

THE NAME

IMMANUEL



Merry Christmas Brandywine! I am Pastor Todd Johnson.

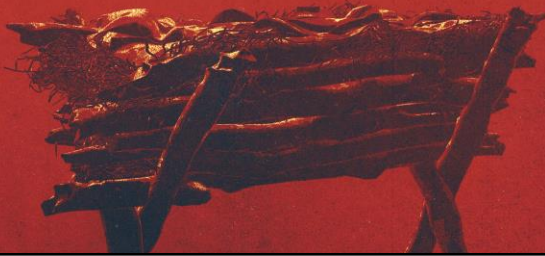
I hope you all have had a wonderful time with your family/friends. We are glad that you have gathered here on this day with your church family to once again reflect/celebrate the birth of Christ.

And this morning we are going to continue our two part Christmas Series THE NAME.

On Christmas Eve Pastor Nate shared about THE MEANING OF THE NAME **JESUS**...and this morning we are going to look at another NAME/TITLE Jesus is given in Matthew Ch. 1. **IMMANUEL = GOD WITH US.**

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As we get started, you know, I was thinking.

Christmas can sometimes highlight that there are two different types of people when it comes to giving and receiving gifts.

There are those who LOVE to GIVE gifts. Raise your hand if you love GIVING GIFTS to others.

I love giving gifts. It is really a gift to me to be able to see someone light up from something I've given them. And I know that many of you feel the same way too.

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There are also those who LOVE to RECEIVE gifts.

Raise your hand if you love receiving gifts. Don't be shy...there is nothing wrong with the enjoyment of receiving gifts.

Jesus said that it is better to give than to receive, but he didn't say that receiving good gifts is bad thing.

There is something really special about receiving a gift from someone who loves you, someone who took special care and attention to offer you something you ***needed***.

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Whether Christmas gets you excited to give or receive...the reality is that ***ALL OF HUMANITY*** has been ***given*** a gift that we ought to ***receive***.

Because friends we NEED to receive the gift of Christmas. And what I mean by that is...we all need what was offered to us in a manger in Bethlehem 2000 years ago.

This morning we are going to examine exactly what we have been given...and also how we can take that same gift and offer it to others.

Pray:

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Many of us here this morning have titles that in some way signify who we are.

- Parents – nurture, protect, provide for children
- Children – spend all of your parent's money 😊
- Grandparents – spoil grandchildren, fill them with sugar, send them home to torment your children 😊

Some of us hold the title of Manager, or Teacher, or Athlete, or Soldier.

There are many titles that we can bear, and what's unique about Matthew's Gospel and his retelling of the Christmas story is that he begins by telling about Jesus' Name and His Title.

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Matthew tells us that before the birth of Jesus, an angel appeared to Joseph and revealed that his fiancée, Mary, had conceived a child through the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20–21).

He was told that Mary would give birth to a Son, and they were to name Him Jesus.

And then Matthew, quoting from Isaiah 7:14, revealed that Jesus was to possess not just one name but two, the name Jesus and the title IMMANUEL.

Matthew 1:22-23 (NIV)

²² 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”).

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

Seven hundred years before the first Christmas, the prophet Isaiah in chapter 7 verse 14 foretold the virgin birth of the promised Messiah.

He prophesied that His name would be Immanuel, which again means “God with us.”

By referencing these words of Isaiah, the Gospel writer Matthew is recognizing the miracle of the Incarnation: that God is now with us!

Matthew 1:22-23 (NIV)

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You see Church, God had always been with His people.

He was there in the pillar of cloud above the tabernacle....He was there in the voice of the prophets...He was there in the ark of the covenant.

But never was God so clearly present with His people as He was through His virgin-born Son, Jesus, the Messiah.

And this has great implications for our lives today.

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Yes, God is the ***Almighty One*** seated High and on the throne. But He is also ***Immanuel*** (*God with us*). If you want a balanced picture of God, you've got to juxtapose those two names. He is God Most High and God Most Nigh. He exists outside time and space. He is also Immanuel—God with us.

You see many times we struggle to believe that ***God Is With Us***. The challenges of life can overwhelm and our circumstances seem like divine intervention ***isn't*** a real thing.

