

Just the Name We Need

by Warren Wiersbe

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the names Jesus and Emmanuel, highlighting God's presence and support in our lives.

Duration: 36:13

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25, Mark 16:20, John 1:18, John 20:28, Acts 20:28, Romans 9:5

Topics: "Gods Presence", "The Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing God's presence in the sorrows of life. He encourages listeners to trust in God as their shepherd and not fear the future or present. The preacher also highlights the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, where for a moment, God was not with him, but ultimately brought about salvation. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God is with believers in their service for the Lord, fulfilling a purpose in their lives.

Transcript

We're reading verses 18 to 25, Matthew 1, 18 to 25. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was in this way. When, as his mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us. Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife, and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son, and he called his name Jesus. Very important.

A sociologist has made a study and discovered that boys and teenagers who had certain names were more prone to get into trouble. And he made a list of 5,000 names that he said were safe. I suppose there are some names you could give a boy that would get him into trouble.

Susie. When they named the Lord Jesus, he was named from heaven. And of course here in Matthew chapter 1, the passage that Pastor Dinwoody read for us, we have a number of names of the Lord Jesus.

The name that is emphasized, of course, is the name Jesus. Verse 21, thou shalt call his name Jesus, which means Savior. And then in verse 25, he called his name Jesus.

As you can see from our text, Jesus is spelled in capital letters, so the name Jesus stands out very boldly. And of course the church exists because of the name Jesus. Jesus means Savior.

Jesus means Jehovah saves. But there's another name that's mentioned in verse 23 that is mentioned, to the best of my knowledge, only three times in the entire Bible. It says in verse 23, quoting from Isaiah chapter 7, verse 14, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.

So would you think with me this morning about this unusual name of Jesus recorded here in Matthew, recorded back in the book of Isaiah, and recorded nowhere else? No leper ever came up to Jesus and said, Oh, Emmanuel. As far as the record is concerned in the four Gospels, no disciple ever came up and called him Emmanuel. And yet this is the name that was given to Jesus by his heavenly Father, Emmanuel, God with us.

Now before we look at the name, we ought to look behind the name. This name was first revealed way back in the days of Isaiah the prophet. So I want you to take the calendar of your mind and just turn it back 700 years from Matthew.

Can you do that this morning? It's a difficult time in world history. Ahaz is the king of Judah, and Ahaz is in hot water because Ahaz is sitting right here in Judah, and Israel, the northern kingdom, and Syria up here in the north have joined forces to fight Assyria. You see, back in those days, they had world problems just as we do today, and the Assyrian armies were sweeping down across that fertile crescent, and they would hit Syria first, and they would hit Assyria, and then they would hit Judah.

And so the king of Israel and the king of Syria sent their emissaries to the king of Judah and said, Look, let's the three of us band together. And if we band together, we can fight the king of Assyria. Ahaz said, No, I won't do it.

Now Ahaz said no because he had done a very sneaky, dirty thing. Ahaz had secretly sent his diplomats to Assyria. They had completely bypassed Israel and Syria, and they went around to Assyria, and Ahaz had a secret agreement with the Assyrians.

Well, when Israel and Syria found out that Judah would not cooperate in fighting this battle, they said, All right, we'll turn on you. And now Ahaz was really in hot water because he'd made an agreement with Assyria, and now he was being attacked by Syria and Israel, and all of his friends were becoming his enemies, and he couldn't make any of his enemies his friends. And about that time, Isaiah the prophet came along.

Isaiah said, You know, king, you're trusting your diplomats, you're trusting your politics. Have you ever thought of trusting the Lord? Ahaz, did you ever read the old Scriptures about the way God used to come and fight battles for His people? Have you forgotten when David was the king and how God used to fight battles for David? He said, Ahaz, why don't you trust the Lord? Well, Ahaz didn't have that kind of faith. Isaiah said, You know, God will give you a sign.

Just ask for a sign. Ahaz said, I don't want any sign. Acting very pious.

And the preacher said, All right, God will give you a sign. It's going to be this. The virgin is going to conceive and bear a son.

