

Series: “The CAROLS of CHRISTMAS”

For Message: Luke 2:10-11; Matthew 1:21-23; Luke 1:28; Hebrews 13:8; Genesis 39:21;  
Romans 8:38-39; Matthew 28:20

Message Title: “O Come, Emmanuel”

Introduction: Good Morning BMZ! I’m so glad you are with us today as we KICK OFF our WORSHIP SERIES called “CHRISTMAS CAROLS”! Over the next several weeks, between now and Christmas, we are going to be STUDYING what Christmas MEANS for us through the LYRICS of “THE CAROLS of CHRISTMAS”!

Well, I thought as we KICK OFF this SERIES; we’d get RIGHT INTO the Christmas SPIRIT with a LITTLE GAME we CALL: “*Name That Christmas Tune*” READY?!?

1. Frosty the Snowman
2. I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus
3. Rocking Around the Christmas Tree
4. Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer
5. The Christmas Song
6. Grandma Got Run Over ...

Alright, THAT’S ENOUGH of THAT...

Those are songs MOST people think about when they think of Christmas. Songs about SANTA and REINDEER and Christmas Trees. For MANY these SONGS bring back GREAT MEMORIES from CHILDHOOD.

BUT, these are NOT the ORIGINAL songs of Christmas. The ORIGINAL MUSIC of Christmas are songs we call: “CHRISTMAS CAROLS”, and they are FAR MORE than just NOSTALGIA / TRADITION. The ORIGINAL Christmas CAROLS were written to TELL US the GOOD NEWS of God’s LOVE for us, REVEALED through JESUS, BORN in a MANGER 2,000, YEARS ago. That is the GOOD NEWS of CHRISTMAS! It’s the SAME Good News the ANGELS announced to the SHEPHERDS on the FIRST Christmas Day.

Okay ... Grab Your Message Notes...

If you have your Bible with you, turn to **LUKE 2**. If you don't have your Bible with you, no worries. We will put up all the Scriptures on the screen and it's also printed in your program. ... *If you haven't already, I invite you to take out your 3-HOLE PUNCHED MESSAGE NOTES and CONNECTION card. You will see that there are blanks to fill in ... Please take the time to do so. Grab a pen and write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, drop off your CONNECTION CARD and take your MESSAGE NOTES home. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. For those of you joining on-line, you can go to our website, [www.bmzchurch.org/](http://www.bmzchurch.org/) MESSAGES ... find the NOTES and the CONNECTION CARD and follow along ... LET’S PRAY (turn off marked lights during prayer)!*

Speaking of the WORDS of the ANGELS on that FIRST CHRISTMAS ... Let’s me get us STARTED and YOU JUMP IN on VERSE 10! Here we go ... Luke 2:8-11 = <sup>8</sup> *That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, <sup>10</sup> but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. <sup>11</sup> The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!*

That's what Christmas CAROLS are ABOUT! They are about the CELEBRATION of the BIRTH of Jesus! In fact, that is what "CAROL" MEANS ... A "CAROL" is a SONG of PRAISE, a SONG of JOY! While MANY SONGS might bring back great MEMORIES of our childhood, CHRISTMAS CAROLS were written to HELP us UNDERSTAND some important THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS about WHO Jesus IS and WHY Jesus CAME!

Over the NEXT FEW WEEKS as we get to CHRISTMAS, we are going to look at the HISTORICAL CHRISTMAS NARRATIVE through the LENS of some of our FAVORITE Christmas CAROLS! We're starting with the "O" Songs ... "O COME EMMANUEL" today. "O HOLY NIGHT" is next week, followed by "O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL". We'll finish the series with "AWAY IN A MANGER" and, on Christmas Eve, "SILENT NIGHT".

Today, we're STARTING with "O COME, O COME EMMANUEL", and it's SO important BECAUSE it helps us UNDERSTAND WHY Jesus CAME and WHAT that MEANS for us in 2018! Now, this song is over 1,000 YEARS OLD. Meaning it is one of the OLDEST known Christmas Carols. It was ORIGINALLY sung in MONASTERIES during ADVENT SEASON. If you listen closely, you'll HEAR some of the MONASTIC CHANT qualities... MOST INTERESTING THOUGH = It was written ABOUT a TIME BEFORE JESUS CAME... It's about a TIME when the people of ISRAEL were PERSECUTED and under GREAT STRESS and they were LOOKING FORWARD to the coming of the MESSIAH!

