

God With Us

I. Slide1 Intro:

A. **Merry Christmas to each of you!** And those *watching on line!*

B. Ps 40:16 *May all who search for you be **filled** with **joy** and **gladness** IN YOU.
May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, **The Lord is great!***

C. **Prayer:** God, You are **our Home**, our **destination**, and **delight**. Don't just be our North Star, **but** be our Entire Universe! Be our Immanuel, *God with us*.

D. **Slide2** Mt.1:20b-23 *behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him (Joe) in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name **Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: (Is.) 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name **Immanuel**" (which means, **God with us**).*

1. This was a **descriptive title** of His earthly ministry - *i.e.* **God with us**.

2. John Wesley died w/this on his tongue. Let us live with it on our hearts.

3. Matthews last sentence says, *And behold, I am **with you** always, to the end of the age.*

E. **Slide3a** Ps.84:5 says, *Blessed are those whose strength is **IN YOU***. I know that some of you are **not** followers of Jesus, and **we are glad you are here!**

1. If you don't know God intimately, I know there's times in your life where you say, *I've had enough, I can't do anymore*. **See**, if you don't know God intimately realize, *all you have is ... all you have*. **But** for **Christ followers**, we believe we have a strength that goes beyond just what we have. **We have access to a heavenly strength**. It's why the Psalmist said, *Blessed are those whose strength is in You*.

F. Slide3b Believe it or not, *Christmas is for Doubters*. The Christmas narratives are filled with people who **doubt**.

1. Here we have *a newly engaged couple* suddenly **mired in scandal** because of *Mary's divinely induced pregnancy*, a pregnancy she **neither** expected **nor** requested.
2. Mary and Joseph were already the *poorest of the poor*, and **now God** chooses to make them **social outcasts too?**
3. Of all the ways to bring the Son of God into the world, **why this way?**

G. Slide4 Outline: 3 words, **God - With - Us**. (*Kids*: what 3 words?)

II. Slide5a **GOD. GOD With Us!**

A. **JESUS SO NORMAL** [JESUS **NOT** SO NORMAL]

B. *Mary & Joseph were so normal*. Arrive in a simple town/Bethlehem, covered in road dust. **Facing common problems**: answering a government census, dealing with busy holiday problems **trying to book an AirB&B**. Found themselves in a common stable. **God in her belly** but no *special tax exemption*, **or spiritual dispensation** to stay home from the census. **She's so normal. He's so normal.**

1. **Don't picture**: King Joseph & Queen Mary. **Or** even Mary & Joseph of the Bible - **but** *Norm and Norma of Normal Nazareth*.¹ max lucado

C. **Don't you feel just normal?** we all are.

1. **Many yrs ago**, back when our son & daughter were born, they showed you the **Ultrasound** (I'm thinking, it's cute, **but** where's the head?). It looked more like *a Doppler Radar Storm Forecast* (which maybe it was for 1 of our children :) **but** she's doing good now).
 - a) **But now**, the **Ultrasound 4D** are gettin **Incredible!** Slide5b
 - b) **Any way**, all that you want to hear from the doctor is *Everything's Normal*.
 - c) Had Mary and Joseph got an *ultrasound*, the doctor would've said, *He's normal*. **So ... all of us common folks can relate!**

¹ Max Lucado.

D. John in 1 sentence says: *And the Word/Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us ... wait*, think about it, *what an immense journey*.

E. **But** wrapped in the cloak of *commonest*, is **God**. And *God is With Us*.

1. **He loves** to come to *normal people*, through *normal circumstances*.
2. **And He** must think really highly of **you**, **He** must think **you're something special**.

F. But was also, **JESUS NOT SO NORMAL**

G. **Isaiah** said *Immanuel* is coming. **Matthew** said He's here.

1. **ImmanuEL** - with us / **God**. (*El, Elah, Elohim. eg. Daniel, Ezekiel, Samuel*)

H. **Once in Haiti**, a friend was bunking with me, and we started feeding **lizards** these *winged bugs* flying around. Before long we were hand feeding them. **But never once** did I think to ask **God**, *Lord make me a lizard, so I might relate to them better*.

1. **Kids you know where Lizards live?** In a hole of an old block wall. Under a rock. I wouldn't want to give up my house with heating & A/C. **Or** give up coffee, steak, 5 Guys burgers, **or** ice cream ... *for little bugs???*
2. **And give up *seeing the world?*** the beach, the mountains, the desert. A lizard usually stays w/in a football fields length of where he's born.
3. **How far of a journey would that be, for me to become one of them a lizard?**
 - a) As soon as you find an answer to that question, *multiply that by a billion*, **and** you'll have a fraction of what it meant for **the Lord Jesus to become flesh/** human **and dwell among us**.
4. **One not bound by time, to be** now under its constraints.
 - a) To be **everywhere present**, **then be** limited to only where His feet would take him
 - b) To be **never tired**, **then** to fall asleep.
 - c) **Never hungry** now needing to nourish His body with food. **GOD With Us!**

III. Slide6 **WITH. God WITH Us!**

A. God - is - **with** - us :)

1. Immanuel - **not** above us, **or** beyond us, **BUT among us**.

2. Jesus is still with us.

a) God **was** with us/mankind in the garden of Eden. (Gen)

b) God **will be** with us in Eternity. Slide7 (Rev.21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of **God is with man**. He will dwell **with them**, and they will be his people, **and** God himself will be **with them as their God**) with 3x's.*

c) Slide8 **And God is with us now**, for those who have *started living in communion WITH Him*.

d) No temporary thing here. *Always with us. Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Col.1:27

B. In Immanuel - the **Distant** became **near**. See Him at the carpenters bench, sitting at the well, weeping at the grave of Laz, on the cross ... **He is near! God WITH Us!**

IV. Slide9 **US. God With US!**

A. **WITH BELIEVERS** [**and** with unbelievers]

B. We gave out books called **WITH** Dec.2020 by Skye Jethani. He said, The **life with God** is a **posture** built on the view that **Relationship is core**:

1. **God the Father**, with the **God the Son**, with **God the HS**. Trinity.

2. Not surprising then that when God desired to **restore his broken relationship with people**, He sent His son to dwell **with us**.

3. He chose to **walk with us once again**, as he did with Adam in Eden.

a) **Jesus** entered into our dark existence, to share our broken world, to **illuminate a different way forward**, **With Jesus**, 1 inch at a time.

C. He's **with us**, **not against** Us. He is **For** Us.

1. Psalm 23:4b **I will not be afraid for You are close to me**.

D. **WITH UNBELIEVERS** in which way?

E. *So we (bel's) are Christ's **ambassadors**; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "**Come back to God!**" 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to **be** the offering **for** our sin, so that we could **be made right with God through Christ**. 2 Cor.5:19-21*

1. **Slide10** It's the Great Exchange: **God** treats **Christ**, like **He** lived your life, so **He** could treat **us** as if we lived **His** life.

F. **He's** waiting to be **with** you. Are you ready to be **with** Him? **God With US!**

G. **Pray: God** with us = **Love** with us. **Hope** with us. **Peace** with us.

H. **End:** I Invite you to join me, **Wed night, 7pm**, in the Fellowship Hall. **On How To Practice: *Communing With God***. In our 1st, Wed Night Refresh.

I. *May you find Comfort in ... **God with us**.

1. Take time each day, for a word **From** Him (in **His book**), and a word **With** Him (in **prayer**).

J. Keywords: God, Immanuel.