

God With Us Sunday: 12/10/2023 – Pastor Lenard Tavernelli – Matthew 1:18-25

*“See that Jesus is God with us, conceived by the Holy Spirit,
come to save us from our sins so that we may find fullness of joy in his presence”*

Overview

This week Pastor Lenard led us through this familiar narrative of Joseph and much of what is not said in this story. The virgin birth, something that sceptics will point to, was just as unbelievable and controversial then as it is today. Pastor Lenard reminded us that the context of this story is an “almost divorce.” This small-town couple’s story is a testament to the fact that Jesus entered humanity by the Spirit and did not arrive how he was expected to. Joseph, who was also skeptical of the explanation of Mary’s pregnancy, was given a vision that not only confirmed her story but also explained the purpose of this disruption of his marriage plans. This son was going to save his people from their sins. We learned that this entire scenario was prophesied about in Isaiah with the promise that this son would be God with us and his name is Jesus.

“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” — C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory, and Other Addresses

Outline

1. Jesus has come by the Spirit (v18-20)
2. Jesus has come to save us (v21)
 - a. Luke 17:10
 - b. Psalm 130:8
 - c. Romans 5:10
 - d. Romans 5:1
 - e. Romans 6:6
 - f. Romans 8:20-21
3. Jesus has come to be God with us (v22-25)
 - a. Psalm 16:11
 - b. Philippians 4:7
 - c. Matthew 28:20

Discussion Questions

1. Given the above C.S. Lewis quote, what are the mud pies in your life?
2. Pastor Lenard pointed out that the humble baby Jesus was not the expected savior that the Jews were waiting for in their oppression. Like those 1st century Jews, we need salvation from God’s wrath and not just the trappings of man. Pastor Lenard framed this with the question, “what do you want vs what do you need?”
 - a. What are ways we approach God like the first century Jews?
 - b. In your own words, how would you answer the question “What do you need?”
3. God came in the flesh to the world as Immanuel (God with us). Jesus did not just enter the world in general he is with us daily in our walks. Even in crisis he does not leave us to ourselves, he is not waiting for us to get everything right.
 - a. How does trying to “get everything right,” show a small view of God?
In what specific way do you personally need to take God at his word?
4. Was there anything else in the sermon that stood out?