

Series: "GOD WITH US"

For Message:

Message Title: "God With Us Brings HOPE"

Introduction: Welcome to BMZ CHURCH! Glad you're here as we CONTINUE our FALL DISCIPLESHIP CAMPAIGN with our WORSHIP SERIES called: "**GOD WITH US**"!

As my NEPHEW JOSH and I share this WORSHIP SERIES, I hope it brings ... HOPE!

**"HOPE"** = Verb: *To want something to HAPPEN or BE TRUE*. 2 = *TO EXPECT with CONFIDENCE* ... NOUN: 1a = *EXPECTATION of FULFILLMENT or SUCCESS*. 1b = *SOMEONE or SOMETHING on which HOPES are CENTERED*. Merriam-Webster. Let's FOCUS on that LAST ONE. WHO or WHAT do we PLACE our HOPES IN? **In WHOM or WHAT can we TRUST for FULFILLMENT or SUCCESS?**

I believe we PLACE our HOPES in MANY **WHO'S** or **WHAT'S** (Too much Dr. Suess ... Grinch?). We OFTEN place our HOPE / TRUST in our **WHO'S** ... our FRIENDS, FINANCIAL ADVISORS, POLITICIANS, FAMILY MEMBERS, and SPOUSES and OFTEN they do NOT HIT that EXPECTATION of FULFILLMENT or SUCCESS.

Or we PLACE our HOPE in our **WHAT'S** ... our MONEY / STUFF (The Generosity Secret), ABILITIES, INTELLECTUAL ACUMEN, our GOVERNMENT, etc. ... and THEY do NOT HIT that EXPECTATION of FULFILLMENT or SUCCESS EITHER.

Yet, PEOPLE for CENTURIES have CONTINUED to PLACE their HOPE in the WHO'S and WHAT'S that SELDOM FULFILL US or Bring "SUCCESS". Today, as we BEGIN the ADVENT SEASON and MOVE Towards CHRISTMAS, we need to DECIDE AGAIN whether we will PLACE our HOPE in the WORDS of the WORLD or The WORD of THE LORD. WHO will we TRUST?

NOW, let me BACK UP just a LITTLE ... I do NOT WANT to be all DOOM and GLOOM. I BELIEVE we all EXPERIENCE SIGNS of HOPE or GLIMMERS of HOPE in our LIVES EVERY DAY. There are SO MANY THINGS that OFFER us some HOPE. I have HOPE and EXPECTATION when I WAKE UP in the MORNING (before my feet hit the floor) ... when the SUN is SHINING ... when we FEEL BETTER after BEING SICK ... IF we HEAR the WORDS, "**He's going to be OK.**" And you can think of others...

Listen, HOPE is what we CELEBRATE this FIRST SUNDAY of ADVENT...

### **ADVENT and IMMANUEL**

Advent is A SEASON of HOPE. THE word "ADVENT" means "ARRIVAL" or "COMING", meaning it is a SEASON of EXPECTATION, WAITING, ANTICIPATION, and LONGING ... a SEASON of HOPE. ADVENT is NOT an EXTENSION of Christmas – it is a SEASON that CONNECTS PAST / PRESENT / FUTURE. We have an OPPORTUNITY (PAST) to SHARE in the ANCIENT LONGING for the COMING MESSIAH, (PRESENT) to CELEBRATE His BIRTH and (FUTURE) be ALERT for JESUS to COME AGAIN.

During ADVENT we CELEBRATE the HOPE FULFILLED in the MESSIAH COMING FOR the FIRST TIME, 2000 YEARS ago. And we HAVE HOPE and EAGERLY ANTICIPATE His COMING AGAIN as He RETURNS for HIS PEOPLE. IT'S BOTH!

ADVENT is NOT about GOD COMING to FIX EVERYTHING in our LIVES with a FINGER SNAP. ADVENT is a CELEBRATION that GOD COMES and HE is WITH US

ALWAYS, no matter WHAT is HAPPENING ... in the DARKNESS, PAIN, SUFFERING, and CHAOS ... He COMES and is WITH US.

The PEOPLE of ISRAEL had WAITED a LONG TIME, GENERATIONS, for a PROMISED MESSIAH (Savior). THIS HOPE was PASSED DOWN for CENTURIES ... and the people CONTINUED to CLING to this HOPE. The PROPHET ISAIAH lived 700 YEARS before JESUS. He gave the ISRAELITES HOPE with these WORDS ... **ISAIAH 7:14 (on screen only) = All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').**

The PEOPLE of ISRAEL CLUNG to this HOPE for CENTURIES... But MAYBE you're thinking, WHAT does THAT HOPE MEAN for ME? I need HOPE TODAY. That's GREAT for THEM, but THEY were NOT FIGHTING CANCER or LOSE their JOBS without WARNING or get STUCK with BILLS and DEBTS STACKING UP ... with the FINANCIAL PRESSURE of CHRISTMAS LOOMING!

