

Call His Name Immanuel

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Preacher: Jeremy Martinson

[0 : 00] But we're going to start at Matthew chapter 1, verse number 18, and Lowe's going to read down through verse number 25. 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. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

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.

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.

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus. Father, we are so grateful for your kindness to gather us together.

[1 : 05] We're grateful for the privilege to have your word. Thank you for these beautiful stories, these accounts at the very beginning of the life of our Savior Jesus here on earth.

Thank you for the privilege we have, as Ryan mentioned, of remembering these stories, not merely and not only and not really because they're just nostalgic to us, but because they teach us about our Savior, and they remind us of who he is and what he is like and the importance of his birth.

And we know that because he came, as we have already sang together, he came so that he could live and so that he could die, so that he could be raised again from the dead in order to secure our salvation.

And so we give you thanks. Would you please be with us as we continue in this time of worship? Would you help me as I worship by preaching your word to your people?

Guard my heart from saying anything foolish or unhelpful. Keep all of the unclear things out of the way. Would you please help your people as they continue in worship by sitting under the preaching of your word?

[2 : 26] We do so desire, Holy Spirit, to hear from you. We so desire to see our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in his name that we pray.

Amen. What is the difference between doing something for someone and doing something with someone?

You can do homework for your student. That would also be called cheating. And so we don't endorse or condone you doing your homework for your student.

But how much better to sit with your student and to be an encouragement and to be a help and to motivate and to coach and to teach.

How much better to be with. In my work, we fix lots and lots of problems for customers.

[3 : 33] And occasionally, a customer will call and they will say, I don't want this problem fixed until I can talk on the phone with someone. I want someone to be with me and to explain what you're doing as you fix this problem.

You can make a doctor's appointment for someone. But if you are sitting in the waiting room, isn't it comforting to have friends and family with you?

I suppose all of us appreciate hearing, I'll pray for you. I'll pray for you.

But let me pray with you? That hits differently, doesn't it? Even when we just want a circumstance to change, most of us don't actually want life handled for us.

We just want to know that we're not alone. That there are people who will be with us. Presence is the greatest present.

[4 : 58] Now, Matthew chapter 1 is the first chapter in the New Testament. And the angelic visit that it describes actually comes after the two angelic visits that we looked at last week that are in the Gospel of Luke chapter 1.

And so, I don't want you to miss that. The angel has already visited Zechariah. Gabriel has already come to Zechariah, promised that his barren wife would give birth to a son.

The son who would prepare the way of the Lord. We know him as John the Baptist. And then six months later, Gabriel again appears to Mary.

And he reveals that she too is going to give birth to a son. And this son will be called Great. The son of the Most High.

Holy. And he will personally reign over a never-ending kingdom. Gabriel says, call his name Yehoshua.

[6 : 06] We know him as Jesus. Those are Luke's stories. Matthew shifts our attention.

From celebration for a barren woman. From celebration of a virgin conceiving a child.

From celebration to confusion. From this miraculous conception. To a quiet crisis.

Look at chapter 1 of Matthew and verse number 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband Joseph, being a just man, and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

[7 : 13] Have you ever had one of those moments where something just didn't add up? It didn't make sense? It seemed so confusing, so disorienting, so out of place, and it would have been easiest to just walk away.

I suspect Joseph feels exactly that. He learns that Mary is pregnant.

He knows that the child is not theirs. And so he assumes that Mary has either been unfaithful to him, or perhaps has been taken advantage of.

And since he and Mary are promised to one another in a legally binding arrangement, divorce and then walking away seems like the best option.

But the scripture says Joseph is a just man. Your Bible may say righteous in verse number 19. This is not Paul's later development of the justification by faith.

[8 : 26] That we see in other epistles. This is righteousness in the Old Testament sense. Righteousness like we just learned about together in the book of James. What does this say about Joseph?

Joseph is a God-fearing man whose faith is showing itself in obedience to God's law. And Joseph's righteousness results in something beautiful.

Do you see it? It doesn't say it there specifically. We have to imply it. His righteousness leads to compassion. He has determined a path forward.

He has resolved that he is going to deal with this crisis privately. He wants to spare Mary the disgrace of divorce. And he wants to shield her from shame.

But, verse 20, 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.

[9 : 51] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. For he will save his people from their sins.

The angel assures Joseph, Don't be afraid about taking Mary as your wife. Things are not as they seem. Mary is pregnant, not by the participation of a man, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

She will have a son. And you should call his name Yehoshua. You should call his name Jesus. It means Yahweh saves.

