MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · DEVOTIONAL #5

Emmanuel

The night God moved into our neighborhood — and decided to stay.

Here is a story many of our families have lived. Rose is a nurse in Miami. On Christmas Eve she works the night shift.

Back home in Les Cayes, her mother is getting ready for the night service. Rose remembers the *fanal* her brothers used to build every December — paper lanterns shaped like little houses and churches, with a candle glowing inside. She remembers the singing in the dark.

This year there is an empty chair at her mother's table. Her father died in the spring. And Rose is fifteen hundred miles away, counting pills under bright hospital lights.

Around eleven o'clock, the call light in Room 12 comes on. It is Mr. Antoine, an old man who has had no visitors all week. She hurries in. "Are you in pain?"

"No," he says, a little embarrassed. "Are you very busy? I just… did not want to be alone tonight."

Rose pulls up a chair. She sits with him for ten minutes. They do not say much. When she stands to go, he squeezes her hand: "Thank you for staying."

Driving home at dawn, Rose understood Christmas better than she ever had. Because the whole story of Christmas is about Someone who did not just send a card from far away. **He came. And He stayed.**

A sign with a name

Seven hundred years before Bethlehem, God gave His people a sign through the prophet Isaiah:

> *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*
>
> **Isaiah 7:14 (KJV)**

Centuries passed. Then an angel spoke to a worried carpenter named Joseph. Mary was expecting a child, and the child was from the Holy Spirit. The angel told Joseph what to name Him, and Matthew explains what it all means:

> *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins... Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*
>
> **Matthew 1:21, 23 (KJV)**

Two names. Two promises. **Jesus** — He saves. **Emmanuel** — God with us. Not God above us, watching from a distance. Not God against us, waiting to punish. *God with us*.

A Child with names bigger than the world

Isaiah saw even more. He saw a baby — and then he saw who that baby really was:

> *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."*
>
> **Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)**

Read it slowly. A *child* is born — He is truly human. A *Son* is given — He is God's gift from heaven. The tiny hands that held Mary's finger were the hands that made the stars (John 1:3). That is the wonder of Christmas: the mighty God became small enough to be held.

The smallest town, the oldest promise

God even told His people *where* it would happen:

> *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth*

> *have been from of old, from everlasting."*
>
> **Micah 5:2 (KJV)**

Notice two things. First, Bethlehem was *little*. God loves to do great things in small places — a village, a manger, a heart that feels forgotten. Second, the Ruler born there had goings forth *"from everlasting."* His life did not begin in Bethlehem. Only His human life did. The eternal Son of God stepped into time.

No room

Luke tells us the empire sent out a decree. Everyone had to travel and register (Luke 2:1-5). So Joseph and Mary walked to Bethlehem, far from home, because a government said so.

Many of us know that story from the inside: papers, offices, long lines, and a new city where nobody knows your name.

> *"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."*
>
> **Luke 2:7 (KJV)**

No room. The King of heaven was born among the animals, and His first bed was a feeding trough. If you have ever felt that there was no room for you — no room in the family, in the country, in the church — remember this: **Jesus knows that feeling from the very first night of His life.**

Good news for the night shift

Who heard the news first? Not the king. Not the priests. Workers.

> *"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."*
>
> **Luke 2:8 (KJV)**

Men on the night shift, tired and cold, smelling of sheep. And heaven lit up over their heads:

> *"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."*
>
> **Luke 2:10-11 (KJV)**

Unto you. Not to important people only. To shepherds. To nurses. To drivers, cleaners, students, grandmothers. To *all people*. Then the whole sky began to sing:

> *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*
>
> **Luke 2:14 (KJV)**

God moved into the neighborhood

John tells the Christmas story without a manger or a star. He tells it in one sentence:

> *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*
>
> **John 1:14 (KJV)**

The word John used for *"dwelt"* means "pitched His tent." God set up His tent right next to ours. He learned to walk. He worked with His hands. He got hungry, tired and sad. He knows our street.

And He came at exactly the right moment:

> *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*
>
> **Galatians 4:4-5 (KJV)**

Why did He come? To bring us back. To *adopt* us. Christmas means you are not a stranger to God. Through Jesus you can belong to His family.

All the way down

The manger was not the end of His coming down. It was only the first step:

> *"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*
>
> **Philippians 2:7-8 (KJV)**

From the manger to the cross, Jesus kept coming closer — all the way down to where we are, all the way down to death itself. The wood of the manger points to the wood of the cross. He was born so that He could die for us. And He rose again so that we could live with Him forever.

For the empty chair

Maybe this season is hard for you. Maybe you are far from home. Maybe there is an empty chair at your table, like Rose's. Christmas does not erase that pain. But it tells you something true about it: **God did not stay far away from your sorrow.** He came into it.

And Emmanuel did not leave when He went back to heaven. Before He ascended, Jesus promised:

> *"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*
>
> **Matthew 28:20 (KJV)**

The story is not finished, either. The Child of Bethlehem is the Saviour who said, *"I will come again, and receive you unto myself"* (John 14:3). The first time He came as a baby in a manger. The next time He will come in glory — and on that day, every empty chair that belongs to God's people will be filled again (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

A gentle word about the date: the Bible does not tell us the day Jesus was born. December 25 is a date the church chose much later, not a date given in Scripture. What matters is not the calendar, but the Person: God really came, and He really saves. This season is simply a time when many hearts are open to hear the story.

Try this: make room this season

- **Read the story aloud:** gather your family, in person or on a video call, and read Luke 2:1-20 together. Let the children read the angel's words.

- **Make room for someone:** the inn had no room. You can. Invite one person who will be alone — a neighbor, a coworker, an older church member — to share a meal, a phone call, or a prayer.
- **Pray the name:** each morning this week, start with one sentence: *"Emmanuel, You are with me today."* Then name the place where you need Him most.

