

Immanuel: God With Us

Christmas is here!

This year it didn't feel like it as much?
a late Thanksgiving. Warm weather?

I've met people over the years that don't celebrate Christmas for one reason or another

- It's too commercial
- They're worried about potential pagan history
- It's against their religion
- They've lost loved ones

**I think each of these is really sad for different reasons,
but most of all because Christmas is about God, with us.**

Tonight, do you know that GOD is WITH YOU?

It's evident all throughout the scripture.

Christophanies/Theophanies

- Genesis 2&3*, God in Eden, planting a garden, making man, walking daily with them, driving them out
- Genesis 16, the Angel of the Lord to Hagar
- Genesis 18, to Abraham, Sarai...but also to inspect Sodom
- Genesis 11*...came down to see Babel
- Genesis 14*...Melchizedek
- Gen 32 God wrestling with Jacob
- Exodus 3:2 Moses, out of the burning bush

List goes on and on...

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Immanuel - God WITH us

Jesus - YHWH/GOD is salvation

God with us...to save us. To be our salvation.

Why?

We can't do this alone. We were never meant to.

- **The Garden** - perfect
- **Walking with God** - daily
- **By sin death entered** - everything changed, for the worse

The lie - we'll be like God if we eat, get enlightened to sin

The truth - we were already made in His image, holy

We're unable to handle the effects of sin & death

- Our lifespan was cut short - anything short of eternal
- Our spirit died immediately - we were cut off from God
- All of Creation was effected

The result?

Romans 8:19-22 NLT - For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

We turn to all sorts of things to alleviate the pain and suffering

Booze, relationships, drugs, money, selfishness, NEW TOYS

Does any of it help? Not for long. Everything wears off. Wears us out.

Or worse, eventually kills us and our relationships.

God didn't design us to live without Him

And when we chose to do life without Him- He had a plan to get us back with Him

So what's the plan?

Genesis 3:13-15 NKJV - And the LORD God said to the woman, "What [is] this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You [are] cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Did you catch that? God would send His son to be a part of the human race.

To rescue humans. To defeat Satan. To do away with sin.

By becoming human.

And that brings us to Christmas.

The plan started long before the first Christmas
And continues many Christmas' later.

But Christmas was it. No more temporary visits.

No more appearing to one person or sending others with the message from God. To go between God and man.

It was God sending His Son to be with us.

Christmas - For Non Christians

A nice day filled with presents. Maybe about getting what you want. Maybe about giving. Maybe about family. Maybe about doing a good deed or going to church to pay respects to the man upstairs.

Christmas - For Christians

It's the day of celebrating Jesus Christ's birth

A day to celebrate that God came to us.

That He gave us the ultimate gift that cost the most anything could cost.

The family? By blood and His blood. The gifts? Just a bonus to show each other love like God showed us His love first.

Romans 5:8 NKJV - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:15-21 NLT - But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. **For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.** God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When we love someone, or miss someone, or need comfort, we tend to cling to things

A teddy bear, a picture of a loved one (Castaway), a blanket (Linus?), comfort food

When we don't realize God is with us, or know him, we cling to other things to keep with us

A rosary, my cross necklace(BC), pictures, statues, idols, religion, the law

I think that's why we're always afraid to go to new places, speak to new people - even if God is leading us. Because we're afraid he's not with us.

Romans 8:29-32 NLT - For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory. **What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?**

But God IS with us!

If you're a Christian, you know this. He lives within you.

If you're not a Christian, did you know God is alongside you?

Reaching out to you? Trying to get you to turn to Him?

Jhn 14:16-20 NKJV - "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. "At that day you will know that I [am] in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

He gave us the Comforter! The Holy Spirit

What more do we need?

The real gift at Christmas is knowing that in Jesus, we have all we need

[Mat 6:25-34 NKJV] 25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, [will He] not much more [clothe] you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. **For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.** 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these

things shall be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day [is] its own trouble.

Christmas giving erased with some generic winter holiday about getting

But the truth is, we need to get...we need to receive Him

When we remove God, it's just us...alone

Remember?

Immanuel - God with us

Jesus - YHWH/God is salvation

He had to be with us to free us

The point was always to bring us back into a relationship with Him

It's not about doctrine

(although right doctrine is essential to knowing who He really is)

It's not about living the right lifestyle

(although living rightly shows we know who He really is)

It's about knowing Him personally...through Jesus and Jesus alone.

Not because we made ourselves with God by being good

But because He brought us close through dying on the cross

Being with us - by becoming our sin

Being with us - by being raised to life again

Do we still see Christmas as a miracle?

Jesus DID many miracles. But Him being born was one, too!

But, there's also another miracle...

John 3:3-8 NLT - Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

That when Jesus was born, it was so that we could be born again,
born and welcomed into God's family.

We are welcome with God because of Jesus.

No matter what we've done. Who we think we are. How good or bad we've been
If we'd but choose Him, too.

Choose Him over: Loneliness, Depression, Sin, Selfishness, Drugs, Death

To Choose His Life and let go of ours.

Even if ours is "good" - it's not truly living.

**Because the ultimate goal, the ultimate plan,
is that we would be with him forever, in heaven.**

Luk 23:39-43 NKJV - Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." **Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."**

That's the gift God wants you to have this Christmas.

Will you receive it?

To be forgiven and washed clean?

That He can be with you right now?

He'll take you to Heaven to be with Him forever?