

Matthew 1:17-25

June 7, 2015

“Immanuel”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

2nd Sunday af. Pentecost

Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

In the Bible, names are significant and reveal characteristics about someone.

Now in our day, it's not quite the same.

Most of our names don't really carry much of a specific meaning that has something to do with our own character or personality.

Unless of course you are one of the seven dwarfs,

Doc, Dopey, Sleepy, Sneezy, Happy, Grumpy, Bashful. [2 Ds; 2 Ss; 3 emotions]

We usually have to make up nicknames like speedy, cutie, or muscles to compensate for our birth names.

Now in the Bible, names usually have a very significant meaning,

For example:

- Adam means earth, and it from the earth that Adam came.
- Manasseh means forgetfulness, and King Manasseh forgot God and His Word.
- Esther means secret, and she kept her Jewish nationality in secret.

Now, this is especially true

when we are given names by which we are to refer to Jesus.

The Holy Scriptures reveal to us unique names by which Jesus is to be known.

These names teach us who Jesus is.

For instance:

- Jesus is known as the Christ, meaning the Anointed One who was promised to the people of Israel.
- Jesus is known as the Good Shepherd, meaning that He lays down His life for His sheep.
- He is called the Lamb of God, meaning that He takes away the sin of the world in His death.
- He is known as the Son of David, meaning that He is the heir to the Davidic throne and rightful King of Israel.

And today we will look at the name “Immanuel.”

To begin with, there are two variant spellings of “Immanuel.”

Sometimes you will see it spelled with an “I”

following the Hebrew of Isaiah chapter 7.

Other times you will see it spelled with an “E”

following the Greek of Matthew chapter 1.

Nevertheless, the significance is not found in the spelling of the name,
but rather in what it means.

“Immanuel” means “God with us.”

[*With Us*]

In the Garden of Eden, God made man to dwell with Him.

But, man fell into sin and chose not to dwell with God.

Man followed after the devil, that ancient serpent.

And after this break in fellowship,

God gave the promise that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head.

This promised Child would be born miraculously of the Virgin.

This was the sign that the prophet Isaiah gave, “*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*” (Isaiah 7:14^{ESV}).

God Himself would become a man.

Jesus is fully God begotten of the Father from all eternity

and fully man born of the Virgin Mary at the proper time.

He took upon flesh to dwell with us.

Because of our sin we cannot dwell with God.

Without Christ, we cannot be with God.

Without Jesus we remain separated from God.

Therefore, God Himself makes the move and becomes man in order to dwell with us.

In His body, Jesus then takes upon the sins of the world in His death.

In the Old Testament times,

God dwelt with His people in a tent during the wilderness wandering.

Later in the Promised Land,

God dwelt with His people in the Temple.

In the Temple and the tent, the Glory of the Lord, the *Kavod Yahweh*,

was present in the midst of the people of Israel.

These structures – the tent and temple – were shadows of the reality to come.
God Himself would dwell among His people in a temple of flesh and bone.

The ceremonial animal sacrifices were shadows of the true sacrifice to come.
God Himself would take a body to be sacrificed upon the cross
shedding His blood for the sins of the world.

In Jesus, God and man are once again reconciled.
God comes to dwell with His people and to be with them always.
He continues to assure us of His presence in His Holy Word and Holy Sacraments.
In which, we hear His Words of comfort that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Christ came from heaven above to dwell with us here in time on earth.
Then at our final hour, He will take us to Himself in heaven for all eternity.

[Serving]

In the meantime, for the rest of our life on this earth, we are the hands and feet of Jesus.
You may not think what you say and do in life gets noticed much, but you'd be wrong.

When you provide light in a dark and cold world, the world notices.
When you offer kindness to a stranger, it makes an impression on them.
When you are generous with your things, it surprises them.
When you refuse to pass on the gossip,
when you refuse to retaliate,
when you refuse to take revenge,
when you refuse to take advantage of someone,
the world is astonished because it is so rare.

When you spend your time cleaning up yards, ripping up weeds, and wiping up dirt,
When you spend your time putting down paint,
putting down food on a table,
and putting down the notion that no one cares
simply because *Christ Cares*, the world notices.

They may even ask you why you act this way, and you may choose to say:
“Before I answer another question, I want to give credit where credit is due.
What you see is the light of Jesus Christ.”

Remember you are the hands and feet of Jesus – for God is with you!

[*Conclusion*]

In the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, before the holy birth,
Jesus is called Immanuel, God with us.

In the last chapter of Matthew, after the resurrection,
Jesus promises His church, “*And behold, I am with you always,
to the end of the age*”(Matt. 28:20^{ESV}).

Immanuel – God with us.

Wherever we go. Whatever we do. God is with us. Amen!

You are the body of Christ, each one of you part of it. Amen!