

The Love of Emmanuel | Isaiah 7:10-16

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[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ.! I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and you're listening to week four of our Advent series here in 2025.

Before we go into today's message, I want to give you a little context. We started Advent exploring in Revelation 21, then we looked at the peace flowing like a river from God's throne in Revelation 22.

Last week, we explored joy that breaks through the wilderness from Isaiah 35. And today, in Advent week four, we are concluding our Advent series with the theme of love.

And the central message is this, Emmanuel, God with us. You know, Advent love is not just a feeling we get at Christmastime with the holiday music and the shopping and all of the busyness. Advent invites us to look deeper and to recognize that God draws near to us with his presence. We remember in this season how God came close to dwell with humanity, the birth of baby Jesus in the manger.

[1:08] God came into our dark and our broken world, and he showed us a better way through his Son, Jesus Christ. What I want you to listen for today is this simple but profound truth that you are not alone.

God is with you. He has saved you, and he calls for you to trust in him, to place your faith in him, to receive his salvation, to grow in him, and to do good in his holy name.

So let's settle in. Let's dive into this message together. Here is the love of Emmanuel. Well, good morning, everyone. Just a few more days before Christmas.

If you haven't been counting, it's just a couple more days here. It's all coming together. Let's pray together. Father God, we are so grateful that we can come together.

We know that there, when we think of this year and we think of how there is this Christmas time, this Advent season, there's the busyness, there's the rushing from one place to the next, the pressures of life, family obligations, and getting a good deal on some presents.

[2:28] But we come before you today. We ask, Father, that you will bless this time together as we're continuing through faithfully through this Advent season.

I pray, Father, that we can calm our hearts, that we can take this moment and this time and offer our burdens to you.

Advent, Father, you remind us, is such a time for us to reflect on the nativity scene, the Christmas story, and these Advent themes of peace, love, joy, hope, all of these things.

We ask, Father, bless this time together. If there's anything that's going on in our mind, in our heart, we want to offer that to you this morning. May your words speak to us.

And may your Holy Spirit move in and through this place, much like how the Holy Spirit works in and through our lives. We love you. We praise you.

[3:44] We glorify you. And we honor you. Be with us this morning. It is in Jesus' name that we pray. We all say together, amen, church. You know, in Advent, love is not just a feeling that we get in Christmastime.

I know there's the holiday music. There's the shopping. There's all the things that's going on. We think of this Advent time as a time for reflection, a time to look deeper and to recognize that God draws near to us with his presence.

We remember that in this season, it is how God came to dwell with humanity. The birth of baby Jesus in the manger.

We think about that and how the Lord came into our dark and broken world and how we needed him back then.

And we certainly need him now in our life. And the Lord showed us a better way through his son, Jesus Christ. And we think about it.

[5:01] We think of the name Emmanuel, God with us. And that has been what God has desired for. To be with us.

Not to force us to respond, but to give us that opportunity to respond. For us to choose him. And as we went over in our interactive reading.

That God loved us first and foremost. And we are to respond to this love. By loving him in return. And to extend that love to other people.

And in the same way that this love came down to dwell with us. And we look forward to the day where we will be in the presence of the Lord.

That's where I want to be. And I hope that that is where you wish to be. To be connected with the Lord. To be in his presence. And for some of you. You may be longing to connect.

[6:10] Or to reconnect with the Lord. And with his presence. For others. You may feel a sense of overwhelm or exhausted. Just ready to reconnect.

And to be refreshed by the Lord. God is with us. He has never been absent. He is always there. And the love that he has for us.

Is an invitation for us. To enter into his love. To respond to his salvation. And to enter into his presence. And one day.

We will be with them. Just as he is near to us. And so we have our scripture reading from Isaiah. It's going to be from Isaiah chapter 7.

Verses 10 through 16. And what you see here. Is that. Isaiah. Is sent to.

[7:12] King. Ahaz. And as we're turning there. It's on page 679. In your ESV Pew Bible. That.

As you're turning there. It says that. The Lord said to Isaiah. I'm reading right before. Go out and meet Ahaz. Right.

Speak to him. Be careful. Be quiet. Do not fear. And it's this conversation. That's happening. The Lord spoke.

