

Cindy Jacobs: Embrace This Key Christmas Declaration

Emmanuel, Emmanuel/ His name is called Emmanuel

God with us, revealed in us/ His name is called Emmanuel

Bob McGee's lovely praise song often resonates in my spirit, particularly at Christmas time. The words "God with us, revealed in us" especially capture my heart and remind me of Paul's words in Acts 17:28a: "For in Him we live and move and have our being."

When Paul's declaration becomes embedded in our spirits, the concept of *Emmanuel, God with us* shifts from a passive knowledge of truth to an active experience of deliverance, warfare, victory and the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. While we delight in and invite the manifest presence of God into our worship, we often fail to remember that His presence indwells us and empowers us every single day.

Perfectly Positioned

Considering the truth that we live, move and have our being in Him, let's reflect on some of the comforting words in Psalm 91.

When we are in God's will, the revelation that our whole being exists in Him awakens us to the understanding that we are perfectly positioned in "the secret place of the Most High" (v. 1b, NKJV). Emmanuel means that He has placed us "under His wings" (). We do not need to run to His protection; we are already there.

Because of our position in Him, we can rest; we can cease from struggling. We can say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust. Surely He shall deliver

you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence" (vv. 2-3).

The power and authority of Emmanuel are released when we make the decision to abide in Him. To *abide* is more than just "to live"; it is "to accept" or "to act in accordance with." When we abide in the Lord, we accept Him and act in accordance with Him. We live our lives in harmony with Him because we know that the path He has chosen for us is the best path. Cherish the admonition that, "Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling" ().

Early in my Christian walk, I learned, with some difficulty, to accept and to act in accordance with God's will for my life. I was comfortably settled into a teaching position at a large high school in the Pacific Northwest that had much to offer both academically and professionally. Then my husband decided he wanted to move back to Wyoming.

I didn't want to go. The transition meant a significant loss of salary and teaching in a tiny rural school with fewer than 100 students from kindergarten to 12th grade.

I wrestled with the Lord. Finally, exhausted from the struggle, I gave in. I stood alone in my living room, with my back against the wall and yelled at God, "OK, I'll go. But You had better make things as good for us there as they are here."

But He made things even better on so many levels—community, provision, cost of living, church family. My teaching job ended up being a delight, and I went on to teach there for nearly 30 years. Unexpected doors opened like the opportunities to work as an adjunct college instructor and to travel around much of the world.

God's plan for my life has been greater than I could think or imagine; all He asked me to do was abide in Him.

The hope of Emmanuel is revealed in God's promises to us:

Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation (vv. 14-16).

Hope Available Now

I love the old hymn frequently heard this time of year:

*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.

The Latin text was first documented in Germany in 1710; however, the tune most familiar in the English-speaking world originated in 15th-century France. Most versions end with the yearning, hopeful cry: "Rejoice. Emmanuel *shall come* to thee, O Israel."

Sadly, when we do not know the power, authority and protection afforded us in Emmanuel, we cry out for that time in eternity when the trials of this life will be over. That is a form of godliness that denies the power of Him in whom we live and move and have our being (see 2 Tim. 3:5).

Many modern psalmists who know His presence and His power have changed the last chorus into a proclamation: "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel *has come* to thee, O, Israel."

As I rest in Emmanuel, fear and doubt flee. As I rest in Emmanuel, faith and truth become steadfast. Emmanuel is manifested when we, like Paul, declare: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in

me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20, MEV).

Emmanuel—God is with us. Oh, that He may be revealed in us.

Reflection

1. Are there areas in your life where you find yourself striving and struggling rather than resting in the reality of who God is in your life? Take some time to specifically name those things and ask the Holy Spirit to help you receive the rest He has for you.

2. Consider dropping a note of encouragement to someone today, reminding them of the reality of Emmanuel in their lives. No matter how long we have known God, we can always use the reminder that He truly is with us! {eo}

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