



SUNDAY 5TH DECEMBER - 10AM VISITATION

God with Us

This has been prepared with acknowledgement and thanks to Carl Johnston, Senior Pastor Letchworth Garden City Church. It is based on what he shared this Sunday morning. Please pray throughout the week for Carl and his family following positive Covid Tests.

As we continue our journey through Advent our focus today starts with Matthew 1:23 *"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").*

This developed to the message that the Angel delivered to Mary in Luke 1:28 *"The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'*" So here is Mary, just a teenager, and first an Angel appears to her! And then she is told she is going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit. But at this life changing moment the first thing she is told is that she is highly favoured, and that God is with her. Such an important thing to know.

There are three truths from this:

1. **God is with us:** Whatever we are experiencing, good things or bad things God is with us. If we are lost; he is our guide. If we are sick; he is our healer. He is our strength when we are weak. He rejoices if we rejoice. Wherever we are, he is with us! He wants us to be aware of that as individuals and as a church. Let him lift our perspectives, raise our faith and begin to see in new ways because he is with us. The God of the universe is with you.
2. **God was with us:** Sometimes it's easier to see that God was with us with the benefit of hindsight. To be able to look back and see that even in difficult times he was with us can be so good. Whenever we have been "through stuff" God has been there.
3. **God will be with us:** For Mary, the Divine Conspiracy started with the Visitation of the Angel. The message was that The Lord is with you. But it wasn't just in that moment. The implication is that not only was God with Mary at that moment but also would be with her throughout her life and the things that she would need to live through. The same is true for us. It starts with "I am with you" but then God reveals his plan. **"The Lord assures his proximity before he reveals his priority."**

God wants us to know that he will be with us in every situation. To shift from self-reliance to become more God dependent, more reliant on him. He is there entirely and eternally. Romans 8:35 asks *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?"* and the answer comes (v37-39) *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."*³⁸ *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,*³⁹ *neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Immanuel – God with us!!!

Monday: Luke 1:28 *“The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.”* Read and prayerfully reflect on this verse and what it means to you. Thank God for his assurance that he is with you. Yes, even on a Monday!

Tuesday: God is with you. What does this mean for you today? Ask God to show you ways that you can live this out for yourself and for those around you today.

Wednesday: God was with you. As you pray think about times when you know God was with you in the past and thank him for those. Also ask him to help you see times when you didn't feel that he was with you, but he actually was. Ask him to change your perspective on this and see his activity in your life.

Thursday: God will be with you. Review Romans 8: 31-39 Ask God to show you how the truth that he will be with you, (and that there is absolutely nothing that can change that), will impact your future. As God assures you of his proximity ask him to reveal his priority for you today and into your future.

Friday: God assures you of his proximity before he reveals his priority! This is so important. Continue today to be aware that whatever is going on for you, he is with you, he is Immanuel. And in that , continue to ask God to reveal to you his priority for you in this season of Advent and as you move into your future – Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Have a great week.

Blessings
Phil