

# Christmas 2014

## Introduction

Good morning.

This morning the title for my message is, "Don't be a Christmas tree."

## Scripture

Just before I read the scripture for this morning here is a brief background:

Mary and Joseph are pledged to be married.

Mary is found to be pregnant.

Joseph is not sure what to do about the situation and then an angel appears to him.

The angel tells him that Mary will give birth to a child conceived by the Holy Spirit.

That this child will be called Jesus and he will save people from their sins.

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

Matthew 1:23

*He shall be called Emmanuel, which means, God with us.*

## Reminder

I just need to remind you what my title of my message is this morning, "Don't be a Christmas tree."

## But I want to be a Christmas tree!

There is a place in many people that when they hear someone say don't they want to give it a try.

I know that some people want to give being a Christmas tree a try.

Put on jacket with Christmas lights and decorations.

After a short while of being excited about the lights and decorations talk about why it would not be good to be a Christmas tree.

- You can't go far then your lights go out.
- You would be packed in a box for most of the year.
- Being a Christmas tree is all about the bling. Nothing changes on the inside.

Take off the jacket.

### **Immanuel – God with us.**

At Christmas time the saviour, Jesus Christ, was born. God became a man and dwelt among us.

This we celebrate today.

Immanuel – God with us.

### **Camping Story**

We were away in the Drakensburg a week ago.

Traveling towards the Drakensburg we saw rain clouds up ahead.

We knew that our tent leaks.

I had bought spray on sealer but had not had a chance to spray it on yet.

When we got to camp it was dry.

When we set up our tent it was dry.

As we were settling in for the night it started to rain.

It rained most of the first night.

At about midnight I felt a drip on my face.

After I had repositioned myself a few times and was unable to escape the drip I decided to do something about it.

Our tent has two rooms.

Firstly I laid black bags that I had slit in half across the top of the room Lana and I were sleeping in.

Then I looked in on Caleb and Jayden.

Both were fast asleep but there were some large drops falling and so I decided to put a small tarpaulin over their side of the tent.

They never woke up.

They slept through and never even knew I had kept the rain out.

This is just like Immanuel – God with us.

God is always there, busy in our lives, even when we don't even know it.

We like to be together

We are created to be connected.

Life is better when we are with others.

We are the church, the body of Christ.

Connected.

Immanuel – we are connected to God.

“God with us” means “on the same side.”

It shows that God is present with you.

He has our backs.

He accompanies us.

He wants to help us.

Jesus' birth announcement provided another name for Him, to convey another idea to us.

Immanuel.

Not only is God the Creator and the Sustainer of life, He is also present.

He is deeply and intimately connected in relationship to you and I.

### **The results of God with us - Immanuel**

Immanuel – God with us means that we can have:

Hope

Peace

Joy

Love

Hope – That Jesus is with us.

That he is preparing a place for us.

That he will never leave us nor forsake us.

That he has promised us the hope of glory.

Peace – That Jesus is able to bring us quiet in our storm.

That he calls us to a place where we can find him, the Prince of Peace.

Joy – That Jesus fills us with Joy.

Rick Warren:

*Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation.*

Love – Jesus became Immanuel – God with us to save the people of this world from their sins.

He demonstrated what real love is by dying for the sins of the world.

Jesus Loves us.

## **Conclusion**

Don't be a Christmas tree.

Don't let Christmas only affect your outward appearance,  
let the birth of Jesus change your heart.

God is with us.

Immanuel.

He is with us to fill us with:

Hope

Peace

Joy

Love

Allow yourself to experience the Immanuel of Jesus.

The “with” of Jesus.

This Christmas season, spend time with Him and ask  
Him to visit you and be with you in a way that  
brings you ever closer to Him.

## **Romans 15:13**

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in  
believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
you may abound in hope.*