

“Immanuel” / Advent 2018

What if God was with us – right now?

What would it be like if God was in this room,

if you could see Him sitting in this chair – right now in this room?

- Can you imagine what our worship together would be like?

- Can you imagine what “God With Us” would have sounded like? You are here You are holy we are standing in Your glory

- Can you imagine what you would do after this service? Who you would tell?

- And can you imagine – How many services we would have to have if people heard God was here in this room?

Go one step further – what would it be like if God was not just in this room – but in you?

In other words, what would it be like if God was not just “with us” in this room – **but you were with God.** That is He was in you? What if God lived inside you, moved with you, engaged with you, and was satisfied with you?

What if God was with us now? *Even more – what if you were with God? Would His presence be life changing for you?*

Maybe you hope this is possible – but you don’t really believe it is possible. Or, maybe you just don’t believe God has come or would come to be with you. Its’ ok. He knows – where you are.

During the next 5 weeks of Advent – we will walk through Isaiah 49:1-6. It contains 4 of over 100 prophecies or predictions that God would come be with us in the person of Jesus. Today we are going to begin in verse 1.

Isaiah 49:1 (ESV) Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

800 years before Jesus arrived on this earth – God foretold us that he would name his Son for us who would come. Actually Jesus – one of those names – is making this declaration. He would have many names – all describing his majesty, his character, and his purpose. The first name we are given to tell us of God the son who would come to this earth: was not Jesus, was not Christ, & it was not Son of Man. The 1st name given ...

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV) Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (God with us) *God longs to be with us – with you. He named His Son to tell us that!*

Isaiah 49:2-3, 6 (ESV) 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. 3 And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” ... 6 he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” *God desires to be with us – but our condition requires that a rescue mission take place. Here is the one and only thought we are going to look at today as we begin this Advent season.*

When we see God’s desire and our condition - we will believe in Immanuel. *God with us!*

01. What is God’s desire?

02. What is our condition? 5:30

01. What is God’s desire?

Isaiah 49:1 (ESV) Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. *God is pleading with us (peoples from afar) to listen because he wants us to know his desire – that He longs to be with us. God’s own people weren’t sure about this - that God wanted to be with them. God said, this is a sign to look for: a virgin will bear a son named, God with us. Because I want to be with you.*

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV) Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. **Here is a sign for you and I – God with us.** **What does this mean?**

• **God desires – longs to be in relationship with you.** *He is relational: created you to be in relationship w Him.*

In order to be with you, God the Son – Jesus, Immanuel - stepped out of heaven and into world. What did this mean? God who is Spirit had to put on skin.

- **God – who had never been bound by skin – would put on skin.** God in a human body. That is like ...

Pics of Cockroaches – *if we lived in a Harry Potter world and someone was going to turn you into something other than a human, what is the last thing you would want to be? And why? This is the one thing I would least want to be. I hate cockroaches – and the thought of being trapped in that hard little creepy body knowing everyone that sees wants to crush me with their foot – yuckkkkkkk!* **Jesus put on our skin – This was like Jesus stepped into the body of a cockroach.**

Not because we are that grotesque to God. No – it because Jesus, God is that holy, other, He is God! 9:30

He would know pimples, sweat, stink, laughter, tickle wars, hunger, being tired and worn out, warmth, cold and pain: jammed toes, cuts, getting the wind knocked out of him, and death – the loss of family and friends.

But that's not all. In order to come be with us, God didn't just put on skin.

- **God the Son – who had never been bound by time – would leave eternity and be bound by time ...**
He would be born, go thru diapers, toddler woes, childhood curiosities, awkward teen years where our ears are bigger than our head, limited light to work, limited hours to serve, limited days to do His Father's will.
- **God the Son- who had only known divine beauty beyond all we know and can fathom, laid down his glory** – put on the body of a small Jewish man, whom the scripture says – **Is 53:2 (ESV) he had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him.**
- **God the Son – who had only know divine status as King of kings, Lord of All, who had only known being worship and being served – took on the form of a servant** and not only was he recognized by only a few – even the scriptures says - **Is 53:3 (ESV) He was despised and rejected by men,**
- **God the Son -who had only know having all power – laid down his power.** *He still did amazing miracles but only as they served the Father's will & often he let himself willingly be subject to time, nature, and people.*

He stepped into the body of a cockroach. *It wasn't just Holy stepping into not holy. It was the limitations and the humiliations. He had to condescend in every way to come to us. Not to put down, but to step down into.*

Why? *He stepped out of eternity and into humanity to be with us – yes! But there was a problem with us that he could only solve by being here. What was the problem – well here is symptom: men, women, girls and boys – could not recognize Him as God. Problem there was and is a separation between God and all humans. Listen to Jesus: **John 3:3 (ESV) Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again – he will not see the kingdom of heaven.*** There is something that separates God and man and it is not a little thing. It is such a huge divide that Jesus says we must actually be born again. There is a life we don't have that we need to have. It is not in us.

Makes me wonder- if Jesus, God did come sit in this room – would we recognize Him? 16

We have seen God's desire – he longs to be in relationship with you! *But our condition ...*

02. What is our condition?

John 5:24 (ESV) Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

- **We are dead – spiritually.**

Our sin – makes us born dead to God, dead to knowing God. *What do I mean? **We can long to be good, but not holy. We can long to not feel guilt, but not be holy. We can long to believe there is something that can fix this broken world – we just cannot admit that we are the problem – and Jesus is the only answer.***

George Carlin, Brian Regan, Dave Chappelle: all these see the issues in our world, just have no answer.