But the reality is friends the Gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't guarantee us a worry/problem free existence...SIN is an ever present reality of our fallen world that has not been fully dealt with yet.

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But the Gospel of Jesus Christ does guarantee that the God of the UNIVERSE will be a Father to us every day of our lives as we place our trust in Him.

Illus: I recently heard Pastor J.D. Greear tell the story of a couple in their church Ryan and Morgan who, adopted a child from an orphanage in another country. They'd passed through all the legal processes in that country. Charlie was their son. But right before the day when they were supposed to pick Charlie up from the orphanage, things changed. There were some political upheavals, and the country froze the process. No more children were going to be able to leave the country.

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Charlie could not come to Ryan and Morgan. So, they decided to go to him. They flew over from the US and basically camped outside of the orphanage. They spent half their time with their son and the other half lobbying the courts and meeting with government officials, pleading with them to release their son.

After a few weeks Morgan came home, but Ryan stayed. It was at Christmas time. This was not where he wanted to be at Christmas—away from home, far from family. But here was a father who loved his son. Since his son could not come to him, he was going to go to that son, and he was going to fight for that son.

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There would be more days and weeks of struggle, but, wonderfully, Ryan was eventually able to bring Charlie home. That Christmas, as Ryan battled corrupt court systems on the other side of the world ... he was a picture of the kind of "Eternal Father" that Jesus is for anyone who asks him to be.

You see Church family, Jesus went far further for us than Ryan went for his son. He didn't leave a country of privilege to move to a country of poverty. No, he left the riches of heaven to come to a world of pain.

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He did all that because he loves us. He did all that because he wants to be with us. He came to us to ensure that we could go to be with him, and it cost him far more than a plane ticket.

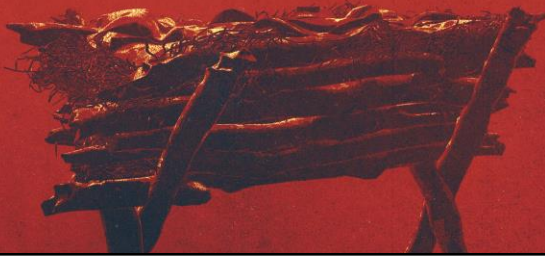
You see Church this title...this declaration GOD WITH US isn't just any name...it is of utmost importance. Because this gift is unapparelled.

Illus:

If you went home this afternoon and a driver pulled up with a huge package from Elon Musk. You wouldn't be disinterested, or send it back. NO! You'd rip that gift open, hoping it was the keys to your new Telsa, or better yet your own rocket ship.

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And the reason why you'd have that hope is because you'd recognize that a gift from the wealthiest person on the planet must be good.

Well then how much more should we consider a gift from the one who made Elon Musk and the other 7 billion people on this planet.

The God who created the expanse of the Universe with the sound of His voice...with ease.

The God who knows how many snowflakes fall in each blizzard and how many cells make up your body right now.

It is a hard to believe that an Almighty God is interested in us. But that doesn't make it any less TRUE.

God With Us

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The whole point in God's creation OF US was to have a relationship WITH US.

In the **Garden of Eden** God walked with Adam and Eve every night. Adam and Eve said, "God walks with us."

When God led the **children of Israel** out of slavery in Egypt he did so with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night and the children of Israel said, "*The Lord is before and behind us.*" (Ex 14:19)

God had them **build a tabernacle** where his glory came to dwell and they said, "God is in the midst of us." (Ex 25:8)

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Jesus is born and the angel says, “Call him **Immanuel**; God is with us.”

When Jesus left the Holy Spirit came on the first disciples and they said, “**God is *in us***.”

You see Church, you weren't created to serve a **distant God who watched over you like a Judge**. You & I were created to **love a Father and walk with him like a friend**.

CHURCH FAMILY....DO YOU KNOW GOD IN THIS WAY?

Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

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Friends, here is what the scriptures have to say (in Romans) about the gift of relationship with God.

Read:

Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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Continue Reading:

God is more powerful than anything! Therefore there is nothing powerful enough to separate you from God's love.

Even when things are difficult or you feel far from God, it's not because God stops loving you. That is a LIE from the enemy.

The truth is that God will never stop loving you.

Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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If you have received the gift of Jesus into your life. Nothing can separate you from Him!

