**(Advent reading)**

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

**‭‭Isaiah‬ ‭7‬:‭14‬ ‭NIV‬‬**

**The Gift of Peace**

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).”

**‭‭Matthew‬ ‭1‬:‭22‬-‭23‬ ‭NIV‬‬**

1. **The Gift of Immanuel**

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

**‭‭John‬ ‭1‬:‭14‬ ‭NIV‬‬**

Jesus is God in human form. John starts out “In the beginning was the word and word was with God and the Word was God.”

Why does John call Jesus the Word? Because Jesus is the perfect revelation of God. Jesus is the perfect revelation of God and the Bible is the word of God because it perfectly reveals Jesus.

Hebrews says this of Jesus

**Hebrew 1:1-3**

 **“**In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. **3** The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

1. **Immanuel now “with us in spirit”**

**Ephesians 1:13-14** And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

The Spirit taking up residence in our bodies is heaven come to earth. Heaven is “God’s space” or the space where God dwells. I love how Paul says that the spirit is a deposit guaranteeing what is to come. We now, in this life have fellowship with God through faith in Christ Jesus. This relationship will be perfected in Heaven however right now we hold in our person a little sliver of heaven or eternal life as it's often called.

**John 17:3 “**Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

Paul also says that we were marked by the Holy Spirit. This means that others can see something different about us. They can see something in us that is not of this world. In order for people to see something different, there will need to be repentance.

Jesus Gospel “Repent! For the kingdom of heaven is near!”

The longer the Holy Spirit dwells in you the more he changes you. Some change faster than others. I believe that has much to do with each person's level of surrender and devotion to spiritual disciplines. Repentance happens when the spirit is present. Remember this: Repentance does not bring heaven, heaven brings repentance. Salvation and sanctification are both by grace through faith and conducted in the heart.

1. **The Gift of Peace**

**Romans 8:15-16** “The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, *“Abba,* Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

The presence of God is the only thing that truly brings peace in our lives. The gift of immanuel is the gift of eternal peace. Paul says that “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit” This means that when we are God’s children, we know it. There is great peace in knowing that. I think of a child who is walking next to their father. They are not worried. They believe and trust in their father to take care of them in spite of what may come. I think that every child thinks that their dad is invincible. I can remember school yard arguments, “My dad can beat up your dad”. When we are children of God, we really do have an invincible father. Unlike worldly father’s.

He is always patient, always kind, he does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, is not rude, is not self seeking, is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, does not delight in evil, rejoices with truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres and never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Our perfect, loving father says to us

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.””

‭‭Deuteronomy‬ ‭31‬:‭6‬ ‭NIV‬‬

There is true peace in the presence of a loving father. You are never alone if God is with you. Never forget that. The Holy Spirit is a person. He is the Spirit of Jesus, The third person of the triune Godhead. You are not alone, you are a member of the kingdom of heaven.

1. **The Gift of Christmas**

**Luke 2:11-14**  “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,”

“Glory to God in the highest,

 and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”