So far, this echoes what Gabriel said to Mary last week in Luke chapter 1. But I want you to notice something.

Joseph gets an extra sentence. And it's a sentence that we should not miss. He gets an explanation to this name, Yahweh saves.

[11 : 00] Look in your Bible. The angel explains, Mary's child, He will save his people from their sins.

Verse 21. Do you see it? It is no longer just Yahweh. The Lord will save. Joseph gets this extra sentence. He, the child inside of your betrothed, He will save his people from their sins.

And then to help readers like us grasp the monumental importance of what is happening here.

Matthew, the narrator, interjects verse 22. 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.

[12 : 17] Now, if you have footnotes in your Bible, you probably have a footnote right there from verse number 23. And it's like a little hyperlink pointing you back to Isaiah chapter 7.

So, let's let's click this link because it will help us to connect the monumental importance of what is happening here. So, let's click this link back to Isaiah chapter 7.

Isaiah 7. King Ahaz is terrified. And rightly so. Two other kingdoms, Syria and Israel, they have joined forces and they are threatening his kingdom, Judah.

It appears that the very promise that God made to David is in danger of collapsing. Kids, you can imagine this.

If the two biggest kids gang up on you, you would feel scared. Ahaz is scared and he has good reason to be afraid.

[13 : 31] But, the prophet Isaiah comes before Ahaz and Isaiah has a word from the Lord and he doesn't need to be afraid at all, Isaiah says.

God will see us through this threat. So, don't be afraid, Isaiah says. Trust God. And then Isaiah does something interesting.

He offers Ahaz a sign, a miracle. God says, I want to prove it to you. I want to give you some evidence that it's going to be okay because I know that your faith is small.

I know that you're worried about these two kingdoms that are coming against you. I want to give you a sign so that you know that you can believe my word. King Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign.

I think not out of faith, but out of a false kind of humility. So, God says, I'm going to give you a sign.

[14 : 40] I'm going to choose the sign that you will have. And here it is. Isaiah chapter 7 and 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. Now, in Isaiah's day, a child named Emmanuel is going to be proof to the king that God has not abandoned his promise.

And God has not abandoned his people even though their king is faithless. This child's birth signals God's presence in a moment of political and spiritual crisis.

So then, we should understand Emmanuel is not some kind of warm, fuzzy word. word. It is a promise spoken while the ground underneath you is shaking.

When you feel like you have no hope, when the two big bullies are ganging up on you and you're not sure what you're going to do. Isaiah chapter 8.

[16 : 02] The situation does not get better. It actually gets worse. judgment comes on God's people. Judah is invaded. Fear spreads. And yet, Isaiah repeats the promise.

Isaiah chapter 8 and verse number 10. Right at the very end of the verse. God is with us. God is with us.

Yes, I see that the situation has gotten worse. I understand that fear continues to spread, but don't forget, God is with us.

Emmanuel does not mean escape from consequences. It means that even when everything else falls apart, God does not abandon his people.

And then there's an interesting little clue a little later in Isaiah 8. that encourages us to keep following this little link, these dot to dots that we're on.

[17 : 10] Look at Isaiah chapter 8 and verse 14. Right? Sorry, Isaiah chapter 8 and verse 18. Behold, Isaiah is speaking and he says, Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs.

signs. They are signs of the Lord of hosts. What's happening here? Well, it seems to imply that Isaiah understands something bigger is going on here.

But it's like we sang about and it's like what comes up in 1 Peter. Those prophets, they're so wanting to understand, they're desiring to understand, they're trying to follow the links and make the dot to dot connection so they can see when will the Messiah come?

Isaiah seems to have some inkling of that. He says, I and the children that the Lord has given me, we are signs. Of what?

Well, this promise may have a short-term fulfillment in Isaiah's day, but Isaiah says, there's something bigger out there. A broader, longer, more magnificent promise.

[18 : 31] Chapter 7, chapter 8, chapter 9. Look at chapter 9 and verse number 2. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shown. What are you talking about, Isaiah? Chapter 6, 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, 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.

Matthew cites Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14 so that readers like us can connect these dots.

The same God who was with his people back when they are about to be invaded, that same God from Isaiah's day has now personally come to be with us.

[20 : 16] The Holy Child conceived inside of Mary he is Emmanuel he is God with us.

Joseph believes the angel and though he does not understand he obeys. Verse 24 when Joseph woke from sleep he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him he took his wife but knew her not until she had given birth to a son and he called his name Jesus.