His name is going to be Immanuel. Immanuel means God with us. You see, king Ahaz, you're standing here and there's the king of Israel and he's shaking his fist at you.

There's the king of Syria and he's joined hands with Israel, shaking his fist at you. And you have made a covenant with the Assyrians and they're not going to keep that covenant. They're going to come swooping down here.

Assyria is not with you. Israel is not with you. Syria is not with you.

But you know what? God is with you. And what you need, king Ahaz, is not politics. You need God.

Immanuel. God with us. Well, the strange thing is, God was with them and God did help them.

This is the name that was given to Jesus. 700 years later, God says to Joseph, he said, now look, you take that name Immanuel and give it to Jesus. God with us.

Because the people that are going to be on earth when Jesus is born are going to need to know God with us. Just as Ahaz was in trouble, people have always been in trouble. Nations have always been in trouble.

Individuals have always had problems of one kind or another. Now they need the name Jesus. That's where it all starts.

First you meet Him as Jesus. Savior. Isn't that a great name? That name Jesus goes back to the Old Testament too.

Joshua. That great soldier Joshua who took the sword and moved in and conquered. Well, my Jesus is my Joshua.

He's conquered. You begin with Jesus. You say, He's my Savior.

Thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall save. But after you've come to know Jesus as Savior, the next step is to know Jesus as Immanuel.

God with us. Now this name Immanuel tells me two very important truths about Jesus. They're very simple.

Number one, Jesus is God. Call His name Immanuel which means God with us. You see, strictly speaking, I could not call any of my sons Immanuel because they aren't God.

When the little baby came into the world, it was God with us. Jesus Christ is God. Now He claimed to be God.

You just read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He claimed to be God. He said to a crowd one day before Abraham came into being, I was.

And they picked up stones and said, you're blaspheming. He wasn't blaspheming. He was telling the truth.

At His trial, art thou then the King? Art thou the Son of the Highest? Thou sayest it. He accepted worship as God. Thomas fell at His feet and said, my Lord and my God.

And Jesus didn't say, look, Thomas, you're disturbed. You better visit an analyst because you need help. No.

He accepted it. They came to His feet and worshipped Him as God. And He accepted it.

A man came to my front door one day some years ago. And when I saw what he was holding in his hand, I knew why he was there. He was out representing a false cult.

I'm always kind to these people, but I don't let them in. Because once you let them in, they go next door and say, well, the preacher let me in. So I just don't let them in.

We stood at the door and he said, I represent so-and-so. I'd like to study the Bible. I said, well, I study the Bible all the time.

He said, do you? I said, yes. I said, I worship Jesus Christ because He is God. And the man just turned white.

Well, he said, no, that's not true. He's the Son of God. I said, I'm sorry, He's God.

Well, said the man, nowhere in the New Testament is Jesus called God. I said, have you got a New Testament? And he did. And we just turned the pages at the front door.

I said, now here, John 1. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. And the Word was God.

That's Jesus. The fact of the matter is, over in John 1, verse 18, I want you to look at it. John 1, verse 18.

If you have the New American Standard Version, you'll see what I'm pointing out here. John 1, verse 18. No man hath seen God at any time.

The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. The only begotten God is the way the text reads. Did you know that? John 1, verse 18 reads, the only begotten God, Jesus Christ, is God.

I have found nine or ten places in my Bible where very openly, Jesus is called God. Here are two of them. John 1.1 and John 1.18. In John 20.28, My Lord and My God.

In Acts 20.28, Paul says He purchased the church with His own blood. The blood of God. The blood of Jesus Christ.

Over in Romans 9, verse 5, Paul calls Him God just as boldly as he can. Romans 9.5. I like Hebrews where it says, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. The man looked at me and said, well, that's in the English.

It's not that way in the Greek. I said, you got a Greek New Testament? And he turned and left. Now whether it's English or Greek or whatever language, no matter where you open the Word of God, you find this truth.

That Jesus is God. Christmas was not the birth of simply a teacher or a prophet or a miracle worker. Jesus came into this world God in the flesh.

