

ADVENT WEEK 2 DECEMBER 7TH - 13TH

JOY //

Read Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 1:20-23, Romans 15:13, Psalm 16:11

What stands out to you from these passages?

How do you see joy in the promise of a Savior? How might you experience this joy in greater measure this season?

At the beginning of Isaiah chapter 7, we're told that the king of Judah and all of his people were afraid for their lives. They had two enemies to contend with, Assyria and Israel. In many ways, they felt surrounded, defenseless.

And yet, they were not alone. In the midst of these harrowing geopolitical circumstances, Isaiah told the people of Judah, "Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid" (Isaiah 7:4). Isaiah also makes a strange promise: the people would receive a sign that God was still good. A virgin would give birth to a child and His name would be Immanuel—God with us (v.14)...

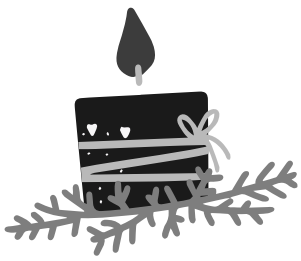
God is with us, even in calamity. Our fear is not proof that our God is absent. So often I want an Isaiah in my life. I want someone to come and tell me specifically what's going to happen this year, next year, and the year after that. I want details. Dates. Times. I want a sign. In reading today's passages, I realize that even if I got what I wanted—even if someone like Isaiah really did come to tell me what was to come—it might only lead to more confusion. It would likely only lead to fear of my circumstances, rather than fear of my Lord. Perhaps all I really need to hear are the promises. Perhaps all I need to do is wait.

The name Immanuel, or "God is with us," appears in the book of Isaiah in key prophecies predicting the coming of the Messiah. The name carries a sense of nearness, including intimate knowledge of the needs, struggles, and hopes of humanity. When Isaiah prophesies about the virgin birth, he says that her child will be called Immanuel. This is not a proper name as much as it is a description of what the Messiah would be like.

In Matthew, an angel tells Joseph to name the child Jesus, because "He will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:23). This name describes what Immanuel would do. Together, the names Immanuel and Jesus mean "God will be with His people and He will save them from their sins." God saves His people and is close to them. The power of Jesus to overcome sin, darkness, and pain gives me a source for joy. And when things are tough, beyond my own ability to find a glimmer of joy, I am met in the midst of my pain. In His presence there is "abundant joy" (Psalm 16:11).

-She Reads Truth





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OPTIONAL FAMILY DISCUSSION:

What brings you joy? Think about a time you were expecting something good to happen and then that good thing happened, I bet that moment brought you great joy. For many that is how they felt about the birth of Jesus. For many years, they had been promised a Savior that would be born as a baby in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph were told to name this baby Jesus and that Jesus would be called Immanuel which means "God with us". Jesus came to earth to be with us and to offer His life as a sacrifice for us. So, the birth of Jesus brought great joy because it was good news. Good news that we are never alone, we have the joy of Jesus. The exciting news of Jesus also leads us to respond by joyfully worshiping Him. As we worship Jesus, we will be able to share our excitement about the good news of Jesus with anyone who will listen. What great joy has come into the world!

What is something that brings you joy at Christmastime?

How does the good news of Jesus' birth bring us joy?

SONG // Joy to the World

WATCH // The BibleProject Video - JOY

PRAYER // God, you promise us in your Word that we are not alone. Thank you for sending Jesus, our greatest joy into the world. May we worship Jesus' coming into the world with great joy in this season and look to Him for our happiness over the things the world has to offer. In your presence there is fullness of joy and for that we are truly grateful! We love you, in Jesus' name, Amen.



WEEK 2 RESOURCES