And just like trees spring up from fertile soil....your life can emerge triumphant each new day, not because of you, but because of God in you.

Now I don't have to tell you that this isn't the message you will get from modern society.

Instead of ***God With Us***...their mantra is ***Power With Us, Money With Us, Beauty With Us, Approval With Us.***

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And while our world will dress these things up as if they are gifts, they often work themselves out to be nothing more than a curse.

An *imitation* of the real thing.

Illus:

Many products are designed to imitate the real thing. There is plastic decking that looks like real wood (trex). Vinyl flooring that appears to be ceramic tile. You can purchase fake fur or jewelry, phony hairpieces. The purpose behind all of *these* items is fairly obvious, but have you ever heard about a can of *Spray-on Mud*?



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Spray-on Mud is designed for use on the outside of your SUV. That way it appears you use your expensive SUV for more than taking the kids to soccer practice. Spray it on and friends might think you've just returned from a wilderness adventure.

Sales of the product are going well, particularly in America, and in London UK where the concept originated. "If they want an authentic look," says inventor Colin Dowse, "There's not a lot else they can do. There's not a lot of mud in Chelsea." Apparently, to many people out there \$15 a can seems a reasonable price for the appearance of authenticity.

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If you are putting fake mud on your car...I don't even know where to being!?!?!?

And while on the surface that's funny. It's reflective of the fact that we live in a world where many people want the Appearance of Authenticity more than they want Authenticity itself.

And Church within the name IMMANUEL - God hasn't given us a cheap substitute of a genuine experience with Him. He has given us the real thing.

And while Jesus isn't physically one the Earth as we speak...he is very much still with us.

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Because you see, when it was time for Jesus to return to the Father, He told His disciples, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you **forever**” (John 14:16).

Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, who would continue to bring the presence of God to dwell in the lives of believers.

The Holy Spirit carries on the role of Jesus as teacher, revealer of truth, encourager, comforter, intercessor, and ***God with us***.

Friends this is available to all who call on THE NAME JESUS.

When once I mourned a load of sin,
When conscience felt a wound within,
When all my works were thrown away,
When on my knees I knelt to pray,
Then, blissful hour, remembered well,
I learned Thy love, Immanuel!

When storms of sorrow toss my soul,
When waves of care around me roll,
When comforts sink, when joys shall flee,
When hopeless griefs shall gape for me,
One word the tempest's rage shall quell,
That word, Thy name, Immanuel!

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One of the late great Charles Spurgeon's favorite subjects was to talk about the depth of the meaning of the name Immanuel.

I'd like to read a poem he wrote about this name, as it speaks to the DEEP AUTHENTICITY of who Jesus is to mankind.

Read:



When for the truth I suffer shame,
When foes pour scandal on my name,
When cruel taunts and jeers abound,
When "Bulls of Bashan" gird me round,
Secure within Thy tower I'll dwell,
That tower, Thy grace, Immanuel!

When hell, enraged, lifts up her roar,
When Satan stops my path before,
When fiends rejoice and wait my end,
When legion'd hosts their arrows send,
Fear not, my soul, but hurl at hell
Thy battle-cry, Immanuel!

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Continue Reading:

When down the hill of life I go,
When o'er my feet death's waters flow,
When in the deep'ning flood I sink,
When friends stand weeping on the brink,
I'll mingle with my last farewell,
Thy lovely name, Immanuel!

When tears are banished from mine eye,
When fairer worlds than these are nigh,
When Heaven shall fill my ravish'd sight,
When I shall bathe in sweet delight,
One joy all joys shall far excel,
To see Thy face, Immanuel!
- Charles H. Spurgeon

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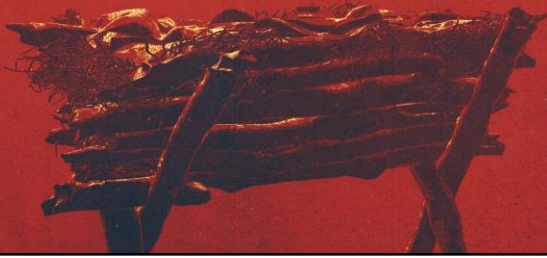
Continue Reading:

That's it!

What a wonderful expression of the deep meaning of God With Us.

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PRAY: