
Sermon Notes

December 6, 2020

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

No Longer Alone...
Experiencing the Joy of Emmanuel
The Prophecy
Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-23

The Problem

- ❖ We live in a lonely world
 - far too many people feel disconnected and lonely
 - for many, Christmas is an especially lonely time
- ❖ A paradox: although Christmas may provoke feelings of loneliness, it's what Christmas is all about that offers us real hope in the face of our deepest loneliness
- ❖ For Christmas to bring you hope in the face of loneliness, you have to look back to the very beginning and see what God **has** done and what God **is** doing about loneliness
- ❖ We are created in the image of God, and relationship is a defining characteristic of God
 - God exists in community (the three in one)
 - in the face of human loneliness, God takes action
 - God promises that things will not always be this way

An Unfolding Promise

- ❖ Over time, God works to unfold and flesh out the implications of His promise bringing things into clearer focus as He works through
 - a nation
 - a tribe
 - a family
 - an individual
- ❖ 700 years before Christ comes, God speaks a very precise word about One who will be known as "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14)
 - Matthew "connects the dots" and tells us Isaiah's prophecy applies to Jesus (Matthew 1:18-23)
 - God fulfills His long-standing promise through the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus
- ❖ Although Mary comes from the line of David, she is not a princess or a noble woman
 - Mary recognizes and confesses that there is nothing outstanding or special about her
 - Mary describes herself as the Lord's servant
- ❖ Jesus is both "a son" (fully human) and Immanuel (fully God)
 - the One who is from everlasting to everlasting comes to this world of time
 - the One whom all space cannot contain comes in a body

God With Us

- ❖ Jesus is God's answer to all of our fears, especially our fear of loneliness and abandonment
 - Jesus promises that He is with you now and He will be with you tomorrow
 - Jesus will be with you in the midst of every trial, temptation, and testing of any sort
- ❖ If you are in doubt about God's presence with you, call on the Holy Spirit asking Him to take the things of Christ and apply them to your heart
 - Jesus has come not only to be WITH us but to be IN us
 - "Christ in us the hope of glory" is what the Bible proclaims and what Christmas is all about
- ❖ Three personal testimonies of men and women who learn through suffering and struggle to depend on Immanuel: God with us
 - Joseph
 - *the LORD was **WITH** Joseph* (Genesis 39:2-3, 20-21, 22-23)
 - God's presence IN trouble does not mean God will exempt us FROM trouble
 - Elijah (1 Kings 19:9-10)
 - "I am the ONLY one left"
 - however, not only is God WITH Elijah, the Lord reveals there are still, 7000 people in Israel who have not lapsed into idol worship

- Mary
 - how lonely it must have been for Mary when she is doubted by Joseph and possibly others as well
 - how lonely it must have felt to give birth in a stable
 - all of this loneliness takes place as part of God's plan to bring Jesus into the world so that God will be WITH US
- ❖ You can share the same testimony as these three if you turn to God, confess your brokenness, acknowledge your need for a Savior and embrace God's love for you
 - draw near to God, and God will draw near to you!
 - do you know the reality of "God with us"?
- ❖ This Christmas, may God teach you the meaning of Immanuel: God with us

Personal Application

1. How does knowing what God has done throughout history to fulfill His promise to bring Immanuel: God with us into the world reassure you of God's presence with you, especially during difficult times?
2. Is "God with you" the heart and hope of your Christmas celebration? If not, what steps do you need to take in order to have this confident assurance?
3. Of the three testimonies mentioned in this message, which is the most meaningful to you at this season of life? How can you learn more from the record of faithfulness this person has left behind?