Listen to the Lyrics... (VIDEO with LYRICS?)

### **O' COME, O' COME, EMMANUEL**

*O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Latin, c. 12th century; Ancient Antiphons  
Translated by John Mason Neale (1851)

This CAROL is SIGNIFICANT because of ONE WORD ... "EMMANUEL". Well, what does that word MEAN? The ANSWER is in ... Matthew 1:21-23 = <sup>21</sup> *And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.* <sup>22</sup> *All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:* <sup>23</sup> *"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"* <sup>2</sup> Would you please UNDERLINE those LAST 4 WORDS? "God is with us". We'll get back to that in a moment...

BUT, I don't want us to MISS what Matthew SAYS here. The ANGEL PROCLAIMS JESUS' PURPOSE for coming into the WORLD as a BABY ... to SAVE US from our SINS! Then, he goes BACK to the PROPHECY of ISAIAH (Isaiah 7:14), written over 700 years BEFORE Jesus was BORN! Matthew POINTS OUT the PROPHECY coming TRUE! Those ancient words are FULFILLED through Jesus! BTW – that is one of OVER 300 Old Testament PROPHECIES that are FULFILLED through JESUS!

You know what? That's ANOTHER REASON you can TRUST GOD and God's WORD ... Because God KEEPS His WORD! Jesus FULFILLS GOD'S PROMISES ... Trustworthy!

In this SCRIPTURE, we're reminded GOD LOVES US so much, HE had a PLAN! His PLAN was to SAVE US; Before we were BORN! He had the PLAN before JESUS was BORN!

Then MATTHEW writes about this name ... “EMMANUEL”. What does that mean? We just UNDERLINED IT ... **EMMANUEL: “GOD IS WITH US”** Would you please WRITE that in your NOTES? “God is with us”.

How many of you have ever THOUGHT or PRAYED, “*God be WITH US / ME*”? “*God, be with me as I go on this JOB INTERVIEW*” or “*God, be with my CHILDREN as they GROW up*” or “*God, be with me as I go through this SURGERY*” or “*God, be with my AGING PARENTS*” or “*God, be with me as I take my FINAL EXAMS*” ...

So, THINK about the POWER of what we’re talking about today, that GOD is WITH US. Maybe you’re thinking, “*Pastor Stan, I’m NOT SURE I BELIEVE that.*” Maybe you’ve never decided to TRUST JESUS ... to TRUST He came and LIVED and DIED so your SINS could be FORGIVEN, and you could have a RELATIONSHIP with ALMIGHTY GOD and have a BETTER LIFE HERE and WAY BETTER LIFE AFTER THIS ONE! I hope and pray that changes...

Maybe you are already a FOLLOWER of JESUS and you’re going through some stuff and WONDERING WHERE God is. You don’t FEEL like GOD is WITH YOU right now. Well, TODAY, I HOPE you know WITHOUT a DOUBT GOD is WITH YOU. For some of you, you may be FACING a DIFFICULT season in life. Maybe this CHRISTMAS there will be ONE LESS at the TABLE because you LOST someone DEAR to you.

Today, I want YOU to KNOW GOD is WITH YOU. I want to TALK today about the POWER of GOD being WITH US. I would LOVE for us ALL to KNOW when we leave here that GOD is WITH YOU beyond a SHADOW of a DOUBT. Why? Because JESUS came at CHRISTMAS... **BECAUSE JESUS CAME INTO OUR WORLD AT CHRISTMAS...**

In your notes ... God IS with me ...

### **God IS with Me**

Right NOW. Right HERE, God is WITH YOU! This is the PRESENT TENSE reality of EMMANUEL. God is WITH ME!

