



Getting Started:

- Share your favorite winter memory. Would you rather build a snowman or go sledding?
- When you see it snowing, what is your first thought? With Christmas just weeks away, how are you feeling?

Going Deeper:

- What is God showing you this week as you read his Word and pray?
- What decisions or life struggles do you need Biblical direction or prayer for?

Message Summary

Isaiah 7:10-16

December 5, 2021

This week, we continue in our Christmas series, *Repeat the Sounding Joy*. For many of us these verses are familiar, especially around the Christmas season. If you have been going to church for a significant time, you were prepared to hear a message filled with hope, joy, and the promise that God would fulfill through his son Jesus (which we did), but we can't miss the context and timing of the prophecy God is giving to his people. As we began, we saw that these events took place during the reign of King Ahaz, the king of Judah. The kingdom had split (Israel in the north and Judah in the south) after they had a dispute about who would replace Solomon. Ahaz - King of Judah - was not a good king and did evil in the eyes of the Lord. The kings of Israel and Samaria wanted to join together and force him out as king and this terrified him. But God had other plans and assured him that he had nothing to worry about. *"The Kings of Israel and Samaria are nothing but burned out embers."*

Even after King Ahaz heard from God, he didn't trust God. Seeing this, God challenged the king to ask for a sign. Surprisingly, he said no. At this, we looked at how foolish Ahaz was because we often would do anything for a sign from God. We then looked at some of the signs God has given to us over time that we see recorded in the Word and the signs we have seen in our own lives but often ignore. It makes you wonder how frustrated it makes God. Probably as frustrated as Isaiah is with King Ahaz: *"He says, 'Isn't it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience of my God as well?'"* And we are not much different. *"God is asking you to be faithful, and trust Him, but, like Ahaz, you just can't let go of trying to be in control."* We all want to be the hero - faithful and true - in the stories we read in the Bible. But the truth is *"we're Ahaz. We're the one who is in the spotlight - struggling to trust God - even though he's standing right in front of us saying 'Don't be afraid. I am with you.'"*

Ahaz received a sign that a virgin would conceive a son and would call his name Immanuel. The reason this was given to Ahaz was to give him an assurance of hope. The hope for him and for us is found in the word "Immanuel", which means "God with us." His name is Jesus. The reason we can call him "Immanuel" is because *"the Son of God became human without ceasing to be God."* Jesus entered a dark hostile world in the flesh to save it. He came from the Father with grace and truth. *"God could have chosen to become human as a judge - where all of us would be found guilty before him and be sentenced to eternal punishment. But he didn't become human in that way."* God sending his son was the ultimate sign of grace, because Jesus had to have been human to die in our place. *"So the Son of God came full of grace, and also full of truth. Part of that truth was in fulfilling the law. While grace & truth both had been evident in the law, these two qualities were fully revealed in the Word becoming human."* John tells us in his gospel that Jesus' life was so magnificent that it can't fully be communicated. He was only thirty-three years old when he died, but in his short life (and even shorter ministry), he did more than we can ever imagine. He was *"an example in love and humility that we should strive to duplicate in our everyday lives."*

Continuing, we looked at three reasons why God being with us should bring us joy. The first reason we learned was that we are set free. We no longer have to fear death as we see the people of Jesus' day did. And if we are honest, many today still fear death. As Christ-followers, we also are free from the bondage of sin. Because of Christ's life, death and resurrection, we can have joy in this life and the coming everlasting life. The second reason for joy is we don't have to see him physically to believe in the fact that he was, is, and always will be God with us. *"It also gives us lots of reason to rejoice in that the Good News of Christ is not hidden from us, despite not seeing him physically."* Our third reason we can find joy in Immanuel is that we know he is with us here on earth today through the Holy Spirit. *"But because of Jesus being with us in human form as our savior, we can now long for the day that he returns to draw us to himself forever. What a joy it is to be eagerly awaiting the return of our glorious savior. A waiting that is filled with hope, knowing that when Christ returns he will judge the world out of his righteousness, and we will be with him forever."*

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Take a moment to read our sermon text:

Isaiah 7:10-16

After briefly reviewing the message summary, use these questions to further examine the sermon and to discuss how these truths apply to daily life, so we can “be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (Jas.1:22). Based on your knowledge of the people in your life group, select the questions that will best help you frame the group’s discussion of this sermon and sermon text.

GENERAL SERMON QUESTIONS

1. What do you think is the key message of these verses? Explain why you think this.
2. After hearing the message and reading the scriptures, what was your biggest takeaway and why?
3. In what ways do these truths, which were written thousands of years ago, apply today?
4. Which point in the sermon spoke to you the most? How did it affect you?
5. In what ways do these passages point to Christ? What can we share with others about Him from what we just heard and read?

Read: Isaiah 7:10-16, John 1:14 21:25, Hebrews 2:14-15 9:28, Philipians 2:5-8, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Revelation 22:20

1. What is the danger in checking out when we hear familiar-themed sermons preached this time of year?
2. Why is it good to remember and celebrate the truths we looked at this week?
3. What was God’s relationship with King Ahaz like? How did he respond when God asked him to ask for a sign?
4. How did Isaiah feel about this rejection? What did he believe the king was doing to God’s patience?
5. Knowing this, why did God choose him to give the sign? What was that sign?
6. What signs do we see that reveal God is with us today? How can we respond at times when we see those signs?
7. Why do we like to insert ourselves as the hero of the stories we read in the Bible? But often who are we really?
8. How did God choose to reveal himself to mankind? Why was this the only way?
9. What did it accomplish? How was the law represented? What was the state of the world when he entered?
10. How was God sending Jesus an ultimate sign of grace? What if Jesus would have come to judge mankind? What would be our fate?
11. Why did John say that Jesus’ life was so magnificent that it was hard to communicate? Why was his life so amazing compared to ours?
12. What are the three reasons we looked at that should give us joy because God is with us?
13. How are we set free? How can we trust that he is with us even if we have never seen him physically?
14. What is our final hope? Why does advent point to his return?
15. Who do you need to invite to church this Christmas to hear this good news?

The Challenge - Life Application

- Read the passages used in this week's message. Write down any scriptures you need to be reminded of on sticky notes and place them around the house. Try to memorize as many as you can.
- Reflect on the message and ask God to give you His strength as you follow Him.
- Pray that, as Christ-followers, we would reflect the change God has made in us.
- Go back and listen or watch the sermon if you missed it or you need to be reminded of its truths.

Weekly Prayer Focus

Pray for Our Church:

- Ask God to use us as instruments for His purpose and glory.
- Pray that we are a GOING church, proclaiming the gospel to the nations.
- Ask God to help each of us to live a life that reflects Him.
- Pray for all of our campuses.
- Pray for our pastors and leadership here at Gateway.

Pray for Our City:

- The government and civic leaders
- Those in need in our community and the services that help them
- The fire and police departments
- Schools, students, and teachers

Pray for Our World:

- Pray for the Christ-followers in Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Cuba, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh.
- Pray for all of those who are being persecuted in harm's way for the Kingdom.
- Pray that the message of Christ will reach all of mankind.

Pray for Life Groups at Gateway:

- Pray for those who are leading our groups.
- Pray that everyone involved in our groups would continue to be rooted in the Word and connected to each other.
- Pray for relationships to grow with other Christ-followers and that we will encourage and care for one another.
- Pray for discipleship opportunities.