

Songs of Christmas Series
Part 4 – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Pastor Lester Zimmerman
Matthew 1:18-25

Today is the last of our Christmas series where we are taking some of the well-known Christmas carols and using them to help tell the Christmas story.

This has been a fun and meaningful series. These Christmas songs are special and sung by many generations.

Our text today will be from Matthew 1.

And this morning's song is "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and is one of the oldest Christmas songs we have.

This hymn, originally in Latin, takes us back over 1,200 years to monastic life in the 8th- or 9th-century. It was written as a Gregorian chant – Monks would sing it as part of their preparation for Christmas. In 1851 the chant was set to music and composed by Thomas Helmore. When we sing this song, we are participating in a sacred Advent ritual at least 11 centuries old.

This morning's video song is by **Phillips, Craig and Dean** but instead of just the song we have added scenes from the **Nativity Story Movie**.

VIDEO SONG

This song reflects Israel's long anticipation of the messiah. The one they believed would come and deliver them from the Roman occupation.

**O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear**

There is a longing and a cry for deliverance in this song.
Ransom us, save us.

**Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!**

The name Emmanuel is a prophetic name given to the coming messiah by Isaiah the prophet and is repeated by Mathew as he tells the Christmas story.

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Emmanuel means “God with us”.

This theme of God being with us is seen throughout the Bible. God promises to be with His people during good times and during hard times. He promises to walk with us through everyday life.

The birth of Jesus was surrounded with hardship. From the very beginning Herod was trying to kill the baby Jesus. Mary and Joseph became **refugees** as they fled to Egypt, until Herod’s death, in order to protect their baby. Many other babies lost their lives at the hand of Herod’s soldiers in their efforts to kill Jesus.

Christmas comes to us through the crucible of suffering. But also comes to us with the promise that God has come to earth to be with us and to walk with us.

We are no longer alone. Emmanuel is here. God is with each one of us.

In verse 21 the angel tells Joseph to name the baby **“Jesus”**.

Jesus is the English pronunciations of the Hebrew and Greek names for our Lord.

The name Jesus means “God Saves” or “Savior.” It is the same name as *Joshua* in the Old Testament. Jesus is a derivative of the Hebrew name **Yeshua**, which is based on the Semitic root meaning **“to deliver; to rescue.”**

So, in his Name, we see that Jesus is - God with us. He is our savior, deliverer and rescuer.

In Vs.21 the angel explains why Joseph should name this baby -Jesus.

“because he will save his people from their sins.”

He was coming as the savior to a broken, sinful, lost world.

1. Everyone needs Jesus to save them from their sins.

He came to save his people – we are all his people. We are all created by him into his likeness and image. Jesus loves each one of his creation.

Children's song. **Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red, brown, yellow, black and white they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world. Jesus died for all the children**

This is why racism is so wrong. Jesus created all colors equal, loves us all equal, died for us all equally. All are precious in his sight and should be in ours too.

The bible makes it clear that **we have all sinned** and are all eternally lost without God's forgiveness purchased by Jesus on the cross. Jesus came with a mission.

Jesus did not overthrow the government - but he could have
Jesus did not become political – but he could have
Jesus did not see how popular he could become – but he could have

Jesus came with **one mission** and **one destination** in mind.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

You and I were his mission. He looked down through time and saw you and me this morning. He knew we would be eternally lost, eternal separated from God, eternally doomed to the punishment of hell. He had to do something. His love compelled him to come to earth.

The Christmas story should deeply move us. If he hadn't come, we would still be lost and without hope.

His destination was burned into his heart. **Not a throne or riches or fame but a cross.** He knew he had to die as the sacrifice, the payment and ransom for our sins.

This is the Good News of the Gospel, this is what the Christmas story is about.

**He will be called – Jesus – the one who saves
And he will be called Emmanuel – God with us**

2. Jesus came to walk with us, and still does. He is Emmanuel.

God stripped Himself of His glory and became like us in the form of a baby. This is the wonder and glory of Christmas.

As Patrick say last week, He did this, so we could better relate to him. He was now one of us. He now understood pain and life from a human perspective.

He came to our earth home as a human, so he could be with us. Walk with us. Be near to us and so we could be near to him. So we could feel and enjoy his presence.

When our daughter was a missionary in China, we communicated with her through email and skype. But when she showed up in person, we enjoyed her presence with us.

Jesus showed up in person. He became Emmanuel to us. **After his resurrection he left earth and ascended into heaven, but he left his presence, through his Holy Spirit, here with us.** We can still feel and enjoy his presence.

He still walks with us through life. As his children, we are never alone. He doesn't remove all pain and struggle from our lives, but he promises to walk with us through them and to redeem them for his greater purposes in our lives.

His last words to us are recorded in **Mt 28:20 And I am with you always, even to the end of the world.**" NLV

No matter what you are going through this morning and no matter what you might face in 2019, you have his presence with you. He will walk with you and help you.

This is the story of Christmas. God has come to save us and live with us.

Let me ask you a question: Do you know Jesus as your savior? Have you asked him to forgive you of your sins and turned your life over to his control? He will forgive you if you ask him. And he will teach you how to walk with him and enjoy his presence as Emmanuel.

Conclusion:

Before we close with this song, I want you to notice one more thing. If you look closely at the verses of this song you will notice that they all have a hidden meaning, or a double purpose.

The lyrics look to the first coming and the second coming of Jesus. Both the incarnation and his return.

When we sing the lyrics of this song, we're not only celebrating the birth of our savior Jesus, but we're also **preparing our hearts for Jesus' return**, which we may actually witness during our lifetime.

Jesus is coming back. O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Come and save us, heal us, deliver us.

Ransom us that mourn in lonely exile here – until the Son of God appears

Prayer Blessing:

May God bless you this Christmas with a ...

- Deeper awareness of God's love for you in sending Jesus
- With a deeper awareness of God's abiding presence with you every day
- With a joy that fills your heart with hope for tomorrow