

"God With Us" Requires Adjusting Our Dreams

Matthew 1:18-25 ▪ December 11, 2022 ▪ Ryan Wildauer

God's _____ for us is better than our _____. (vs 18-19)

Jesus came _____ as we _____ Him to. (vs 20-23)

We can _____ God with the _____ of our lives. (vs 24-25)

^[18] Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ^[19] And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ^[20] But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ^[21] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ^[22] All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

^[23] "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). ^[24] When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ^[25] but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. (ESV)

Honest
CHRISTMAS

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: Share about a time God changed your plans unexpectedly.

Read & Discuss: Matthew 1:18-25

1. Why do you think Matthew starts off verse 18 by saying the birth of Christ took place in this way? Why is the virgin birth a significant truth for the people of God? What is the potential value in the Church reflecting on this truth every Christmas?
2. How would you characterize Joseph's reaction in verse 19 to Mary's pregnancy before the angel visits him? How might Joseph have felt given the circumstances as he perceived them?
3. What does this account of the coming of Jesus help us understand about our God? In what ways might we apply some of these truths in our own expectations of God and in how we respond to His direction in our lives?
4. In verses 20-21 the angel makes some very bold promises to Joseph about Jesus. How do these truths bring you encouragement as we celebrate the coming of Jesus during the Advent season? The name Immanuel in verse 23 is a quote of Isaiah 7:14 and means "God with us." How does that name in particular shine a light on an important truth about Jesus?
5. How would you describe Joseph's response (vv. 24-25) to his circumstances after his visit by the angel? How would you describe what God was asking Joseph (and Mary) to do? (*For example, was it exciting, scary, hard, or something else?*)
6. What has God given you to do that seems difficult to accomplish? What elements from this account could bring you comfort in the midst of difficulty?

Apply: How might you express your trust in God based in what He is presently asking you to walk through? What might it look like to fail to trust God's plan?

Pray: Pray God would strengthen our trust in Him. Pray specifically for those going through difficult circumstances. Thank God for the gift of Jesus, Immanuel, God with us.