Emmanuel. He's God. You know what that means? That means you can't run away from Him.

Some of you folks here this morning all this past year have thought very little about Jesus. Been concerned about Nixon or been concerned about McGovern or been concerned about this one or that one. Haven't been concerned about Jesus.

Now look, Jesus is God. You can't run away from Him. You can't just put Him off on a siding somewhere like a freight car.

Jesus is God. You have to do business with Him. You have to face up to Him.

He's God. The second fact that is in this name is very obvious. Jesus is not only God, but Jesus is God with us.

Now where is God? Well, you talk to an agnostic and he says, God is nowhere. As you know, an agnostic is a person who has no invisible means of support. You remember the story of the schoolteacher who did a very foolish thing? The schoolteacher went up to the blackboard and wrote, God is nowhere.

And a little girl went up and just drew a line between the W and the H in nowhere. And she made it read, God is now here. The agnostic says God is nowhere.

The pantheist says God is everywhere. We have a lot of that today. We're worshiping creation.

God is everywhere. What did Steve McQueen say? God is my kids. God is the green grass.

God is machinery. God is everything. He's confused.

He's confused. Why anybody ever turns to Hollywood to find out what heaven is like, I don't know. The ritualist says God is in a building.

God is between these candles or God is on this piece of furniture. He's wrong. Stephen took care of that a long time ago.

Stephen said God does not dwell in temples made with hands and people said he's wrong and they killed him, but he was right. Where is God? There used to be a group of people in this country called transcendentalists. Big word.

They said God is the great beyond. Ralph Waldo Emerson was this way. That wasn't the only thing he was wrong in.

God is way out there someplace. God is the Creator who wound up the clock and went off someplace on a vacation. God is far away.

The devil comes along and says I'll tell you where God is. God is against you. God is an enemy.

God is holding out on you. But Jesus comes along and says I want to tell you where God is. God is with you.

Isn't that precious? God is not far from me. God is not behind me, pushing me. God is with me.

I went through the pages of my Bible some time ago to find out what does it mean to have God with me. You see, if you don't know Jesus as your Savior, you don't know Emmanuel, God with you. You're living alone.

You're living alone. You say I don't need any help from God. I'm self-sufficient.

Are you really? Nobody here is self-sufficient. Why, the bread you ate for your toast this morning at breakfast involved hundreds of people. You plugged in your electric razor or if you're fortunate enough, your electric comb.

That involved thousands of people. You put on clothing that involved hundreds of people. You aren't alone.

You aren't self-sufficient. Well, okay, you say, when it comes to material things, I need other people. When it comes to intellectual things, I need other people.

When it comes to this business of spiritual things, I don't need God. I've got my own religion. Do you really? If you don't know Jesus as Savior, you don't know Emmanuel, God with us.

So I turned the pages of my Bible and I said to myself, what does it mean to have God with you? When is God with us? Well, of course He's with us in salvation. We know that. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice, said Jesus, and what? Open the door. I will come in and will sup with him and he with me. Isn't that great? That moment when you opened your heart to Jesus Christ, you had God with you.

You said, I'm going to come in. Revelation 3.20, I'm going to come in and I'm going to save you. And we're going to fellowship together.

During this Christmas season, you're going to sit down with a lot of people and fellowship in that way. A cup of coffee, a cup of tea, a glass of eggnog. I trust nothing stronger than that.

And you're going to have fellowship together. That's what happens when you're saved. You just open your heart and Jesus comes in and says, you know, you've been lonely.

You've been empty. You've been defeated. You've been dirty.

Let me clean you up and straighten you up and move in God with us in salvation. Now, God won't come in unless we invite Him. God will not come in unless we invite Him.

He won't force His way in. He just simply waits at the door and He knocks. He's been talking to some of you people about letting Him come in.

God with us in salvation. But it goes beyond that. How about God with us in the struggles of life? You've discovered, I'm sure, that life is not a playground.

