



Pastor's Pen

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14

Dear Bethel Church family and friends,

Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray you are having a blessed month and that you and your loved ones are enjoying summer. I send you warm greetings from Louisville, KY, and the 53rd General Assembly of the PCA. I'll have a full wrap-up of the meeting in next month's newsletter, but so far, so good.

We're continuing to explore the Holy One of Israel's **"great and precious promises"** (2 Peter 1:4). This month, we turn to what I believe is the greatest of all Biblical promises: the guarantee that God will be with us.

Where do we find this assurance on the pages of Scripture? While the guarantee of a coming Redeemer goes all the way back to Genesis 3, we find this special promise in the Isaiah passage listed above. However, to fully understand the pledge, you need to know a little about Hebrew. You see, it all hinges on the name *Immanuel*. This one Hebrew word is actually a combination of three words: the preposition *im*, which means "with, by, or among," the word *anu*, which means "us," and the word *El*, which is the Hebrew term for God. So, when you put it all together, to call someone Immanuel means that they are "God with us," just as we read in Matthew 1:23. As the Matthew passage clarifies, the writers of the gospels, in fact all of the New Testament scribes rightly understood this promise of "God with us" as being fulfilled in the birth, life, and ministry of our Lord Jesus.

But knowing this background raises more questions. Like, what is the significance of God being with us? What does this name tell us about Jesus' life and ministry? And what does this promise mean to each one of us personally? Beloved, let me concentrate on two key things.

First, having the name Immanuel tells us about the nature of Jesus. If we go back to the birth narrative recorded for us in Matthew, we are told about Mary's pregnancy, Joseph's concern about how Mary became pregnant, and the angel's assurance of the divine source of the child. Then Matthew records for us the promise in Isaiah 7:14. In addition, Luke's gospel tells us how the sign of Immanuel came to be. The angel Gabriel has told Mary that she will bear a son who will be the Messiah. *"How will this be,"* Mary asked the angel, *'since I am a virgin?'* The angel answered, *'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'* Therefore, to make it quite plain, the name Immanuel is to be understood literally. Jesus is the son of Mary in His human nature, but spiritually, He is God the Son, the only begotten of the Heavenly Father. So, when the shepherds and, later, the magi gather to worship the baby, they are worshipping God himself.

The name Immanuel also tells us about Jesus' mission from the Heavenly Father. Just before Christ returned to the Father's right hand, remember what He told His disciples: ***"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"*** (Matthew 28:18-20). The mission of Immanuel, to be with God's people always, was not just made to the apostles, but it was given to us as well. How is that the case? We rejoice that the Lord is still with us today through the Holy Spirit who dwells within each adopted child of God. He is what gives us not only the ability, but the desire to obey God's good commands. I pray you will spend some time over the next few weeks meditating on everything Our Heavenly Father has given you in Christ.

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Chris

this week

Sunday's sermon:

Our Urgent Message

Exodus 3:7-17

events

Youth Lake Day
6/27 at 12:00 pm

Youth
6/28 at 6:00 pm

GriefShare
6/30 at 6:30 pm

volunteer schedule

Infant Nursery
Rebecca Wallace and Kimberly Richards

Toddler Nursery
Cathy Robinson and Shirley Brackett

Worship Training
Peggy and David Long