So then we should ask an important interpretive question. If Joseph was not necessary and not involved in the conception of Jesus then why bother with Joseph at all?

Why bother with Joseph at all? If you look back at the beginning of Matthew which Lois did not have to read Matthew chapter one at the very beginning you will notice there a genealogy Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham all the way down to Joseph but there's a problem here I say problem in double air quotes there's a problem here and here is the problem verse number 16 look at verse 16 Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary notice these words of whom Jesus was born smart people tell me that underneath these words the grammar underneath these words they are feminine and they are singular and they can only refer to

Mary as the human parent of Jesus but in case if we skim over these genealogies I see you in our scripture readings the angel makes sure that we don't miss a very important critical fact and it is in the narrative so helpful verse number 20 right in the middle the angel says Joseph son of David case if you skip the genealogy Gabriel includes it for us so we get it Joseph is a descendant of King David Joseph has royal blood surging through his veins even though he is a carpenter in Nazareth is where he's going to land even though he's a carpenter that's his trade he's of

[23 : 39] David's line he's a son of David and so when Joseph takes Mary as his wife and names her son Jesus though he is not his son physically Jesus becomes Joseph's son legally it is through Joseph's obedience that Jesus is legally established as the descendant of David Mary's child is the heir to David's throne but without inheriting David's sin and Adam's sin even though Josie I know this is important to you even though Joseph has no speaking lines in the story did you notice that no speaking lines for

Joseph he becomes the means for God to fulfill Isaiah's ancient prophecy the government shall rest where on his shoulders and for how long will he reign he will reign on the throne of David Isaiah says forever more I confess to you I am not always as serious as I ought to be when I hear the Lord's name used carelessly but there is one thing that consistently makes me pause when it comes to how people refer to God and that is when someone refers to him as the man upstairs or the big guy in the sky do you know why this bothers me it bothers me because when we talk about

God in that way we are directly contradicting! the name Emmanuel we want to make God somewhere out there maybe somewhere up there so that we can keep him at a distance and we can call on him when we're in a pinch and we need a favor!

and personally when Emmanuel is spoken in Isaiah 7 God's people are afraid they are tempted to trust in anyone and anything except for God and when Emmanuel comes up in the story of Joseph Joseph is grieving disoriented confused facing a situation where trust feels impossible and just walking away seems like the most obvious solution in neither case does God fix everything in neither case does God make everything perfectly clear so that we can all just understand exactly what's going on no instead God's messenger speaks a word of assurance a word of comfort a word of encouragement do not fear why not because

God is with us in Hebrews chapter 13 God says I will never leave you nor forsake you I will never leave you nor forsake you if that promise is true and it is then child of God that means he is with you now because Jesus is Emmanuel you do not face your fears or your disorienting circumstances alone and know this God's presence is not seasonal!

[28 : 57] He doesn't show up and kind of check in during the good times of life and then when things start going hard and things start going south and you wonder what are we going to do and you're confused and you're not sure what's next the Holy Spirit is not abandoning you the promise of Hebrews 13 I will never leave you if that promise is true then God is with you now so let me ask you this question where does life feel too big for you right now what is pushing you to the edge physically emotionally mentally relationally spiritually what's pushing you to the edge and

I wonder if you would entrust whatever that thing is that thing that you say this is the last straw whatever that one thing is would you entrust that this week to God not because he promises to fix it immediately not because you're going to understand perfectly but because Jesus who saves is the God who stays do we believe that I wonder if as you commit whatever your one thing is to God if you would also commit to being like God in this way moving towards someone who is hurting being with someone who is exhausted spending time with someone who is emotionally tapped out caring for someone who is relationally lonely what a wonderful opportunity for us to be like

God to be present with his people and to be a real demonstration of God's presence to someone nearby can we do that this week and encourage one another bless this church and bless our neighbors and our co-workers there's hurting people all over just ask ask how are you doing you'll learn move towards them with love kindness mindful that you are standing in the place in that moment of God and being with someone what a beautiful opportunity call his name Emmanuel because he is God with us now and forever and in

Revelation 21 3 the dwelling place of God is again with humanity and John records these words from the throne God will dwell with us and we will be his people I love that and God himself will again be present in a personal relational real actual physical way John says we will see the face of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ are you looking forward to that day his presence is the greatest present last week we celebrated that Jesus saves what a privilege this week to remember that he didn't only die for his people he came to be with his people so if you are looking for hope his name is

Emmanuel and there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved let's pray go to go to go to go to go to