

IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

Matthew 1:18-25
Leitvers 1,23

**"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."**

Thank the Lord for the blessed Genesis Bible Study. God leads us and our new life, because like Abraham we can love God more than his blessing and trust his guidance more. May God use us as mothers and fathers of faith and raise many young students on campus as an exceedingly large army of God.

Today we started the Christmas Bible Study. Through the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthews 1:1-17, we learned the story of God's redemption, which reflects the history of God's righteousness. God wrote and writes His story of salvation above all through the people who hear His Word with fear of God, turn to God with repentance and faith and risk their lives. God's history of salvation is not the story of perfect, blameless people, but the history of God's righteousness.

Today we celebrate the first Advent worship service of 2021 for Jesus, who came into the world as Savior and Immanuel. Praise be to Jesus, the Savior-King, who came into the world so humbly in silence and gave himself completely on the cross for our salvation. Through his painful wounds and abandonment, we have been completely freed from the yoke of sin power to a new eternal life. Thank and praise be to Jesus, Immanuel, that is, God with us. He dwells among us through the Holy Spirit and helps us, and especially me, to receive Jesus' grace during this Christmas season and to proclaim his joyful message. May God help each of us in this Advent season to know in

depth the true meaning of Jesus' arrival and to be filled with the true joy of Christmas.

1. Joseph, an image of Jesus (18-20)

Let us read verses 18 and 19 together: "This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly." Matthew tells the story of the birth of Jesus Christ from the point of view of Joseph's family tree. His Christmas story begins with an apparent adultery of Mary. Joseph was greatly surprised and shaken by the news that his fiancée, Mary, was pregnant. But this was done by the Holy Spirit according to God's counsel; but Joseph did not know this and had to assume that Mary had become unfaithful.

The law was on Joseph's side; at that time, women who committed adultery were usually stoned. Perhaps he was very agitated and wondered why Mary would suddenly love someone else now, or what wrong he would have done that Mary had turned away from him. Joseph was shocked and, above all, deeply hurt that Mary had done such a thing to him. He would probably have to deal with many unpleasant feelings and questions. It would have been a little easy for him to let his feelings run wild and take "revenge". If he had acted in this way, Mary would have to be

brought into disrepute and destined for stoning.

But the Bible says, "Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man." To be righteous or pious here means that he had fear of God and lived in a firm love relationship with God. Joseph knew God's heart and lived with God's heart and love. Instead of acting self-righteously, he brought his concern to God in prayer. Because Joseph feared God, he did not think first of his own right, but first of Mary's life. Mary's life was more important to him than his own righteousness, and he preferred to give his own righteousness and be ostracized in its own place. Joseph decided to take all shame and guilt upon himself and save Mary and her life. It was a great decision of Joseph's redemptive love.

When Joseph made this decision, the angel of God revealed to him what God had done to Mary's life. The angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that Mary had become pregnant through the Holy Spirit and that she would give birth to the promised Messiah. Let us look at verses 24 and 25: "When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." Joseph would probably have many questions in his heart. Nor would he have understood everything God had told him. But Joseph obeyed God's counsel. This was Joseph's piety, which shows his trust in God's guidance and his fear of God in his life. He gave himself in and did his best to prepare for Jesus' birth. When he obeyed with the absolute trust of God's sovereign guidance for his life and for his family, he could be used as an environmental preparer for the coming of Jesus, and could also be included in Jesus' family tree.

Joseph is an image of Jesus to us, because although he was right and had every reason to use his right, he preferred to take the blame upon himself to save Mary and her life. Jesus, too, as God Himself, was and is in law and without sin and guilt, and has every reason to punish us sinners for our sin and

rebellion against Him. But Jesus did not do this, but rather loved us. Because Jesus loved us so much, He took the guilt and sin upon Himself and humiliated Himself completely to the point of shameful death on the cross. Jesus was obedient to the will of God and willingly died vicarious death, in which we may have eternal salvation by faith alone. Let us attract Joseph's piety and live as pastors and Bible teachers, faithfully serving a person with the unchanging faithful love of God that transcends all human boundaries. In this love, our next generation and our sheep on campus can be spiritually refreshed and saved and receive the new eternal life. May God use Sh. Noah, Olaf and our next generation as environmental preparers like Joseph for the birth of the Messiah in the hearts of the young people in Germany and Europe very precious and continue his work of salvation until Jesus returns.

2. Immanuel, God with us (21-25)

So, Joseph had decided to save Mary's life by taking upon himself the shame and secretly leaving her. When the angel appeared to Joseph, the angel taught Joseph who the son Mary would give birth to really is, as Isaiah had prophesied. Let's think about who Jesus is in two ways.

First, Jesus is the Savior of sin power.

