

Sermon Discussion Guide:

Christmas is About Reconciliation

Scripture: **Matthew 1:22–23**

Series: **Advent**

Sunday, December 8, 2019

OVERVIEW

We do not fully grasp the weight of reconciliation. When it feels like God is far, we experience feelings of depression, loneliness, fear, despair, and rebellion. Our rebellious sin is cosmic treason against the Lord, and we need reconciliation to God! The text reminds us that Jesus shall be called Immanuel which means “God with us.” **The nearness of God produces either dread or delight.** This nearness, manifested through the incarnate Christ, brings dread and is a curse to those who do not believe, as sin makes us enemies with God. For the believer, however, Jesus is the basis of our faith and His nearness is a delight! The believer is saved, adopted, joyful, and has access to God through Christ’s intercession. This is why Christmas is about reconciliation.

CORROBORATING TEXTS

Psalm 27:9; Ephesians 2:11-15; Isaiah 7-8; 1 Peter 2:7-8; John 3:18-19; Colossians 1:19; Psalm 73:28; Malachi 4:1-2; Matthew 1:28; Matthew 12:17; 18:20; 26:29; 28:20; Hebrews 4:14-16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The text states that Jesus shall be called Immanuel, which means “God with us.” What does it mean for God to be “with us?” (consider the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14; consider the passages of Matthew that refer to the presence of God; consider Hebrews 4:14-16).
2. When you hear the word reconciliation, what do you think of? How have you failed to fully grasp this? Why do we need to be reconciled to God? [*we are enemies due to our sin*]
3. Christmas seems like such a happy and joyful time for everyone, why does the nearness of God produce dread in the unbeliever? [*sign of a curse to those who disbelieve/distrust (Isaiah 7:14), stumbling block (1 Peter 2:7-8), condemnation (John 3:18-19)*]
4. What are some of the ways that the nearness of God produces delight in the believers? [*salvation, adoption, joy, presence of God, access to God, mercy, grace, help*]
5. Jesus is not dead and buried—He is alive and ascended into glory and is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding on behalf of His children. How should this truth guide our daily lives? How should it shape our understanding of advent?
6. How were you challenged, convicted, or encouraged by the sermon? Is there sin in your life of which you need to repent?