

Highway to the Manger Zone Part 3: God With us

Objective: To call us to recognize the presence of Christ this season

Read together:

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

Matthew 1:22-23

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24 Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

26 He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

27 The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Matthew 8:23-27

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

- Would you, generally speaking, describe your experience during the holidays as a peaceful experience or do you tend to be more stressed, frustrated and anxious than at other times of the year? If you are more anxious, what do you think causes that?
- In Matthew 1:22-23, we are told that Jesus was called Immanuel which means, "God with us." When you think of God being with us, what comes to mind?
- The pastor said that a part of the reason we experience anxiety and lack peace is that we don't recognize God's presence. How have you experienced the presence of God in your own life? Are there other ways you can/should recognize the presence of God?
- In the boat, during the storm, the disciples were afraid they were going to drown, so they called out to Jesus. As he calmed the storm he said, "**You of little faith, why are you so afraid?**" Why do you think Jesus connected their fear with a lack of faith? How does faith impact your ability or willingness to recognize the presence of Jesus.
- Three of the main sources of anxiety come from our relationships with others, our circumstances and a lack of peace between ourselves and God. Which of these areas causes the greatest anxiety for you? How can recognizing the presence of Jesus help bring peace to that particular situation?

This week: Take some time to slow down and quiet yourself. Then ask God to make His presence real to you and spend some time resting in His presence, allowing him to conquer your anxiety with His peace.