Life is a battleground. The older we get, the more the battles become more serious. Back in Isaiah 53, God has some beautiful things to say to us.

I want you to look at it. God with us in salvation and God with us in the struggles of life. Look at Isaiah 43.

But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob... He's the Creator. And He that formed thee, O Israel... He wants to form you. Are you letting Him? Fear not.

For I have redeemed thee. I like that. He's the Creator.

He's the Former. He's the Redeemer. I have redeemed thee.

I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine. That's wonderful.

God made me. God is making me. God redeemed me.

God called me. And God says, you're mine. Now look at verse 2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.

Does anybody else ever say that to you? Folks come up and say, now, if there's anything I can do, let me know. And you know very well, with most of them, if you let them know, they wouldn't be there. God says, when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.

I'm not going to send a substitute. I'm not going to send a care package. I'm going to be there.

And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Look at verse 9. Fear not, for I am with thee.

That's Emmanuel. God with us in the struggles of life. And here's a precious husband and wife trying to raise a little family, and there are struggles, and God's with them.

And here's a dear elderly person who has lived for the Lord Jesus and now is in a rest home someplace and doesn't even always know what's going on, but God is with her. Aren't you glad you have Emmanuel? God with us in the struggles of life. Some of you dear people this past year have gone through the waters.

You've gone through the furnace. And if we were to go up and down these roads, you'd stand up and say, I want people to know God was with me. God was with me.

How about God being with us in our service for the Lord? There's a beautiful little statement at the end of the Gospel of Mark that has always intrigued me. In Mark 16, verse 20, God with us in the service of life. Mark 16.

And they went forth. He went back to heaven, but they went forth and preached everywhere the Lord working with them. That's great.

Week by week, we seek to serve the Lord. You're teaching your Sunday school class or singing in the choir or ushering or ministering in your neighborhood or helping somebody some way. And day after day, we say, oh God, I must minister, I must minister.

And God says, don't worry, I'm with you. I'm with you. I hope you're praying for our missionary personnel down there in Nicaragua.

They're having to serve God under difficulties now. God's with them. You know, it's beautiful when you read the book of Acts.

Here's a little fellow named Paul. Paul the Apostle. And Paul was persecuted.

And Paul went through difficulty. And Paul came to Corinth one day. And Paul started a church in Corinth.

And you'd think everybody would be enthusiastic about a church getting started in wicked Corinth. They weren't. And they attacked him and they persecuted him.

And Paul went home one night and Paul said, I wonder if it's worth it all. And Acts chapter 18 says, that night the Lord appeared to him. And the Lord said, don't be afraid.

I'm with you. And I have many people in this city. And Paul stayed 18 months and built a great church.

You feel like giving up? Emmanuel, God, is with us in our service. They arrested Paul and over in Acts chapter 22, they pushed Paul in front of the council and said, okay, give your testimony. Tell us what you want us to know.

And Paul began to witness and it just broke into pieces. The whole thing just erupted. And back in prison, Paul is a little bit discouraged and Jesus comes and says, don't be afraid.

I'm with you. As you've witnessed for me in Jerusalem, you're going to witness for me in Rome. Isn't it good to know God has a purpose for our lives? Isn't it good to know that regardless of what happens to us, God is fulfilling a purpose? You say, Pastor, I can't see what He's doing.

You don't have to see what He's doing. He sees what He's doing. He is Emmanuel in the service of life.

He's with us. Paul gets to the end of his life there in 2 Timothy. He writes his last letter.

I wonder if I knew it was my last letter. I wonder what I would say. Paul wrote something like this.

At my first defense, no one stood with me. Isn't that awful? Paul. Paul who had sent letters to Rome.

They weren't there standing with him. Paul who had won thousands to Jesus Christ and he stands before the judge and no one stands with him. Then in the next verse he says, but the Lord stood with me.

God was with me. Emmanuel in salvation. God with us in the struggles of life.

God with us in our service. Isn't it good to know Emmanuel when you go through the sorrows of life? Did you ever notice the change in Psalm 23? You've noticed this I'm sure. Psalm 23.

