

Emmanuel: The Purpose, The Prophecy, The Promise

Intro: Pastor Mike chose the theme of Emmanuel for this Christmas season. This is no doubt the heart of the Lord for His Church right now and God's perfect timing to remind us that He is with us. There are so many angles by which we can approach the Word of God and look into the Incarnation of God, and I believe that it is nothing less than God's providential grace to our Church that He led Pastor Mike to choose **Emmanuel**.

Emmanuel means: **God With Us**. If you only take away one thing from this message then know this: "**Church, God is with us.**" I don't say that wishfully or presumptuously, but I say it in assurance of faith, taking God at His Word.

If you have your Bibles, please hold them up high! If you are joining us for the first time today we want to welcome you and let you know that we are a Bible teaching, bible believing and it's up to you to be a Bible living church. Please Turn to Matthew 1:18-23. **God is about to break a silence of 400 years in preparation of the announcement of His Son.** Quick side note, just because it may seem that God is silent in your life, it doesn't mean He isn't working. **Read Text.**

Background: Joseph is betrothed to Mary and when he finds out that she is with child he plans to break off the betrothal secretly. The Lord intervenes and sends an angel to explain to Joseph the plan of God.

If you are taking notes, The title of the message is **Emmanuel: The Purpose, The Prophecy and The Promise.**

Right here in Matthew, The Spirit of God reveals to us **three key features** about the life and ministry of Emmanuel. I want to take a moment to briefly *preview* them and then we will *unwrap* them one by one in detail afterward.

1. His **Purpose:** In V. 21 the angel reveals to Joseph that Jesus will **save His people from their sins.**
2. His **Prophecy:** In V. 22 we read "all this was done that it might be **fulfilled** which was **spoken by the Lord** through the **prophet**"
3. His **Promise:** In V. 23 the promise of Immanuel is given to us that **God will be with us.**

Let's look at the **Purpose** of Emmanuel together. And for the sake of abundance of clarity, Jesus is Emmanuel. So what is the purpose of Jesus? Why did He come? Before we dive further into that, I think now would be a good time to dispel as many erroneous ideas about this and false notions that we can, because it is critical to the cause of truth this morning that we know the purpose of Jesus coming.

First let me start by saying what Jesus didn't come for:

1. Jesus did not come to teach good men how to live healthy and productive lives, he came to seek and save those who are lost. He did not come to make bad men good and moral, but He came to make dead men live. The Bible says that those who are born of the flesh (that's all of us) are dead in trespasses and sin and spiritually separated from God.
2. Jesus did not come to help people reach their full potential, be financially prosperous or have your best life now on earth. Jesus did not come to merely improve your quality of life. Beloved do not be deceived.
3. Jesus did not come to build big church buildings, make people religious church attenders and collect money from people to help get him into office. He did not come with a political campaign in mind or how to win the popular vote.

So why did Jesus come? Why did God decide to come off His throne and take on human flesh and condescend to earth and live among us for 33 years? The **purpose** of Jesus is right here: **He came to save His people from their sins.** Now let's also be clear, this was not the only thing that Jesus accomplished while on earth, but this was the primary reason for his coming.

Why did we need saving? What was He saving us from, exactly? Are we really lost? Are we really in need of rescue from sin? Why?

The river of sin has been flowing through humanity since the beginning, but in order to find out how it started, we have to look at the **fountainhead** of when it all started.

When God created everything, He made the world perfect. There was no sin, there was no death or disease. There was no curse on the earth. Everything was good. Along comes the devil and he begins to **undermine God's Word** to Adam and Eve and he convinces Eve to sin by disobeying God's command to abstain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam also fell into this trap and sinned willfully along with Eve. The moment they did this, **sin entered the world**.

Romans 5:12 - *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—*

The Bible tells us that **death entered the world by sin**. And we know now that sin was introduced by the devil. Do you see the progression here? 1). Doubt God's Word. 2) Believe the Lie. 3) Disobey God. 4) Bring Sin into the world. 5) Death comes to all men.

This is why Jesus called the devil a **murderer** from the beginning and the **father of lies**, a thief that comes to steal, to kill, and destroy.

