

SERMON SERIES: For Unto Us

SPEAKER: Scott Beckenhauer

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Sermon Title

“God With Us”

Introduction

This week we began a Christmas series titled “For Unto Us”. In Isaiah chapter 9, we are told that Jesus would come as a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. But the first words of that verse tell us, “For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given...” Throughout this series, we are going to lean in and discover together the difference it can make in our lives when we understand how the baby who *came to be with* us became the man who *died for* us. To get started this week, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- If you could choose any modern-day object to represent God’s presence with you (like the cloud and fire in the wilderness), what would it be and why?

Seek the Word

- Read Isaiah 9:6-7 aloud, then discuss.
 - How does the prophecy of “For unto us a child is born” speak to the hope and expectation of the Israelites? How does it apply to us today?
- Read Exodus 12:21-22 aloud, then discuss.
 - What does the presence of God as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night teach us about God’s guidance and protection?
- Read Matthew 1:22-23 aloud, then discuss.
 - What is the significance of the name “Emmanuel”, and how does it change our understanding of God’s relationship with us?

Go Deeper

What/when are the moments in your life where you don’t feel the presence of Jesus? Do they come when things are going really well, when you are busy, when you are struggling? Take some time to think about those moments, and what pulls your attention off of Jesus. Then, share with the group something that you want to begin doing this week and this Christmas season that will help you focus on the presence of Jesus in your life.

Talk About It

- What Old Testament story about God's connection to His people stands out to you the most and why? What about God's desire to be connected to us resonates with you so deeply? How have you seen that play out in your life so far?
- Isaiah prophesied some of the names of Jesus that would come about many generations after Isaiah was alive. Wonderful Counselor; Mighty God; Everlasting Father; Prince of Peace. Jesus is all these things, but often we might find ourselves feeling distant from one aspect or another. Which of these titles of Jesus are you needing Him to be in your life right now? What would it look like for you to be connected to Jesus as _____?
- Look back at your Christmas season last year, on the presence of Jesus in your life. Was the presence of Jesus a priority for you, or did you lose it a little bit in all the hustle and bustle of the season? What would this year's Christmas look like if you kept a firm sight on the presence of Jesus, and invited others to experience that with you?

Wrap Up

Reminder: God desires connection with His people, with YOU. There's nothing you can do to make Him not want you, no matter how sinful you become. It is all too easy to miss out on what God wants to do in our hearts and lives when we focus on all of the craziness in life. But this Christmas season, when we hear words like "Glory to God in the Highest" and "God With Us, Emmanuel", our hope is that you can believe those things. That the presence of Jesus is so prevalent and noticeable in your life that you have no choice but to express that to the people around you. God desires connection with you, so He sent His Son to dwell among us and be that connection. **For Unto Us** a child is born, and he is still with us.

Challenge: Create a plan of daily devotion during this Christmas season. Include things like daily Bible reading, prayer, and service into your routine. You can do this as a group or individually, but make sure people know what you are wanting to do so they can help keep you accountable and encourage you along this journey.

Prayer: We are going to pray a prayer that came out of the sermon, as a reminder of God's desire for us and our desire for Him. This can be something that you can keep with you, and constantly be praying if you are needing a reminder of God's presence in your life.

Father God, we invite you into our hearts and into our lives. We want to surrender to you each and every day and let your presence lead us. Thank you God for the promise of your Son, who is always with us and never far away. God, we want your presence to be known and felt by all the people in our lives, so lead and guide us towards that, and use us for the good of your Kingdom. And through all things, thank you for your love for us.
Amen.