Around 2,000 years ago, and ANGEL named “Gabriel” appeared to a young peasant girl in Galilee, Mary, the soon to be mother of Jesus. Gabriel APPEARED to tell MARY GOD was WITH HER right THEN and THERE ... Luke 1:28 = <sup>28</sup> *Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”* <sup>3</sup> God was about to ASK MARY to DO something very IMPORTANT and very DIFFICULT. God knew it would be DIFFICULT, so He assured MARY He would be WITH HER. Mary needed to KNOW THAT! **SO DO WE!**

God wants YOU to KNOW He is WITH you too. Would you TURN to your neighbor and tell them, “**GOD IS WITH YOU!**” See, it helps to ASSURED of that, doesn’t it?! BECAUSE my guess is: each of us is HURTING today in ONE way or ANOTHER. Know this ... JESUS is WITH you and FEELS your PAIN. Jesus KNOWS what it’s like to feel PAIN as a HUMAN, so He KNOWS to come along side of us. When you feel LONELY or SICK or FEEL as if you’ve LOST EVERYTHING ... Jesus is RIGHT THERE.

God is like that PERFECT PARENT that is BY your SIDE when you are HURTING. Whatever you are GOING THROUGH, you do NOT have to go it ALONE. If you’re feeling LONELY this Christmas Season ... God is with you and you are NOT ALONE. If you’re experiencing LOSS this season, GOD is WITH YOU! He KNOWS about LOSS and can GIVE COMFORT. Maybe your MARRIAGE is STRUGGLING right now, and you DON’T KNOW what to DO. God is WITH you and will NEVER LEAVE you.

If you are facing a HEALTH CRISIS right now, GOD is WITH you. No matter what it is, Jesus is WITH YOU! He is WITH YOU AS: your FRIEND, your STRENGTH, your COMFORTER, your HEALER, your GUIDE and your HOPE. Listen ... *“You can TRUST God’s HEART, even when you CANNOT see His HAND.”* (repeat)

See, the PEACE of GOD is NOT the ABSENCE of ADVERSITY. True PEACE is being fully AWARE of God’s PRESENCE in the MIDST of ADVERSITY.

Let me finish this section with this: GOD is WITH you. And, we can KNOW THAT for SURE. Here’s WHY: God’s LOVE is PERFECT and CONSISTENT. It is UNFAILING. God’s LOVE is NOT like OUR LOVE (Thank God!). WE LOVE IMPERFECTLY and CONDITIONALLY. God LOVES us PERFECTLY and UNCONDITIONALLY. Don’t ASSUME God’s LOVE is like YOUR LOVE! “EMMANUEL” does NOT mean *“GOD is WITH US ... SOMETIMES”*. It means *“God is WITH US ALL the TIME!”*

Listen to the author of Hebrews ... Hebrews 13:8 = <sup>8</sup> *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*<sup>4</sup> WE can TRUST that Jesus is WITH US RIGHT NOW and ALWAYS...

### **God WAS with Me**

This is the PAST TENSE REALITY of EMMANUEL. Sometimes it’s EASIER for us to SEE GOD in the REARVIEW Mirror ... IF we pay attention! Sometimes we can look BACK and see GOD’S active HAND in our lives EASIER than we can see GOD in our PRESENT SITUATION. My thought is: JOSEPH was the perfect EXAMPLE of this (OT Joseph; NOT Mary’s Husband to be).

Remember JOSEPH? He was the young man with BIG DREAMS and his older brothers HATED him? They thought about KILLING him but decided to throw him in a PIT and then SELL him into SLAVERY and he spent YEARS in and out of SLAVERY and in and out of PRISONS. He was FALSELY ACCUSED and FORGOTTEN in PRISON and he had to be THINKING, “Where ARE YOU GOD?”

In GENESIS, we find out WHERE GOD WAS ... Genesis 39:21 = <sup>21</sup> *But the LORD was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden.*<sup>5</sup> Again, I don’t want to even HAVE a PRISON WARDEN, FAVORITE or NOT! But, what we FIND is the HISTORY of JOSEPH is closely TIED to the HISTORY of the HEBREW people! If the LORD had NOT been with JOSEPH, then JOSEPH would NOT have been in POSITION to become 2<sup>nd</sup> in COMMAND in EGYPT, save COUNTLESS LIVES from FAMINE and eventually SAVE his FAMILY and the HEBREW PEOPLE from STARVING! I’m sure JOSEPH struggled to SEE it at the TIME, but LATER, when he LOOKED BACK on his LIFE, he could SEE that GOD WAS WITH HIM!