Sin, death, sickness, disease, pain and suffering were never part of God's plan or design. These are all works of the devil. **For too long humanity has blamed its problems on God when the devil should be the one getting all the credit.**

So again, what is the purpose of Jesus' coming? **Jesus came to save us from our sins. But there's more.**

1 John 3:8 - *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. The Bible says that death is an "Enemy". Emmanuel has come! Jesus came to not only undo what was done, but to destroy the works of the devil and all that has ravaged this world because of it!

Isaiah 25:8 *"He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken."*

How is Jesus going to save us from our sins?

1. He saves us from the **Penalty** of Our sins: a judicial pardon where He takes the sentence and we go free.
2. He saves us from the **Power** of our sins so that while we yet remain in this body of flesh He provides the power and resource of Himself to have victory over temptation. We have grace and freedom to not sin.
3. Finally, He will one day save us from the **Presence** of sin where our earthly suffering is ended and we will no longer be under the curse. This is where Pastor Mike is, with Christ free from the presence of sin!

Jesus came to save us from our sins, destroy the works of the devil and for many other purposes. He came to become the spotless Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He came to bear your sin and shame on the cross and die a death He did not deserve in your place and mine. He came to preach the Gospel, sow His Kingdom into His disciples and open the door of fellowship back to God, where it was broken in the garden.

This is the Purpose of Emmanuel.

Now, what about the **Prophecy of Emmanuel**? Why is it significant that the coming of Jesus to the earth was foretold in prophecy?

Isaiah 42:9 *"Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."* NKJV

“Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens.” NLT

God declares to us what will happen in the future so that when it happens we know that we can trust His Word. **Friends, can't you see the wisdom of God in this? It's vital that we trust His Word, because all of the evils that have befallen humanity began with the undermining of God's Word – “Hath God really said”,** said the serpent.

We don't have time to study all of the prophecies related to Christ's 1st coming, but let's take a moment to look at some of the most famous ones.

Isaiah 7:14 - *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”* Not only was this an incredible miracle of God but it was absolutely essential to the redemptive plan of God. **Jesus did not have the cursed seed of Adam**, which fulfilled the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 stating that the seed of the woman, apart from man would come to crush the serpent's head. That is why Jesus is called the Last Adam, because just as Adam failed through sin and effected all of humanity Christ prevailed in a sinless life and brought the gift of righteousness and salvation to all who would receive it.

Micah 5:2 - *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”* This specific prophecy identifies the birthplace of the Messiah 700 years in advance, specifying which Bethlehem even, the smaller one south of Jerusalem. It also speaks of the deity of Christ.

So perhaps you are thinking, big deal, those prophets just got lucky. Well first of all, you can't get around the virgin birth of Christ, but let me just name off a few more prophecies fulfilled in Christ at His first coming, and note this does not even touch the prophecies that will be fulfilled when He comes again.

It was prophesied beforehand that: Jesus would have a prophetic forerunner which was fulfilled in John the Baptist, that He would be presented to His people as Messiah while riding the young colt of a donkey, He would be betrayed by His friend, that He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver, that He would be slaughtered as a sacrificial Lamb and during this He would remain silent, He would be spit on, His beard would be plucked out, that it would be dark at noon during His crucifixion, none of His bones would be broken, His hands would be pierced, his garments would be gambled for and He would be buried in a rich man's tomb – and Jesus predicted His own resurrection after 3 days! This is by no means an exhaustive list!

Christ's birth was not just foretold by prophecy either! His birth was foretold in the heavens! If you really study the origin of the star of Bethlehem and how the wise men determined it's appearing it will blow your mind. Not only that, but the gospel is presented in the constellations. The heavens truly do declare the glory of God! Night unto night they utter speech – what are they saying? There are key players in the live drama God has placed in the stars, and the climax is when Leo the Lion put his paw on the multi headed serpent that appears to be fleeing. If God did declare the Gospel to the ancient world, doesn't it make sense that Satan would try and pervert it with modern astrology and star worship?

Why would the Lord do this? So we would trust His Word again! Because remember, all the works of the devil were manifested when man doubted the Word of God. So God has given us irrefutable prophecy that any honest seeker cannot deny in order to bolster our faith in His Word and give us comfort that He is in control.