To Ahaz. Ask a sign. Of the Lord your God. This is from verse 10. Let it be deep. As Sheol. Or as high as heaven.

But Ahaz says. I will not ask. And I will not put the Lord. To the test. And he said. Here then. Oh house of David. Is it too little.

[8:07] For you. To weary men. That you weary. My God also. Therefore. The Lord. Himself. Will give you a sign. This is very interesting.

So you see it. Behold. What does it say church. The virgin. Shall conceive. And bear a son. And shall call his name.

What? Emmanuel. He shall. Eat curds and honey. When he knows. How. To refuse evil. And choose. The good. For before the boy knows.

How to refuse the evil. And choose good. The land. Whose two kings you dread. Will be deserted. So it's foretelling. About Emmanuel. About God being with us.

And I always love how in scripture you find little pieces. Little snippets throughout the Old Testament that is pointing. To the coming of Christ. And how powerful that is.

[9:07] We can see that in this particular scripture. How it's connected with other verses within scripture. That it is referenced later on in the gospel of Matthew.

Where it is a fulfillment of prophecy. God being with us. His name being Emmanuel. Think about that. Just one of many connections.

Foretelling. And I just love that. Where there shall be a sign. A virgin shall conceive. And bear a son. That's the main verse I want you to focus on from Isaiah. And how it's connected with the Advent story.

How it's connected with the Christmas story. And how it was foretold. The first coming of Christ. And how in the same way. We wait upon the Lord.

For the second coming of Christ. It's this sense of anticipation. It's this sense of preparing the way for the Lord. Knowing that our hope is in Christ.

[10:12] That there is peace that surpasses all understanding. And there is joy in the Lord. We also are reminded how in Psalm 80.

That the psalmist cries out to God to restore his people. And make his face shine upon them. Much like how we pray at benediction.

Right? To have the Lord's face shine upon you. To be gracious to you. We think of these things. And how this is even connected to how.

The apostle Paul writes in Romans. Describing God's son being a descendant of David. Declared as the son of God.

So it's all connected here. What we see in Isaiah. And how it's connected with everything. And all of these texts. Are pointing us to one central truth church. Emmanuel.

[11:14] God is with us. Can we say that together? Emmanuel. God is with us. And how powerful. Those verses are. Right?

Just like we have this image. This idea. This concept of. The star. Right? I always love that part. Where you have the wise men. That are traveling.

And seeing the star. It's just such a. Wonderful thing. And. I love how it's connected to. When we've talked about revelation. How Christ.

Is. The morning star. And we look. In the direction of Christ. And just like. The wise men. That were following the star. To get to Jesus.

We follow. The morning star. Isn't that kind of cool? That. Very unusual connection. But a connection nonetheless. And so. In these verses. It's.

[12:10] It's Isaiah. From Psalms. From Romans. And from Matthew. But the primary text. Being from Isaiah. What do all these things mean? Let's go to that. What is happening?

This interpretation. Is that. Yeah. We can go to that. Next one then. Is that. Love. Means. God. Comes. Near.

The name. Emmanuel. Means. That God. Is. With us. He is with us. In our very lives.

No matter what situation. You have gone through. Or what situation. You're going to. When we think. Of.

This season. We are to be reminded. That God. Is with us. God. Sending. His only son. To the earth. That God. Is not distant.

[13:04] And God. Makes. A way. For us. That he is here. And. We think of the. Incarnation. Right. Being proof. Of God's love.

You think about it. That God. Enters. The. Dark. And the broken. World. We think of that. Then. We think of that.

Even from the beginning. Right. When I've mentioned before. And I'll mention it again. In the Genesis account. How there is the darkness. The. Scene. Of the.

Stormy. And chaotic. Waters. And then God saying. Let there be light. And there was light.

Representing. The light. Love. And truth. Of Christ.

Entering. Into the world. And I always find it. Fascinating. In the Genesis account. How. Some of you. Bible scholars. May know this one.

[13:57] In the creation account. God says. Let there be light. And there was light. But the sun. Doesn't even show up. On the scene. Until later on. I always found that.