Let us read verse 21 together: "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus." At that time, the Jews lived under the rule of the Roman Empire. They felt oppressed and exploited. Therefore, when the Jews heard the word "Jesus," they thought of a Savior who would break the chains of cruel oppression by the Romans and their entourage like Herod and free them and drive the Roman legions out of the land. They expected and hoped that the promised Savior, Jesus, would establish a great kingdom of "New Great Israel."

But Jesus did not come to improve people's conditions. Jesus came into the world to

solve the true problem of man. The fundamental problem of people is not in the conditions or the political circumstances. No, but sin is the fundamental problem that makes people empty, dark, chaotic, fatalistic and deadly unhappy. We know that the reign of sin in every human being is the spiritual reality. Since the Fall, since man got into the devil's challenge and rebelled against God, every human being has been separated from God and lives under the rule of Satan. It is not God who rules our hearts, but our ego, which tells us: "I am the king of MY life!". Because people worship their egos, suppress God's truth, and exclude God, many young people are chained and tied to their sin of laziness, game addictions, and pleasure addictions, in front of their screen or live on site. Chained and caught up in the power of sin, we are withered, incompetent dead legs that are spiritually dead and useless. Such life is a constant cycle of rebellion against God. Because of the power of sin, each of us would have to bear the just punishment, so that our lives can be found above all in meaninglessness and aimlessness and in hopelessness and deep fatalism. Every path of life, whether poor or rich, right or left, smart or stupid, popular or unpopular, famous or ordinary, ends in a dead end of death. Life under the power of sin is the truly unhappy life. Thus, because of the power of sin, we are eternally condemned and have no other way out to eternal life than to ultimately suffer the greatest torments in eternal damnation.

But thanks and praise be to Jesus, who came to earth to save people from their sins, which they themselves had committed, and to redeem them from the power of sin and death. Jesus would not have had to do that at all. He was not guilty, but we. But because Jesus loved us so much, he did not spare himself, but gave himself up for us. He took upon Himself all our guilt and sin, carrying it until His death on the cross, even when He was abandoned by God Himself and died shamefully. He was punished in our place and shed His own blood to preserve our lives. Through Jesus, we are now free from the power of sin and forgive all sins to live the new life as children of God. This is Jesus'

incomprehensible saving grace, which gives us an undeserved new chance. That is why we absolutely need Jesus, the Savior who gives us forgiveness; for whoever accepts Jesus as his Savior will break out of the cycle of unhappy, fatalistic life as a slave to sin and from the impasse of damnation and enter into the new life with the hope of the eternal, glorious kingdom of God. Everyone who has the Savior Jesus in his heart is free from sin and has true peace and joy in his heart! Let us be used in our new lives as witnesses of God, who testify to Jesus' one-sided, wonderful saving grace to the students, sheep and young people in Germany and Europe that they too accept Jesus as their Savior and are changed into children of God.

John Newton was the son of a captain who was a slave trade. For a long time, he acted as an unscrupulous slave trader and hunter, who mercilessly shipped his slaves to America for his own profit. He lived a very extravagant life by giving free reign to his youthful desire. He himself said of himself, "I sailed to Africa because I wanted to be free and sin to my heart's content." But he was not free, but condemned to be an eternal slave of Satan. But when he cried out for the grace of God in his desperation, he received the incomprehensible, undeserved saving grace of Jesus. The saving grace of Jesus changed him 180° and made him a completely new person. He became a pastor, a champion against slavery, and out of his joy testified to God's benefits and his forgiveness grace, which brought peace to him.

Second, Jesus is Immanuel — God with us.

Let us read verse 23, the key verse, together: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"— which means, "God with us." Jesus is Immanuel – God with us. God is not a distant God. No, God is with us, even among us, He has completely humiliated Himself to save us from our sins.

Jesus is God, the ruler of the universe. Jesus is without sin. Jesus could have simply

continued to live in His glorious kingdom as the almighty king and ruler. Jesus had no reason to enter the earth with the sinful people and to reduce himself to their low level. It was not he who had done something bad that he had to make amends, but we are the culprits. Yet He gave up His eternal and glorious life in heaven and became a transient, carnal being with all our weaknesses to live among us filthy, unworthy sinners. He left His heavenly place to be with us and serve as the least. How could he do this? He did this because He loved us. Jesus came to earth as Immanuel because God (= Jesus) loved us lost sinners so much that all who believe in him will not perish, but will have eternal life (John 3:16). Paul writes: "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil 2:6-8).

Jesus lived the grace of incarnation by faithfully serving an outcasted Samaritan woman, a selfish tax collector, and the outsiders of society such as the disabled in John 9 or Matthew's friends. This is Immanuel, who, out of his one-sided grace for us humans, belittled himself so much. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Markus 10:45). The incarnation grace of Jesus changes you and me that we are no longer separated from God, but have a personal love relationship with Him and put our new life into Immanuel. Now we no longer live senselessly, but live through Jesus with the true peace, and the true joy in our hearts.