Romans 15:4 – *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”*

Galatians 4:4 - *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son..*

If we can trust His prophecies, we can trust His Word, and if we can trust His Word, we can trust Emmanuel, because the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us. We can trust Emmanuel's character because He was announced by a trustworthy God.

Emmanuel's Promise. This leads us to our last and final package to open.

The Promise of Emmanuel reveals the heart of God, to ever and always be in the midst of His creation. One of the names of God in the Bible is the **“Desire of Nations”**. He desires that we would desire Him, but He also jealously desires to be with us. So much so that He left His throne in Heaven to repair the breach between us and fill the chasm of sin that separated us.

God did not create us for amusement or personal enjoyment from afar, nor did He create us as animatronic robots with no capacity for love and fellowship. God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden in the cool of the day and was accustomed to regular fellowship – this is why He was so alarmed when they were hiding in their sin and He cried out in tenderness **“Where are you”?**

You can see God’s progressive desire for fellowship with us in the Bible.

1. First the Tabernacle was a place of gathering for worship, but we were still separated by a veil
2. Then the Temple was a permanent building, but even for God this would not suffice because “Even heaven nor the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, how much less this house built by human hands”
3. Then Jesus came in flesh, Emmanuel to dwell among us – that word is literally “tabernacled” among us
4. Jesus preached His kingdom at first was **not far off**, then to those who listened it was **close at hand**, and then to those who received Him and His message it was eventually **within them**.

Church, God is not looking for a sentimental nod of the head this Christmas. We adore Jesus in the manger but sometimes we leave Him there. God’s intention is not to just come and live on the earth as Emmanuel, **but He wants to live in you**. That is the ultimate fulfillment of Emmanuel’s promise. Listen to these words of Christ spoken regarding this:

John 14:23 – “Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

1 Corinthians 3:16 – “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

This is the promise of Emmanuel – that God is with us. He is with us in our mourning, He is with us in our grieving. He with us in our trials. He is with us in our losses, He is with us in our failures. His presence gives Peace in the chaos of life, Comfort in our suffering, and Hope and consolation in times of doubt and uncertainty.

Emmanuel reminded us that He knows even when the sparrows fall from their place and not a single one of them falls apart from God’s will and presence. Our losses are of greater importance to Him than sparrows, beloved. So what is your sparrow? Is it a diagnosis? Emmanuel is with you. Are you staring death in the face? Emmanuel is with you. Are you grieving and mourning over the loss of a loved one from recent time or perhaps one who passed during Christmas years ago? Emmanuel is with you. He wants you to know that He is in complete control. Not a single sparrow falls to the ground apart from Him.

When your family seems to be coming apart at the seams, God is with us. When your children are wandering and astray, God is with us. When a church, loses its loving pastor...God is with us.

Remember church, Jesus said to His disciples, **“Lo I am with you always**, even to the end of the age.”

How profound and providential of God to take us through the book of Joshua this year. With the passing of Moses, Joshua was no doubt full of fear, doubt and uncertainty. God comforted Him with these words.

*Joshua 1:9 - “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the **LORD your God is with you wherever you go.**” Emmanuel: **God is with us.***

Conclusion – We have looked at the Purpose, The Prophecy and Promise of Emmanuel

- Have you **allowed Emmanuel to save you from your sins**? He wants to set you free from the Penalty and the Power of sin. Don't you hear the voice of Emmanuel calling to you as He called to Adam in the garden...**where are you?** This could be the greatest gift you ever received at Christmas, the gift of forgiveness and eternal life from God.
- Do you need **assurance and certainty that God is who He says He is** and can really be considered trustworthy? You can trust Him with your life. **You can trust His Word.** He has fulfilled it and will continue to fulfill it. God keeps His promises.
- **Have you allowed the Lord entrance into your life?** Are you holding him at arm's length? Are you willing to allow Him to make His home in you and give Him unrestricted access to your temple? Anything less denies Him His right as king. Refusal of such a request He has made to you is worse than those who shunned Him in Bethlehem that starry night 2000 years ago – when “there was no room for Him in the Inn”. He is not satisfied with the inn, He is not satisfied with the manger, he is not satisfied with the temple – He wants to dwell in you.

Will you permit Emmanuel to be Emmanuel to you?