*We are not just in the doghouse with God needing to be forgiven for rebelling against his holiness and offending his glory. We are in the morgue. In the doghouse you might whimper. You might say you are sorry. You might make some good resolutions. You might decide to cast yourself on the mercy of God. But what can you do if you are in the morgue? **We need someone to bring us to life.***

John 3:3 (ESV) Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again – he will not see the kingdom of heaven.

John 5:24 (ESV)

- **We are under judgment – because we are sinFULL.**

We cannot be in relationship with holy God – because we are not holy. We are full of sin, not right before holy God - rebels who are not like God. (Jesus' example shows us this.)

SinFULL – God is so other, holy, our sin is so vile to his holiness – he must judge it. (You are under judgment.)

*We are sinFULL – dead to the holiness and presence of God, under God's judgment - but loved. **Dilemma ...***

God's holiness required that He judge us. He cannot deny his holiness. But ...

God's perfect love required that he do something to bring us to be with Him. He longs to be with you.

So – God came to us – to solve our problem, our condition – that we could not fix.

Jesus didn't come and lay down eternity and put on humanity just to relate to us, for us to relate to Him, to give us an example - to be around us. 23

God can be around you and you can feel his presence and intellectually agree he exists and still be dead in your

sin and under judgment. Many of us feel God has been around us since we can remember, but I will ask you – what gave you this new life, what made you born again like Jesus says. Your goodness, your trying to follow Jesus' example. He says that is not possible. Only being born again. He can be near us – and us, you & I not be with Him. God came to us – because he had to come to rescue us – so we could be with Him.

Holy Son of God – took off His throne, left heaven, and put on flesh and became a servant.

Holy Son of God – put on flesh and lived the perfect life we should have lived so –

He could take our place of judgment before holy God. *I couldn't take your place – I deserve punishment. Only Jesus – who is perfect and lived perfect – could take our place.*

Holy Son of God – took our place – was judged guilty of our sin, & hung on a cross for our punishment.

It is at this point – that many of us really have an issue. We get God becoming a cockroach – to come to us, but did the cockroach really have to die for me – am I really that bad, am I really dead to God?

Picture two people in a car out for a drive along the Mississippi up near Alton. The rider knows that there is a time bomb in the trunk and that any second might blow the car to pieces. The driver doesn't believe there is one, and thinks that his rider is insane. The state patrol has been alerted that the car is indeed loaded with a bomb that will soon go off. They begin their search and pursuit.

The rider suddenly sees the State Patrol far in the distance to the rear racing toward the car. His heart leaps with hope for possible rescue! If you are the rider who knows that there is a bomb in the trunk, the flashing red lights in the distance are very precious, and the closer they get, the more precious they become. But if you are the driver and you don't think that there is a bomb in the trunk, the flashing red lights are a threat. WHY is Jesus a threat?

Why do we run from God's rescue of us?

1) **I don't want to believe I'm this bad. That bad of a rebel - this vile that God's Son – Jesus – had to die for me to know life with God. Its offensive to say – I'm a sinner.**

- If he can give me something to do to get in or be a part of him – I will do it.
- I am willing to follow Jesus' rules and his ideals – I am not sure I am ready to say I have no life, no ability to be with God.

2) **Getting exposed by God to God - is beyond fearFULL. If God really sees that I am a full-on sinner, rebel – not just a good person – who needs a better life – He will reject me.** *When people see the worst in me – they don't usually want to stay around me after that. Closeness doesn't always mean good. I don't want him that close – he will see everything and he will say – get away from me!*

*Truth is ... I would rather Jesus be a star in the sky – than the baby in a manger.
I would rather him be the man upstairs – than the man walking with me.
Because ultimately - I don't want to be exposed.*

Jesus' name says it all. **Immanuel – God with us. Jesus – God rescues.** God longs for desires you! God so desired to be with you – and so knew that you and I could not be with Him on our own – that He sent Jesus, Immanuel - to this earth to be with us - to live and die for you and I.

He died – so we could be offered forgiveness. The cross proves, outs our condition. We are in complete and desperate need of Jesus work. If not – why did God judge and execute his son for us. Overkill.

He died – not just for our forgiveness. You see – forgiveness was the only way we could be with God.

All his punishment was needed to cover and forgive all our rebellion > so God could bring us to Him.

And now - Jesus stands and pleads for you to believe you need his life to have life – to be born again!

God came to be with us – because He had to come to rescue us – so we could be with Him. *Will you believe Jesus, Immanuel? Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.* What does it mean to believe?

Trust our soul, our whole broken, sinFULL self to Jesus. 1) We confess we are rebels, 2) We trust our soul to Jesus' work. When we believe, trust Jesus & His work, He breathes life into our soul. This happened to Josh & to Amanda who are about to be baptized. It can happen to you. God can be with you now, because Jesus came to be with us & rescue us.

You have seen God's desire and your condition – will you believe in Immanuel?

Do you need Immanuel? If you see God's desire for you and your condition – you will cry out to him now?

Pray for people to believe in Immanuel

Visited a friend in the hospital (Brandon) laughed, cried, listened, hoped, prayed – God is with you and you are with Him

not because you are sick, have been good, or you need him. Your condition just screams – stay away. But Jesus – has brought you close. He is with you, in you, he will not leave you brother! Remember 1st question – what if God was in this room.
Believer, God is in this room with you because you have trusted your soul to Jesus & His work. Live in that today.

ONE & Fund *To multiply churches across our city and world*

Commissioning

Jesus laid down eternity and took up humanity to come rescue us,
So we could be with Him – in the presence of His joy.
He was SENT so by His work - we could be with Him.

In His joy and through the power of Jesus work – God SENDS us today.
To live amongst humanity with a sure hope for eternity
That declares – “you can be with God.”

Go in His joy!