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He, third person.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. But then that fourth verse changes from He to Thou. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me.

Not He. Thou! Thou art with me. God with us in the sorrows of life.

Oh, what do people do when they go through the valley? What are you going to do when you go through the valley? I think it was O. Henry, the famous American short story writer who when he lay dying said, please lift up the shade. I don't want to go home in the dark. I tell you, it takes more than lifting up a shade

not to go home in the dark.

God with us in the sorrows of life. When you go through the valley, it's so wonderful to have the shepherd. I will fear no evil.

I'm not going to fear the future. I'm not going to fear the present. Thou art with me.

Thou art Emmanuel. God with us. Is that going to be your experience? And then it all comes to that wonderful, glorious conclusion there in the book of Revelation.

Just about every time I conduct a funeral service when we end up at the graveside, I usually read Revelation chapter 21. The first five or six verses. May I read it to you? This is what we're living for.

This is what we're looking for. This is what Jesus died to give us. This whole Christmas thing is not a story in a book.

It's a reality to us. We know Jesus. We know Emmanuel.

God with us. He's with me in salvation. I've known Him as my Savior.

He's with me in the struggles of life. He's with me in service. He's with me in sorrow.

Ah, but He's going to be with me throughout all eternity. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them. And they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, and neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away.

Three times in verse 3 of Revelation 21 you find, with them, with them, with them. That's Emmanuel. It's as though God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, the whole Trinity, get wrapped up in verse 3. God is with men.

He will dwell with them. They shall be His God. God shall be with them.

That's heaven. Some of you look very skeptical. You say, do you really believe in heaven? I believe more in heaven today than I did yesterday.

Heaven. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, you said, Jesus, I will come again, receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be with Him. That's Emmanuel.

God with us. They called His name Emmanuel. That's all the name we need.

If you know Him as Jesus the Savior, then just take that further step of faith and say, oh, Emmanuel, You are with me. I'm not alone. I'm not afraid.

You're with me no matter what I may go through. If I should sin, You're with me to forgive me. If I'm carrying burdens, You're with me to strengthen me.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear. The Lord of hosts is with us.

Can't you just hear Jesus when He went back to heaven shouting down to that little group of people and saying, Lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age. Peter ends up in prison and the devil says, it's not worth it. He said, oh, yes it is.

He's with me. And they take Paul outside the city of Rome and they're about to chop off his head and he says, ah, he's with me. And they take the Apostle John to the Isle of Patmos and put him in the Roman salt mines and John looks up and says, God, You're with me.

That's Emmanuel. God with us. Is God with you? Have you received Him? Have you opened your heart to Him? You could do that today.

Why don't you receive a wonderful Christmas gift this morning? The gift of God's salvation through His Son, Jesus. Isn't that wonderful? The gift of salvation. The gift of eternal life.

One word and we close. Did you ever think of what it cost Jesus to be Emmanuel? God with us. Left a throne for a cross.

Left glory for poverty. He left worship for hatred. He left blessing for cursing and there came that hour in His life when they nailed Him to a cross and your sin and my sin were placed upon His body.

And a strange thing happened. God was not with Him. My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? And for that instant of time, all of the workings of God's grace brought about salvation.

Somehow the sinless one became sin. And then God's face shined upon Him again and He said, Father, it is finished. Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.

Oh, how wonderful. Do you know God with you, Emmanuel? Open your heart to Him this morning. He'll save you.

And then He'll be with you. And then one day you'll be with Him. Forever and ever.

Gracious Father, our hearts well up today in praise and adoration. How undeserving we are. Little clods of clay and yet we've been made the children of God.

Children of this earth and yet one day we shall be the very citizens of heaven. And even now, our citizenship is already written down in heaven. Oh, thank You, Father, for the precious experience of God with us.

And Lord, we're not afraid of life and we're not afraid of death and we're not afraid of all eternity because You're with us. You're with us. And You always will be.

And now as we express our praise and thanksgiving in song, may there be those who will come to receive this Savior. Speak to hearts for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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