

Immanuel

REMEMBERING: GOD WITH US

Like many of you, I am in a season of remembering: a favorite memory, a fond tradition, or a reflection of a slower time of life. In remembrance, I often spend a lot of time studying the Gospels and the Christmas story found in Matthew and Luke. This year I was led to Matthew 1:23 and the name that would be given to the child, *and they will call him Immanuel--which means, "God with us"*. Jesus as Immanuel is not something we just celebrate once a year. He is Immanuel 365 days out of the year for He is *with us always*.

Perhaps, you have been privileged at some point in your life to have a friend, a child, or a

spouse say "I am with you". The translation is: *I am pulling for you; we are in this together; I believe in you; I support you; we'll do it as a team; you are not alone*. Likewise, *God with us* carries with it the same interpretation with an everlasting meaning.

The book of Matthew begins with the birth of the baby, Jesus, and the virgin giving Him the name "Immanuel". It ends with similar words from the resurrected Jesus as He appeared to His disciples on a mountain in Galilee, saying---*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*.

God with us is the message from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, to the

end of it! Interestingly in the middle of Matthew and Luke Jesus gives the Passover meal to his friends and in doing so he says, *remember me* (Luke 22: 19). I think Jesus knew human nature would be to forget Him as the God who is *with us always*. A friend of mine calls it the great "With-ness" doctrine of the Christian faith. You won't read it in a Theology book, but it is not heresy. The great truth is: God is with us. Even when we feel used, battered, burdened, and all alone He is with us—every day--always—and forevermore.

The resurrection is our assurance of God's living presence *with us* today as we live in a fallen and

broken world. His future return is our hope that *God is with us* in the coming reign and rule of His kingdom forever and ever. "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and *he will live with them*. They will be his people, and God himself *will be with them* and be their God"."(Rev. 21:3)

Christmas is a time of remembering the great truth—that *God is with us*—yesterday, today, and forever.



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We at Carmel Counseling Center appreciate your partnership in ministry during 2011 and hope you have a wonderful season celebrating the birth of our Savior.

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