

RECAP

Brian gave 3 ways last week to grow in joy - Tell the story, Think about the story often and Rejoice.

What invitations from God did you receive this week to grow in joy?

Does anyone have anything they'd like to rejoice about with the group?

IDEA 1

Throughout the gospel of Matthew, Matthew records prophecies from the Old Testament to affirm and confirm that Jesus is the Messiah, that God has become man.

Here are a few examples

- Micah 5:2 - The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem
- Psalm 72:10 - Distant kings would come and bring Him tribute
- Isaiah 7:14 - A virgin will give birth to Immanuel

As you reflect on these and other prophetic words shared from Scripture about the coming of Jesus as the Messiah, what stands out to you?

What about these prophetic words brings you a sense of joy and wonder? What strengthens and encourages your faith?

Had these prophetic words not been given about Jesus' coming, how would that impact the way you view and experience the Advent season?

IDEA 2

One name for Jesus that we remember and celebrate in this season is Immanuel, which means God with us.

There is so much richness and beauty that this name reveals about Jesus towards us.

- He Pursued us
- He Gets Us
- He is WITH us

Where do you notice Jesus pursuing you in this Advent season?

As you think about your life right now, how can Jesus relate to your experience? How does he “get” you?

How are you experiencing Jesus’ With-ness at the moment? Where does the presence of Immanuel feel missing?

EXPERIENCE GOD TOGETHER

One of the ways that we experience Jesus’ with-ness is through each other. We embody the very presence of Immanuel as we see and soothe, as we provide safety and security to one another.

Take time to share and encourage one another ways that you have experienced Jesus’ with-ness through your Life Group.

PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK

Rob asked the question - In your daily experience, do you know Jesus as Immanuel , God with you?

Pay attention and notice how God is with you this week. (Remember we can experience God's presence in many ways - people, places, prophetic words and many more)

You may find it helpful to use Immanuel as a breath prayer (breathe deeply in and then as you exhale say "Immanuel"). This is a simple way to help focus and direct your attention on God's presence with you throughout the day.

If you connect with someone from your Life Group this week, a helpful question to ask them might be - where are you noticing "God with you" this week?