To be interesting. But it's a representation. Of the light. That comes from the Lord. To. Make. Things. Greater. We think of our own.

Context. The world. In which we live in. How there is so much. Darkness. And hatred. And anger. And division. Amongst each other. You know. Last night. I was. I met a family.

Who was talking about. They had just gotten married. And yet. They were. Facing. Hatred. From their own family. And from the community. And I don't know the context.

Of what was going on. But I would think that. In a time. Especially. In the Christmas season. Maybe not so much.

[14:53] Hatred and division. Now maybe. The reason. Why they got married. It could. It could have been. Many different things. But just the way. The story was. Explained to me. Just reminded me.

Of how. What a terrible time. For there to be division. A terrible time. For there to be hatred. It's a time. For us to reflect. On the love. That God has.

For each. And every one of us. How God. enters our own. Messiness. And our own chaos. Who here is a mess. Don't. Don't raise your hand.

Please. Right. We got a few. Right. We certainly are a mess. And God enters. Into the scene. Showing us.

His love. His light. And his truth. And that God. Comes near to us. He enters in our mess. But he loves us.

[15:47] And he dwells with us. And he gives us. All. That opportunity. To respond. And whenever we look. At baby Jesus. Entering the world. Think of how.

God enters. Our own life. And dwells. In our hearts. What a beautiful image. And representation. Not only of what we see. From the bigger world. But also. In our own. World. So to speak. In our own lives. God entering.

Into our life. And it's my prayer. For all of us. That we all come. To know Jesus. That we all come. To respond. To his love.

And that God. Has. A much. Greater way. And I want you. To ask yourself. This question. Think about it. How is your relationship.

[16:43] With the Lord. For some people. You may think. You may answer. And you may say. I believe that God. Is distant. Or I feel that God.

Is far away. And certainly. There are moments. Where we feel that way. But maybe you can. Answer by. Asking yourself. Is he truly.

Near with me. And I'm here. To tell you. The Lord. Is here. With us. Even when we. Don't see it. When we face. Storms. In our life.

When we face. Situations. That are happening. We're focused. In at the moment. But just know. That God. Is there with you. In every. Season.

Every storm. Every trial. And that's the beauty. Of the Christmas story. The Lord. Drawing near. To us. We also see.

[17:38] In the second thing. Here. Is that love. Saves us. From our what church. From our sins. Right. Jesus name. Meaning. The Lord saves.

And that his mission. His mission. Was very clear. To provide. Salvation. For all. Him being. The sacrificial. Lamb. It was.

To fulfill. Prophecy. Just like how. We were reading. In Isaiah. The virgin. And the child.

I think that's very. Specific. Prophecy. For sure. And to see. That that is fulfilled. Is wonderful. It's to show us. A different way.

Not by. Force. Or not by. What we can do. Either. But what has been. Done. For us. And you think about it.

[18:37] How wonderful. Is it to know. That. Because. God loves us. He gives all of us.

A choice. Whether or not. To respond. Or to not respond. You know. I've given this example. Before. And I certainly. Will give it many times. I can't force.

My wife. To love me. Just being honest. Here. Right. I can't force. My children. To obey me. Even though. I can certainly. Try. And. Still discipline.

And do all these things. But at the end of the day. How many of us. Even try to control ourselves. Right. We think of how.

We fundamentally. Can't control people. And yet. God. Gives us. That same chance. For us. To choose him. Certainly.

[19:35] The wise decision. When it comes to children. Is to listen to their parents. Amen. Right. And certainly. It's a better thing. If my wife. Chooses to love me. As opposed to my wife. Being forced to love me.

I would never. Encourage that. But certainly. It's so much better. When it's chosen. That love. Is chosen. And we think of how.

Christ. Is giving us. This chance. To respond. To him. Let that be a call. For you. To respond. And that God. Desires for us. To choose him.

Right. Let us not. Let us know. The difference. God. Allows for us. To choose. And this love. It doesn't overlook.

Sin. But. It rescues us. From sin. The call. Is for us. To. Recognize. That Jesus. Paid for it all. [20:30] On the cross. And. It doesn't give us. A ticket. To just sin. As much. As we want. But it gives us. A call. For us. To become more. Like him. And to know.

