

JOURNEY WAYPOINTS

A stop along the journey to study, share, and support one another while we learn the way of Jesus.

This Week's Big Idea

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." We have joy because God with us – Immanuel.

Scripture & Study

KEY TEXT: Isaiah 7:1-4; Psalm 16:11; Matthew 1:20-25 [Click here to access this week's scriptures](#)

The promise of a child named Immanuel, "God with us," carries profound significance for understanding the joy found in God's presence. Originally delivered to King Ahaz of Judah during a time of political and personal crisis, this prophecy assured him of God's faithfulness. Its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ reveals God's unchanging commitment to His people.

The prophecy in Isaiah 7 takes place during the "Syro-Ephraimite crisis." King Ahaz was confronted by Isaiah who urged him to trust in God. God's promise of a sign—a virgin giving birth to Immanuel—offered both immediate reassurance and a prophetic glimpse into God's ultimate redemptive plan.

For Ahaz and Judah, "God with us" reminded them of God's faithfulness in the midst of uncertainty and fear. For us today, Immanuel is fully revealed in Jesus Christ. As Matthew 1:20-25 explains, Jesus' birth to the Virgin Mary fulfills this ancient prophecy: God Himself has come to dwell among us. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection embody the truth that we are not abandoned, but fully known and loved.

Psalm 16:11 assures us, "In Your presence is fullness of joy." This joy is not fleeting or circumstantial but is rooted in the unchanging reality of God's presence. Nehemiah 8:10 reinforces this by proclaiming, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." When we fix our eyes on Jesus, our Immanuel, we find joy that transcends our circumstances. This joy strengthens us, giving us courage and hope even in the most challenging times.

The birth of Jesus was heralded by the angels as "good tidings of great joy for all people" (Luke 2:10-11). This joy is not merely an emotion but a reflection of the deep wholeness and hope that come from being reconciled to God through Christ.

Joy is rooted in the assurance of God's presence. Whether in times of celebration or challenge, Jesus, our Immanuel, fills us with the strength and hope of knowing we are never alone.

Discussion Questions:

- Immanuel and Joy: How does the promise of Immanuel deepen your understanding of joy? What does it mean to you personally that Jesus is "God with us"?
- Recognizing God's Presence: When have you experienced joy through recognizing God's presence in your life? How did this perspective shift your circumstances?
- Faith in Difficult Times: How does knowing Jesus as Immanuel shape your faith and response to challenges or uncertainties?

Apply it:

- Reflect: Identify areas of your life where you've struggled to see God's presence. Reflect on His faithfulness and how He's been with you even in difficult times.
- Pray: Meditate on Psalm 16:11. Thank God for the joy found in His presence and ask Him to help you recognize His nearness in your daily life.
- Act: Share God's joy with someone this week. Offer words of encouragement, hope, or an act of kindness to remind them of the truth of "God with us."