Because the servant of God had Jesus, the Savior and Immanuel in his heart, he gave up his doctorate and career opportunities. He lived the incarnation grace of Jesus by giving his whole life for campus mission to lead the lost students to their Savior Jesus. But he and M. Sarah have been living common life continuously for over 40 years. They lived in

a cold basement room, washed the dirty laundry of their sheep and served moldy computer people, sellers of light bulbs and vacuum cleaners or a drug-addicted hippie. God worked mightily in these sheep that they welcomed Immanuel into their hearts and were transformed into spiritual leaders, full-bodied preachers, and Bible teachers for campus and world mission.

Immanuel Jesus has also been with us, the Next Generation, in the past year. The Servant of God served the Next Generation through the in-depth baptismal Bible study, through the community of life for early morning prayer, the GLEF 2021 and above all through the International Bible Seminary. Through his servanthood, as Jesus did, he has worked fully this year. Five young people were hopelessly lost in the sin of their desire and rebellion. When, through baptismal study, they received Jesus as Immanuel and as their true and only Savior, they received a new, truly free, new life. Jesus changed them so that with 1 Pet 4:13 they decided to participate resolutely and joyfully in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. God has also established Dasom and Olaf as full-bodied preachers who pass on God's Word clearly and comprehensibly. Because the servant of God faithfully lives this incarnation grace of Immanuel, God begins right now in Noah and David and also in Peter K. to work mightily, to use them as influential leaders, Bible teachers and witnesses of Jesus. Living with Jesus' saving and incarnation grace is the truly blessed life. Jesus' saving and incarnation grace works not only in Germany or Europe, but also in the Muslim world and up to China and North Korea, because only Jesus is the true Savior and our Immanuel, and will establish it as a royal priesthood.

I led and continue to lead a miserable life, trapped as an unfortunate slave to rebellion, my ego worship and my ingratitude. I was a hopeless case of incurable tic problems. Because I wanted to enforce my desire and comfort, I rebelled against the servant of God and destroyed many relationships. Many had already given up on me. But praise and thanks be to Jesus! Although Jesus had no

reason to do so, He completely humiliated Himself from Almighty God to the least servant to be with me. Jesus humiliated himself to the point that he died alone and forsaken the shameful death on the cross, so that I might have forgiveness of sins, eternal salvation and new life. I thank Jesus for my grandfather and my parents who serve me with the incarnation grace of God. They carried me, were with me, and humiliated themselves for me by challenging me daily with God's Word, praying for me with tears, and serving me through Bible study and early morning prayer, even though I was always unfaithful and rebellious. But through the in-depth Bible study of Hebrews 5:8,9 about who Jesus is, I was able to personally receive Jesus, who is my true and only Savior, and the Immanuel, who completely humiliated himself and took upon himself all shame. God changed me 180°. My life is no longer a dead end, but God has given me a new life and eternal salvation that I can give completely for Him and His work. In my new life, out of gratitude and joy for Jesus' incredible grace of incarnation and forgiveness, I am allowed to serve God and His work by joining the Servant of God and H. Peter R. For the online mission, the M-Mission and for the mobilization of the next generation through the International Bible Study. Thanks be to God, who is currently giving me the privilege, out of gratitude for Jesus' grace of incarnation for me, to now live the incarnation grace of Jesus myself. God has entrusted to me the sheep Dan, Jihee and Peter K. and a medical student Hargun. Without Jesus, they are trapped in the sin power of their ego, their lust for pleasure and unbelief. God helps me through practical help in math and history for high school graduation, in medical school, and faithful prayer for them to receive the gospel from Mark 15:34. Jesus, the Savior, and Jesus, Immanuel, will give them true joy and peace in their hearts and establish them as good collaborators in His work.

Today we have learned who Jesus is. Jesus is our true and only Savior from the power of sin. Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, who, out of his absolute love for us, completely

humiliated himself to serve us; to endure our sins; and to save us from sins through his death on the cross. In this Advent season, let us remember the grace of salvation and incarnation and welcome Jesus deep into our hearts as our Savior and as Immanuel. With the deepest gratitude, joy and peace in our hearts, let us give our whole lives to world mission through the formation of 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams and the establishment of three mission bases in Cairo, Istanbul and Dubai. Living with Jesus in our hearts is the truly blessed life. Let us serve the students on campus with the incarnation grace of Jesus, that they too may accept Jesus as their true Savior and that they will be raised as an exceedingly great army of God for the spiritual revival of Europe and the M-world from the power of sin!

Let us read guide 23 again: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."