That. In your heart. And in your mind. Following. The ways. Of the Lord. And becoming. More like him. To. Sin. Less. We're not.

Sinless. We're going to. Sin. Less. And it goes. To show. That we rely. On the Lord. We think. About these things. And. Ask yourself. That question. Have I accepted.

Jesus's love. That saves. Or. Am I still trying. To save myself. Ask yourself. That. The third thing. Then. Is to. Response. To this love. Is trust. And you think. Of the story. Of. Mary. And Joseph. You think. How. Inconvenience.

[21:25] They were. Going. Against. Tradition. And the cultural. Norms. Mary. You're going. To be pregnant. What do you mean? What's going on here?

And how Mary. Had to make the decision. To follow. What God had. In store. For her. It's the same thing. For Joseph. Right? I can't imagine. Being in that.

Kind of situation. But yet. They trusted. In the Lord. And sometimes. It takes. Some divine intervention. A little bit.

Of persuading. To. We think. About that. They followed. They trusted God. Even when it seemed. Impossible. When it seemed.

Confusing. And when you couldn't. Really sleep at night. Either. To follow God. That's an example. For us. Even when we don't.

[22:20] Understand. Many times. In our life. We will be placed. In a situation. Where we don't know. What in the world. Is going on. We may not even know. Why.

Something's happening. But when we think. About this. We are. To respond. To the Lord. God's love.

Is beyond us. And love. Responds. To God's plan. By following. The Lord. Saying yes. To him. We think.

About that. This then. Leads us then. Into our application. Is how. Should we live then. What do we do.

About this. What do we do. About this. This concept. This idea. Of Emmanuel. God. Being with us.

[23:15] Well. The first thing. Is to what church. Three words. Embrace. Emmanuel's presence. How can you practice.

How can you recognize. That God is with us. To be aware. That God. Is here in this place. God is present. With us.

That should give us. Not only comfort. But confidence. At the same time. And certainly. Also conviction. At times. When you rise. In the morning. When you get up.

Take some time. To know. That God. Is there with you. Or maybe. It's before you go to bed. Some of us. Have to get up. Really early. I get it. Maybe it's. Right before you go to bed.

Taking some time. To know. That God. Is near with you. That God. Is present. Acknowledging. And thanking him. For his presence. Or maybe.

[24:14] How many of you guys. Like going for a drive. Anybody. Sometimes. Sometimes. When I need time. To think. Or to pray. Or just to calm down. Or get the kids.

To go to sleep. I go for a drive. It's become my. Favorite pastime. Kids will all go nap. It's a really wonderful thing. Try it sometime. But. In that.

Time. That can be a good opportunity. God is with me. Wherever I go. And it's also important.

To not forget that. So find a way. In your own. Life. This week. Or. You know.

The year is almost over. I'd like to encourage you. Before the year ends. Take some time. And recognize. That. God's presence. Is here. That God. Is with us.

[25:08] God. With me. Awareness. Take time. To pause. Throughout the day. Acknowledge his nearness. God is here. Present. With us today.

We think. Of the Christmas story. As a representation. Of God. Entering into the world. His presence. Being here. But just because. Christ. Isn't physically here. Doesn't mean. That he's not here. With us today. That's why. We always. Pray to the Lord. And ask him. To bless. Our time. Together. And so. Share with someone. How you connect. With the Lord. How you're able. To be in God's presence. I can tell you. For some of us. It may be completely. Different than the next person. And Advent. Is a perfect time. To quiet your soul. To take some time. In reflection. And ask yourself.

[26:09] That question then. Do you live your life. Knowing that God. Is with you. Do you. Or. Do you act like.

He's not there. For some of us. We may live life. As though God's not there. Let us recognize. God's presence. That Emmanuel.

God. With us. The second thing then. Is to. Receive. The gift. Of salvation.

Right. We think of this theme. Of love. Love being transcendent. Love being beyond. Our human understanding.

And certainly. We think of how we love one another. How we love our pets. Right. There's all these different types of love. But God's love. Being transcendent. From our human understanding.

[27:07] Think of John 3.16. For God so loved the world. That he gave his only son. That. Only a select amount of people. Exactly.