TODAY, HOW about some HOPE? NO matter what PROBLEMS, PAIN, DARKNESS, or STRUGGLES you are DEALING with today, YOU can PLACE your HOPE in JESUS ... IMMANUEL ... GOD WITH US.

### **RECONNECTING WITH GOD'S HOPE DURING ADVENT:**

If you NEED some HOPE today, I believe there are WAYS we can RECONNECT with GOD'S HOPE this ADVENT Season ... no matter WHAT you are FACING. Here's HOW ...

#### **#1 = Hope Based on God's WORD**

We can HAVE HOPE BASED on GOD'S WORD. It's UP to US to TRUST IT, but THERE is HOPE in HIS WORD. There are MANY passages of SCRIPTURE that REMIND us of The HOPE we have in GOD. So, NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT your circumstances, NO MATTER HOW BLEAK it might APPEAR, GOD REMINDS us that NOTHING can SEPARATE US from HIM ... He is WITH us ALWAYS. From the O.T. Psalmist ... **PSALM 139:7-12 = I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! 8If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. 9If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, 10even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. 11I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—12but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.**

Can you FEEL the HOPE in THESE WORDS? You are NOT ALONE. You are NEVER ALONE. IMMANUEL ... GOD WITH US! We can NEVER ESCAPE the PRESENCE of GOD! He is NEVER CONFUSED about WHAT you GO THROUGH in LIFE. According to HIS WORD ... FILLED with PROMISES and HISTORY and EXPERIENCES to REMIND us of the SUPERNATURAL HOPE of The ALMIGHTY ... Our GOD LOVES us UNCONDITIONALLY and ALWAYS. You can NEVER ESCAPE IT! Awesome!

Let's go BACK to GOD'S WORD ... In the Beginning was the Word and all things were CREATED through The WORD ... and The WORD became FLESH. HOPE! #2 =

#### **#2 = Hope Based on God's CHARACTER**

HOPE is BASED on WHO GOD IS and WHO He PROMISES to BE ALWAYS, without a SHIFTING SHADOW. There is a SHORT piece of HISTORY about JESUS in MARK 5 ... a STORY of HOPE and IN WHOM we can PLACE our HOPE. It's about a WOMAN with BOLD HOPE in JESUS. For whatever REASON SHE has been BLEEDING for 12 YEARS. No one was able to HELP HER, and her CONDITION WORSENEDED.

Think about it ... THIS CONDITION would AFFECT EVERYTHING about HER, her EVERYDAY LIFE, her RELATIONSHIPS, JOB, etc. She was LIKELY CONSIDERED UNCLEAN and treated as an OUTCAST. No one UNDERSTOOD, including HER.

BUT she had HEARD about JESUS and the MIRACLE HEALINGS HE had DONE ... and SHE BELIEVED. She had HOPE in HIM. The HOPE of HEALING and NEW LIFE DROVE her to TAKE ACTION. JESUS in a CROWD of people ... HER FAITH told her IF she could JUST TOUCH His ROBE, that would be ENOUGH for HEALING. She made her WAY THROUGH the CROWD and TOUCHED the HEM. She was IMMEDIATELY HEALED. Was it DIFFICULT for HER? Probably. Working her WAY through a CROWD as a DISGUISED UNCLEAN person... Was she AFRAID? LIKELY ... especially when JESUS began LOOKING for HER.

WHO TOUCHED ME? She probably wanted to just SNEAK AWAY. Had she OVERSTEPPED her BOUNDS? Was she, an UNCLEAN PERSON, in TROUBLE with another RELIGIOUS LEADER? BUT she CONFESSED. She had been HEALED, which was a MIRACLE, but was she ABOUT to be PUNISHED?

Listen to the RESPONSE of JESUS ... **MARK 5:34 = And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."**

JESUS connected with this WOMAN who had been WITHOUT HOPE for 12 YEARS, as IMMANUEL, GOD with US! This is OUR GOD and HIS CHARACTER. He is STILL WITH US. JESUS PROMISED ... Matthew 28 = I WILL BE WITH you ALWAYS, even to the END of the AGE (that means ALWAYS!). By FAITH ... TRUSTING you can PLACE your HOPE in ME, GO in PEACE. Your SUFFERING is OVER!

