

THURSDAY, APRIL 9**Immanuel, God With Us**

- If someone who did not know God—no church background, no Bible knowledge—came to you and asked, ***“What is God really like?”***
 - where would you turn in Scripture?
- Most honest / most complete / most beautiful answer is this:
 - **Look at Jesus**
- Jesus does not merely **represent** God = He **reveals** God because He is God = Lord of glory who stepped out of Heaven to be incarnated in flesh = to become Son of Man / covenant Son of God

Philippians 2:6-7 AMP ⁶[Messiah/Christ] Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained, ⁷But stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born a human being.

Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily

- 2nd Person of Godhead who possesses fullness of divine nature took on a human body = fully God / fully human

Colossians 1:15-16 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

- In Jesus = invisible God / becomes visible
- Firstborn [covenant term meaning “Preeminent—surpasses all others”] = Creator was not Himself created

John 14:9 “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”

- Jesus/ saying, “If you want to know God’s heart = look at Me”
 - If you want to know how God treats people = watch Me

- If you want to know how God responds to sinners / sufferers / and seekers—listen to Me

Hebrews 1:3 echoes this truth = saying Jesus = “the brightness of His glory [doesn’t just reflect God’s glory / He radiates God’s glory --I am the Light of the world= because He is God in the flesh] and the express image of His person.” CO-EQUAL / CO-ETERNAL

- Exactly same nature of self-sacrificing love
 - character of perfect righteousness = because He is God in the flesh
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- God— in His love, did not give us just one account of Jesus—but **four**. 4 perspectives / 4 witnesses / 4 windows into heart of God
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- 1) In **Matthew** = written by Jew for Jews = see Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah—the fulfillment of God’s promises
Matthew repeatedly says, “**This happened that it might be fulfilled**”
God / shown to be **faithful** promise-keeper / never forgets His word

 - 2) In **Mark** =see Jesus in action =moving quickly / serving relentlessly/ sacrificing constantly = Jesus is always responding to human need / always obeying Father’s will
Mark shows us God who **serves** / who is not too important to touch lepers or stop for the broken.
Jesus Himself said **Mark 10:45** “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

 - 3) In **Luke** = see compassion / humanity of Jesus. Luke shows us how Jesus feels—His tenderness toward the outcast / His mercy toward sinners / His tears over suffering. Luke carefully records these things so that we can have confidence in what we believe (Luke 1:3–4).
Here we meet a God who **understands** = who enters our pain who draws close to the wounded

4) And in **John** = we encounter / eternal Creator God

John 1:1–3 ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made = Word made flesh = **John 1:14** declares, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory.”

John invites us to believe = Jesus is exactly who He claims to be, so that our spiritual lives might be revived

- **Which Gospel have you read most recently?** Which portrait of Jesus has been shaping your understanding of God?
- This brings us to / name given to Jesus = tells us something profound about God’s character

Matthew 1:23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which means, “God with us.”

- This name= revelation of God’s heart
- From very beginning = God has desired to dwell w/His people
- In Garden = He walked w/ Adam and Eve
- In wilderness = He lived among Israel in sanctuary
- And in Person of Jesus Christ = God stepped fully into human flesh
- Promise does not end at birth of Jesus
- Fast-forward to very end of Matthew’s Gospel.
- After Jesus had lived / died / risen / given His disciples their mission, He left them w/ these final words:

Matthew 28:20 “And lo, I am with you always, even to/ end of / age.”

- Matthew begins w/ **Immanuel = God w/ us**
- Matthew ends w/ Christ’s assurance **“I am with you always.”**
- **God does not abandon His people**

Psalms 139:7 “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”

Isaiah 41:10 “Fear not, for I am with you... I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you.”

Hebrews 13:5 echoes promise: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

- Whatever season you are in—joy/ sorrow, faith/doubt,
 - Strength/ weakness—**God is w/ you**
- And we have only touched surface
- Character of God is deeper than /ocean = higher than / heavens
- We will spend eternity discovering new dimensions of His love /
 - His justice / His mercy / His beauty

Revelation 21:3 gives us a glimpse of where all this is heading:

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them.” = eternal reality

- So today, God deserves our praise—not just for what He has done
 - but for **who He is**
- He is faithful / compassionate / present = He is w/ us