The heart of it: He stayed

Mr. Antoine did not need a speech that night. He needed someone to stay. Rose gave him ten minutes and a chair.

God gave us much more. He gave His Son. Jesus did not visit our world for an evening; He lived our life, carried our sin, and promised never to leave us. That is the good news of Emmanuel: **you are not alone tonight.**

So make room for Him. Right where you are — in the hospital, in the kitchen, in a small apartment far from home — tell Him: *"Jesus, there is room for You here."* He has been waiting to come in.

Before you close this — one question

Is there room for Jesus in your life this season? Or does He feel far away, like a story from long ago?

You do not have to figure it out alone. We would be honored to pray with you, open the Bible with you, and help you meet the Jesus who came near — and who is near to you today.

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or go deeper on this topic? Reach us today:

📞 **903-748-9353** · ✉ **jils19802012@gmail.com**
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Viewer Handout

Emmanuel — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. Emmanuel means "God with us," and Jesus means He saves — both names were promised and fulfilled (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21-23).
2. The Child born in Bethlehem is fully human and "The mighty God," whose life did not begin there but is "from everlasting" (Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2).
3. Jesus was born where there was "no room," and the first good news went to shepherds on the night shift — the gospel is for all people (Luke 2:7-11).
4. The Word was made flesh and "dwelt among us" to redeem us and adopt us into God's family (John 1:14; Galatians 4:4-5).
5. From the manger to the cross He came all the way down, and He promises to be with us always and to come again (Philippians 2:7-8; Matthew 28:20; John 14:3).

Memory verse

> *"They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*
>
> **Matthew 1:23 (KJV)**

Think & pray about it

- Where in my life does God feel far away — and what changes if He is truly "with us" there?
- Is there a place in my heart where I have told Jesus, like the inn, "no room"?
- Who will be alone this season, and how can I make room for them?

FOR TEACHERS & SMALL GROUPS

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (an illustrative story: Rose, a nurse on Christmas Eve night shift, far from Les Cayes, and the lonely patient who asks her to stay) — ask: "When has someone's presence meant more to you than any gift?"
- **Point 1 — A sign with a name:** Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23. Jesus = He saves; Emmanuel = God with us.
- **Point 2 — Names bigger than the world:** Isaiah 9:6 (Isaiah 9:5 in Louis Segond). A child born (truly human), a Son given (truly God); John 1:3.
- **Point 3 — The smallest town, the oldest promise:** Micah 5:2 (Micah 5:1 in Louis Segond). God works in small places; Christ is "from everlasting."
- **Point 4 — No room:** Luke 2:1-7. Connect with migrants and anyone who has felt unwelcome.
- **Point 5 — Good news for the night shift:** Luke 2:8-14. The first announcement went to working people; "to all people."
- **Point 6 — God moved into the neighborhood:** John 1:14 ("dwelt" = pitched His tent); Galatians 4:4-5 (redemption and adoption).
- **Point 7 — All the way down:** Philippians 2:5-8. The manger points to the cross and the empty tomb.
- **Point 8 — For the empty chair:** Matthew 28:20; John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. Note: the Bible gives no date for Jesus' birth; the focus is the Person, not the calendar.
- **Practice:** read Luke 2:1-20 aloud as a family; make room for one lonely person; pray "Emmanuel, You are with me today."
- **Appeal:** invite each person to make room for Jesus in their heart today. Offer prayer and Bible study.
- **Close:** memory verse (Matthew 1:23) + announce the next devotional, "A New Year with God."

EVIDENCE-BASED · FACT-CHECKED

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. The Bible says Jesus was born on December 25.	The Bible gives no date. Luke tells us the circumstances (Luke 2:1-7), not the day. What matters is that "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Galatians 4:4).
2. Jesus began to exist in Bethlehem.	His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2); "In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God" (John 1:1-2).
3. Jesus was only a good man or a great teacher.	Isaiah calls Him "The mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6), and "the Word was God" (John 1:1) — yet He was truly human: "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14).
4. God is too far away to care about ordinary people.	The first announcement went to shepherds working at night (Luke 2:8-11). His name is "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).
5. The heart of Christmas is gifts and parties.	The heart of it is a Saviour: "unto you is born this day... a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11); "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16).
6. "God with us" was only true 2,000 years ago.	Jesus promised, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).
7. The manger story is just for children.	The Child of the manger "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Bethlehem leads to Calvary.
8. You must be important or rich to be welcome near Jesus.	He was laid in a manger because there was "no room" (Luke 2:7); "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor" (2 Corinthians 8:9).
9. "Peace on earth" means believers will have no more trouble now.	Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). He gives peace with God (Romans 5:1) in the middle of trouble.

10. The story ends in Bethlehem.	Jesus promised, "I will come again" (John 14:3); "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time" (Hebrews 9:28).

Where this comes from (Sources)

This devotional is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — passages on the coming of Christ: Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18-23; Matthew 28:20; Luke 2:1-20; John 1:1-3, 14; John 3:16; John 14:3; John 16:33; Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Hebrews 9:28 (King James Version, public domain). Note: Isaiah 9:6 and Micah 5:2 in the KJV and Reina-Valera are Isaiah 9:5 and Micah 5:1 in the Louis Segond and Kreyòl editions.
- Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #4, "The Son" (God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ, truly God and truly human) — official beliefs: https://adventist.org/beliefs
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: https://gc.adventist.org/
- Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 1, "God With Us," and chapter 4, "Unto You a Saviour," public domain: https://whiteestate.org/ / https://m.egwwritings.org/
- Related in this library: *"Who Is Jesus, Really?"* and *"Hope After Loss"* — https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/resources.html · Questions? https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/faq.html

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