There are other EXAMPLES throughout the Bible ... Peter and Paul and their time in PRISON. NOAH getting MOCKED for building a huge BOAT. DAVID making POOR DECISIONS and mistakes. JESUS HIMSELF going through TORTURE and CRUCIFIXION.

God was with THEM and God is WITH YOU! Even in TIMES when you’ve turned your BACK on God ... still WITH YOU. THINK BACK ... Think back to a TIME when you FACED DIFFICULTY. Maybe you saw your MARRIAGE falling apart and weren’t sure if it would SURVIVE ... but, it did! Maybe you were going through a serious HEALTH CRISIS and you are still HERE TODAY. Maybe you were caught up in an ADDICTION and you’ve now broken FREE. Remember how God has been WITH YOU, even though you may NOT have DESERVED IT... Tell your neighbor: “GOD WAS ALWAYS WITH YOU”!

<sup>4</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Heb 13:8). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ge 39:21). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.



Next time you FACE a DIFFICULT situation, remember GOD WAS WITH YOU... #3  
**God WILL ALWAYS BE with Me**

EMMANUEL means GOD will ALWAYS be with me. This is the FUTURE TENSE of EMMANUEL. JESUS / EMMANUEL will ALWAYS be WITH ME! God didn't set the world in MOTION and say, "Good Luck!" NO! God says he will ALWAYS be WITH YOU! "I've always BEEN with you. I am WITH YOU right NOW. And, I will ALWAYS be WITH YOU!" This is the HOPE we have ... the FAITH we have in JESUS! We TRUST GOD is WITH US and ALWAYS WILL BE!

Think about MARY for a moment. If Mary could have SEEN into the FUTURE as Gabe spoke to her and TOLD her about the NEW BABY ... if she could have SEEN all the WAYS God was going to be WITH HER, she probably would have said, "God will be with me when I tell JOSEPH I'm PREGNANT. God will be with me when I give BIRTH in a STABLE in a far-away town. God will be with me when I watch my son's MINISTRY and MIRACLES. God will be with me when I see him UNFAIRLY TRIED and BEATEN and CRUCIFIED on a CROSS. God will be with me in my MOURNING his DEATH. God will be with me on the THIRD DAY when the STONE is rolled away and JESUS is raised to new BODILY LIFE and overcomes the power of SIN and DEATH." IF ... she could have seen the FUTURE...

Mary did NOT KNOW the FUTURE, but she TRUSTED God anyway. She trusted God would be with her ... ALWAYS. Same is TRUE for ME and YOU! If we could somehow SEE the FUTURE and HOW God will be WITH US ... maybe we could go through the LIFE TRANSITIONS and the PAIN and the WAITING and the GAINS and LOSSES TRUSTING GOD would be WITH US.

You know what? I know a group of KIDS who RECOGNIZE God WAS with them in some TOUGH times. They TRUST God is with them NOW and are TRUSTING GOD with their FUTURE. And, they are THANKFUL to YOU! Every one of these KIDS was RESCUED from living on their OWN ... on the STREETS ... ABANDONED. They have NEW HOPE NOW (more set-up?) ... WATCH! (InterHope Video here)

Paul writes of his TRUST in EMMANUEL ... Romans 8:38-39 = <sup>38</sup> *And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.* <sup>39</sup> *No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* <sup>6</sup>

NOTHING will SEPARATE us from EMMANUEL / JESUS! Jesus came into our world at Christmas, NOT just to be BORN and LIVE ... BUT, to DIE on a CROSS so our SINS can be FORGIVEN. He was BORN to be RESURRECTED and SHOW us the HOPE we have for ETERNITY! Listen, NOTHING will EVER STOP GOD from LOVING YOU ... not DEATH, nor LIFE, nor DIFFICULTY, BROKENNESS, SICKNESS, nor ANYTHING. NOTHING can change the TRUTH that GOD WAS, IS and will ALWAYS be WITH YOU!

Jesus words ... Matthew 28:20 = <sup>20</sup> *Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.* <sup>7</sup>

Let's PRAY!

Next Steps: *I will memorize Matthew 28:20*  
*I will read Luke 1-2 to help prepare me for Christmas*  
*Trust that God is always with me*  
*I will Attend "The CAROLS of CHRISTMAS" Worship Series as much as possible*

<sup>6</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 8:38-39). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>7</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Mt 28:20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.