That PROMISE is for US as WELL. #3 =

### **#3 = Hope Based on God's FAITHFULNESS**

We can FIND HOPE when we FOCUS on God's FAITHFULNESS. Think about how GOD has ALREADY WORKED in your LIFE. There are TIMES, if we pay attention, that we KNOW GOD is WITH US and WORKING on our BEHALF. Maybe it was RECENTLY and MAYBE it was a LONG TIME ago. But what about NOW? HOW does it HELP?

Well, MAYBE you remember from our PREVIOUS SERIES that GRATITUDE MATTERS to GOD. THANKFULNESS brings HOPE. PAYING attention to our BLESSINGS and THANKING the ONE they COME FROM (James 1:17 ... all good things...) ... that ACKNOWLEDGEMENT brings HOPE.

Listen to the PROPHET JEREMIAH in the Book of Lamentations ... **LAMENTATIONS 3:21-24 = Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: 22The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. 23Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. 24I say to myself, "The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!"** JEREMIAH WROTE this when things were NOT GOING WELL for HIM, NOR the HEBREW PEOPLE (Israelites). **And WHAT did he SAY? I DARE to HOPE when I WHAT? REMEMBER!**

When THINGS are NOT GOING WELL for YOU, FOCUS again on the GRATITUDE you HAVE for the BLESSINGS GOD has ALREADY GIVEN to YOU. REMEMBER. No GRUMBLING. Just GRATITUDE.

When we REMEMBER the FAITHFULNESS of GOD, we DARE to HOPE. We KNOW His LOVE NEVER ENDS and His MERCIES NEVER CEASE! We can TRUST HIM ANEW EVERY MORNING ... Before our FEET HIT the FLOOR! These VERSES might be GOOD ONES to KEEP BY your BED ... MORNING and NIGHT. **"I say to myself..."**

Okay, we can RECONNECT with the HOPE GOD GIVES by KNOWING God's WORD, LEARNING of His CHARACTER, and REMEMBERING His FAITHFULNESS. #4 = **#4 = Hope Based on Jesus' WORK**

The PEOPLE of ISRAEL HUNG ONTO HOPE from the WORDS of the PROPHETS, ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, and OTHERS ... even as they were CONQUERED by OTHER COUNTRIES ... for CENTURIES. Then, IN JESUS, Immanuel, God WITH US, the WORLD CHANGED. And NOW the PEOPLE of the WORLD can CHANGE as WELL.

ADVENT looks BACK at the CELEBRATION of the HOPE FULFILLED in JESUS' coming as a HUMAN ... as WELL AS the PROMISE of HIS COMING KINGDOM when He RETURNS for His FOLLOWERS. As ISAIAH wrote of the HOPE of The MESSIAH'S COMING, PAUL wrote about the OUTCOME to the Christians in ROME ...

*ROMANS 5:1-5 = Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. 2Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. 3We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.* This is ETERNAL, CONFIDENT HOPE of SALVATION, for EACH of US!

PURPOSE of the HOLY SPIRIT? To FILL our HEARTS with HIS LOVE. See, PART of our HOPE comes from the HOPE WE GET to OFFER OTHERS... and OTHERS have HOPE in THIS LIFE and the NEXT BECAUSE of the HOPE they SEE in US.

WILL WE? Will we PLACE our HOPE in JESUS for THIS LIFE and the NEXT? WILL we FOLLOW His ORDERS and OFFER HOPE / GOOD NEWS to a WORLD who NEEDS SOME? Thinking about INVESTMENTS in ETERNITY ... LIVING Righteously (God's way), we have OPPORTUNITY to STORE up some HEAVENLY TREASURES. We've DONE it in the PAST. Let's DO it AGAIN ... **Show: INTERHOPE VIDEO ... "JOY!"**

All Given between NOW and End of Year will be MATCH-GIFTED.

Let's PRAY Together!

Next Steps: *Memorize Romans 5:1  
Read Romans 5 and/or Mark 5 or more.  
I will strive to live with and offer hope.*

## Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!  
In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information.

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

### **IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today**

• We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.  
It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is HIT "**SEND**" your COMPLETED Connection Card

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- I just want to remind you ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23 = *The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. 23Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.*
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the first place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- NEXT WEEK: **ADVENT SERIES: "God With Us" When GOD is WITH US, we START to FEEL the LOVE ... with PASTOR JOSH!**

*"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."*

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