Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah to the people of Israel.

Isaiah is a prophet of Israel, who began to prophesy in 740 BCE, or about 700 years before Christ was born.

For most of his life, Isaiah prophesied both judgment and hope. He prophesied that due to their lack of concern for the poor and their other forms of disobedience that God would judge the people of Israel and leave them vulnerable to attacks from Assyria and ultimately to exile in Babylon.

Isaiah also prophesied the hopeful message about the coming of the Messiah, who would eventually bring about a new kingdom and reign that would bring shalom, peace and wholeness to all nations.

Our Scripture texts this morning specifically show that Isaiah prophesied that God will give a sign. He prophesies, “Look the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.” Isn’t it wonderful that we have a prophecy some 700 years before Jesus is born saying that a young woman will give birth to Immanuel.

And that word Immanuel, means God with us. Later in Isaiah we read that this Immanuel will also be called wonderful counselor and prince of peace.

Immanuel, God with us. This simple phrase brings such hope to all of us during the Advent Season and really invites us to have hope every day of our lives.

God with us.

What does it mean to you that God became one of us?

For me this means that God understands the frailty and beauty of what it means to be human. He gets us.

There is a poignant moment in Mel Gibson's movie, the Passion of the Christ, where Mary the Mother of Jesus is watching her son carry the cross and sees him fall. Mary, daydreams back to when Jesus was a little boy and he was running to see her, but then tripped and fell to the ground scraping his knee, causing Mary his mom to run to his aid.

The phrase Immanuel, God with Us reminds me that Jesus knows what it is like to be a kid who scrapes his knee and he knows the more dramatic forms of suffering that our world experiences. To me Immanuel, means God truly is with us in the highs and lows of life. He is with those who experience significant tragedy. He is with the houseless person in Newberg who walks miles each day in order to make it from the Northside Church Emergency shelter to the Drop-in Center, back eventually to the Emergency Center at the end of the night for a meal and some needed rest.

To me Immanuel means, God is with each one of us, children, youth, young adults, adults, middle age, and the seasoned mature folks. At each stage of life, we face both opportunities and obstacles. Sometimes we face the frailty of our health and the pain of grief. God with us means we do not face these struggles alone because we have a God who cares.

When I think of a God who cares, I remember that description of the Messiah as a wonderful counselor. Jesus is the counselor we need when we are vulnerable, when we need someone to listen to our woes and our hopes.

I encourage you during this Advent Season to ponder what it means for Jesus to be Immanuel, God with us.

Where do you need God to show up in your own life?

When I was growing up and participated in a Young Life program to help me grow in my relationship with Christ, I learned that Young Life teaches its leaders that when working with teenagers they need to earn the right to be heard. In other words, Young Life teaches its leaders that only through relationship with youth will youth feel comfortable enough to hear the message of the good news of Jesus.

May I suggest that Jesus has earned the right to be heard in our own lives, because God in Jesus has become one of us. He knows what it is like to be a teenager who is developing a sense of identity. He

understands the struggles of physical pain and emotional turmoil. Jesus enjoyed good wine and laughed at jokes. He really understands what you are going through and he cares.

So where do you need God, Jesus, Holy Spirit to show up in your life.

During this Advent Season, invite Jesus to make himself real to you. Let him be your comforter and counselor. Hear him offer you peace because he is the Prince of Peace.

As we journey through Advent and remember Christ's birth, may we be in awe of the miracle of God becoming one of us and may we respond to the invitation to experience the hope of a Messiah who offers us the gift of eternal life. A life where we are never alone, even in the darkest nights, Jesus is with us. Jesus is Immanuel. AMEN.

Isaiah 7:14

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6-7

6 For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Great will be his authority,[a]
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.