Whoever. Right. Does that. Does that mean the tall. Or the short. Means everybody. Right.

Whosoever. Some translations say all.

Right. Everybody. Whoever believes. Shall not perish. But have eternal life. It's that simple. Believe in the Lord.

And be saved. And if you want to know specifically. What to believe. Believe in the death. Burial.

And resurrection. Of Jesus. How simple is that? It defies logic.

And reason. Right. We think of how the world works. And we live in a world of. Check boxes. And checklists. And bullet points. And all the things.

[28:05] When it comes to God. His love is very different. And we praise God. And we thank God for that. Compared to just the constant checklist. You got to do this.

That. Oh. You forgot that. Try again. Right. Thank God. It's not like that. If you. Have never had a relationship with the Lord. Let this be a call for you.

To believe in him. And if you have that relationship with him. Thank him. Specifically. For revealing himself to you. And never be afraid of.

God. The salvation story. The Christmas story for that matter. And have confidence in him. Don't be ashamed. Of how God is working in your life.

Don't be afraid of the fact that. God is present in our lives. And then finally I put here. Follow the Lord like Mary.

[29:04] And Joseph. As I put that. Because how. Challenging is it. We hear about Mary and Joseph.

But. To think for a moment. How challenging that must be. Even today. If you were to hear. The same story happening today.

I'm sure. A lot of the cultural ramifications. Right. The consequence. The kind of conversations. Of what am I going to do. Would still happen. God had his own timing.

On when the storyline would happen. But it's to show us. The faithfulness. The trust. And certainly the wrestling.

How many of us have wrestled. Because we didn't understand a situation. You don't have to raise your hand. Please don't. I'm just raising it for example here. Right. For many of us.

[30:01] We have those situations. We just don't understand. What are you doing God? I don't get it. Why is this happening? Why did this. Why did X, Y, or Z happen?

And. How often do we have. More understanding. And more revelation. In hindsight. Hindsight. You kind of wish you knew.

Then and there. But more often than not. We understand. Why something happened. The way that it happened. In hindsight. Oh. That's what you were doing God.

I didn't understand then. But I'm sure glad. That I do. Now. And that's why. It's also important. For us to reflect on. How did God work in that.

That time. And. Certainly. We may not have. All of the answers. That's okay. We continue. To stand firm.

[31:00] In our faith. Identify. And I challenge for you. Where is an area. That God is calling you.

It might be to respond. To his salvation. It might be. Having a conversation. With a friend. Or a family member. It might be saying. Merry Christmas. To someone you haven't called in a while. I got in the mail. The other day. A letter from my uncle. And I haven't heard from him. In. Well over a year. And the fact that he thought about me.

I was like. I should have been thinking about him. But you know what. I'm glad that he thought. To send a letter. To say hello. And ask for pictures of the kids too.

You know. That piece helps. Right. But we think about this. That God calls all of us. To follow him. To grow. And to live. And to love like him.

[31:58] And I want you to think about. The story of Mary and Joseph. It took daring faith. It took bold faith. And man.

What a ride. What a ride that must have been. And then we think of our own story. Has it been a wild ride? I sure hope it has.

An amazing story. How God will work. In all of our lives. God works behind the scenes. In many ways. That we do not understand. So is there something in your life.

That God is calling you to do. That you're not responding to. Maybe it's time for you. To respond. In that bold. And daring faith. And I want to go to this next slide.

And. As we go there. The good news. Of Emmanuel. God being with us.

[32:59] Is knowing the simple fact. That you are not alone. God being with his people. With us collectively. But also for us individually.

There's great comfort. To know. That God is there. In those moments. Where we feel. Abandoned or alone.

God is there. And I have this image here. Right. Four words. Church. You. Are not alone. And if there's anything.

I want you to take away from this. Is that. Emmanuel. God is with us. And because of this. You are not alone. It always saddens me.

When I hear about people. Who are alone. On Christmas. Or people that have all. The family together. And yet they still feel. Empty. That hasn't happened.

[33:59] To any of us. Has it? It's just knowing. That God's love. Is extending to you. No matter what situation. You're in. No matter how old. You are. And it's so important for us.

