

Advent



WK OF 12/21/25

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL

ISAIAH 7:10-16

Silence (1-2 minutes)

Sit silently for a minute as a way to center your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to help you listen to and receive God's Word.

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Read: Isaiah 7:10-16

Group Devotional (30-45 minutes)

Our passage for this week concerns one of the best-known prophecies regarding the coming Christ, the Messiah. In Isaiah 7:10-16, the Lord reveals through Isaiah that the Messiah will be known as Immanuel, which literally means "God with Us." This week's passage is the first time in the Scriptures that Christ's name of "Immanuel" is mentioned!

1. How has the name "Immanuel" impacted you in the past?
2. How do the words "God is with you" resonate with you today?

Isaiah 7 – Immanuel as a Sign of Judgment | The backdrop for our Scripture passage is the 8th century BC, and the kings of Syria and Israel are conspiring to destroy Judah because they will not join them to fight against Assyria. In verses 10-14, the Lord mentions the word "sign twice." In doing so, he allows King Ahaz to ask for any sign he wishes. When Ahaz refuses the opportunity, the Lord responds with His own sign in verse 14. This is the Sign of Immanuel, which according to God's Word has two purposes of functions. First, the purpose of Immanuel is to urge Ahaz (the King of Judah – and everyone since!): "Turn to God and live."

3. Read Isaiah 7:4. This is God's *first* attempt at reaching Ahaz. What is God urging Ahaz to do? What does God's approach tell us about our Lord?
4. Read Ahaz's response in 2 Kings 16:7-8. How does Ahaz respond to God's entreaty to the king?

5. How does this background inform your reading of Isaiah 7:12? What do you think is the heart of Ahaz's problem? (See 2 Chron. 28:22 and Ezekiel 18:32).

Matthew 1 - Immanuel as a Sign of Salvation | In the first chapter of Matthew, an eyewitness of Christ's ministry and an apostle, he describes the birth of Christ and says in verse 22, "All of this took place in fulfillment of what the Lord had said through the prophet, 'Behold! The virgin will be with child and shall bear a son and will name Him Immanuel.'"

6. Please spend a few minutes discussing the "mind-boggling" statement that Matthew makes here. How is this good news? If time permits, please also read Acts 3:17-18.

7. One clear lesson from these passages of Scripture (i.e., Isaiah, Matthew, and beyond) is that the Lord keeps every single one of His promises. In the words of Rich Villoandas, "The good news of Advent is not that we are faithful in our waiting (we often aren't) but that God is faithful in his coming!" How does this message resonate with you today?

Big Idea: *In Christ, God is with you always, to the end of the age!* | In light of this good news, how then shall we live? First, since the Spirit lives within those who are His, we know that He will never abandon us. This means we ought to be bold in our faith! Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Immanuel is an invitation to daily, conscious fellowship with Christ in us. This is what Brother Lawrence referred to as "practicing the presence of God" and Dallas Willard called the "with-God-life."

8. Please spend several minutes discussing various spiritual practices that have helped you grow in the awareness of God's presence.

9. Discuss the following two spiritual practices that were shared on Sunday morning. The first is a prayer practice called *The Daily Examen* and the other is *Compass Journaling*. How might these strengthen your relationship with Christ?

The Daily Examen

Movement #1: Ask God for Light (Ps. 139:8-9)

Movement #2: Give thanks (Psalm 9)

Movement #3: Review the day (Ps. 139:1-3)

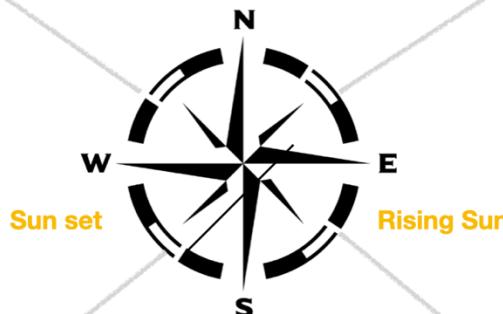
Movement #4: Face your shortcomings (Ps. 51)

Movement #5: Look toward the day to come

What promise of God (Scripture) is guiding and sustaining me in this current season?

Psalm 119:105

North Star



How is God calling me to grow in new ways moving into the future?

Isaiah 43:19

What is God calling me to “put off” and leave behind?

Ephesians 4:22-24
Hebrews 12:1

In what ways have I grown for which I am most thankful to God? What's blooming in my life right now?

2 Corinthians 3:18

Closing Prayer: Dear Father, thank you so much in this Advent season for the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Savior, our Immanuel. We are so grateful that He is the fulfillment of the promise you made through the prophet many years ago. Because Christ was willing to lay down His life, we have life. We do not have the words to thank you for your "Indescribable Gift" – the Lord Jesus.