To think. And to consider the love. That God has for us. An everlasting love. You know. When I. I mentioned earlier. With Matt and Yai.

About how. That word. The name of this city. Is Ontario. And how in Japanese. It means grace. Overflowing.

And we think of. The love. That God's has for us. That it's in. Abundance. It's not like God's. Going to run out of love. And like. You know what? I'm done. I've got enough love.

For you. It's that love. It keeps flowing. And it's in. It's. Unfathomable. The amount of love. That God has for us.

[34:57] And that we are called. To respond to that love. That we are called. To say yes. And then think further. I want to be loved.

Like that. And I'm to love. Like that. We are all called. To live. And love. Like Jesus Christ. To be transformed.

To become. Holy. To become more. Like him. And to know. That that. Overflowing grace. It extends. To all of us. And may we respond.

To that grace. And I want you to just. Remember those words. You are not alone. Because God is with us. Because God loves us.

That he sent his only son. Everything gets connected here. In this Christmas time. Let us remember.

[35:53] That overflowing. And that abundant love. That God has for us. Let's pray together. Father God. We thank you. For this time.

And this opportunity. For us to gather. And to go over this Advent theme. Of. Love. May we. Understand. The name. Emmanuel. God. With us. May we. Understand. That we are not alone. And that you love. Each and every one of us. And you call us. To salvation. You call us. To a greater life. You call us. To know you.

And to grow in you. You call us. To seek. The higher things. To be transformed. And not. To be. Divided. Or to. Go into the former life.

[36:51] You call. For all of us. To become more like you. And I just pray. Father. If there's any. Division.

Whether theological. Or political. Or family division. Or whatever it is. May we lay that aside. May we focus. And fixate on you. That is beyond. Any.

Political party. Any sort of. Family division. Any. Or even our own. Situations. And problems. You are beyond that. May you give. Each and every one of us.

Wisdom. And insight. To be able. To respond. To your salvation. And to live in love. Like you. We thank you. For sending your son.

The word. Becoming flesh. And dwelling. Among us. May we never forget. As we. Are so close. To celebrating Christmas.

[37:47] That it is your son. Who is the reason. For the season. And I pray. For everyone. Who is here. In person.

I pray. For everyone. Who is online. And I think. I'm just so grateful. For your love. May we all be more aware.

Of your presence. Of your love. Your grace. And your truth. We thank you so much. It is in the name. Of Jesus Christ.

The morning star. That we pray. And we all say together. Church. Amen. Amen. Thank you for listening. To today's message.

I really hope. That this sermon. Encouraged you. You know. When I was preparing. This message. I kept coming back. To these four. Simple words. That give us. Or should give us. Comfort.

[38:43] You. Are not alone. And that is the heart. Of Emmanuel. God. With us. It always saddens me. When I hear about people. Who are alone. On Christmas. Or people.

Who have family. Around them. But yet they still feel. This sense of emptiness. Inside. But here is the good news. God's love. Is reaching out to you. No matter what situation.

You're in. No matter how old you are. Or what you will go through. Something that is fascinating. That I've always found. To be just really. Awesome. Is the fact that the name.

Ontario. The name of this city. In which Ontario Community Church. Exists in. Ontario means. Grace overflowing. In Japanese. And that is such.

A fitting. And encouraging. Set of words. Think about that. God's love. Is for us. And it is in abundance. It is overflowing. God is not going to run out.

[39:36] Of his love. That love. Keeps flowing. And it's unfathomable. The amount of love. That God has for us. All of our resources. From today. The notes. The slides.

They're available for free. On our website. At Ontario Community Church. Dot org. And in the podcast description. Everything is in our sermon archive. So you can go back.

And review it. Or share it with a friend. We celebrate Christmas Eve. And Christmas Day this week. But until then. Remember this. You are not alone. God is with you.

He has saved you. And he calls for you. To place your faith. And trust in him. With daring faith. Just like Mary and Joseph did. Let us remember the word.

The name. Emmanuel. God with us. May we all be aware of his presence. His love. His grace. And his truth. May God bless you. And we will see you.

[40:30] As we celebrate the birth of our Savior. Thank you. God bless you.