

Sermon Series: The Greatest Gift
Sermon: A GOD to dwell among us
Scripture reading: John 1:1-14

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
December 23, 2018
Pastor S.C. Brown

Let me begin by saying that I am aware that my title is a bit misleading. It says, “A God to dwell among us.” In fact, there is only one God. It’s not as if there is another kind of God that doesn’t dwell among us and then this God of ours....DOES!

There is no other God as the scripture says in **Isaiah 45:5**, **“I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God.”** There are no Hindu gods. There is no Shiva. There is no Vishnu. The idols of Buddhism are not real. There are no Bodhisattvas. There is no Yama. The statues and idols are fake. They have no power. They are metal and wood. They can’t move or speak. The so called gods of the Chinese temples don’t exist. They don’t respond to the incense sticks. The offerings to them are a waste of time and energy. The god of the Koran is not God. There is only one God and he is known from the Bible or you have not known him. BUT,..... we can know him!

The only God...the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything....is not distant but he is a God who we can be near.

We see this from the very beginning and it's a thread that runs throughout the Bible, that God is a God who dwells with his people.

I want us to ponder the reality today of the only God being able to be known and known closely. I want it to lead us today to **ADORATION**.

We need to think deeply about it. We need to work hard in our hearts and minds to really grasp it this morning. We need to *adore* God. We need the reality of the incarnation to stir our *affections* for God.

In the very beginning, in **Genesis 1-3** we see God speaking all things into existence.

All things are made by him and for him.

In the garden of Eden he is dwelling in his creation with the creatures he has made. They are living in harmony.

Everything is as it supposed to be, until the man and his wife rebel and they are kicked out of the the garden and are now alienated from the continual presence of God.

Their sin separated them from God and every person who is born thereafter, is alienated from God and a rebel against God by nature.

-From here on things will be different and the rest of the Bible is a story of God making things right again.

-From here on there is a distance created by man's sin and continual rebellion. God is still there, but with barriers. Not like in the garden. Yet...graciously...we still see the promise of his presence.

Genesis 7-8 he is with Noah. He blesses him, makes a covenant with him and protects him from the flood by putting him in the Ark.

Genesis 12 he is with Abraham. He also blesses him and makes a covenant with him and his descendants. Throughout **Genesis**- he is with Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, and his brothers, even when they are down in Egypt. He is with the Hebrew midwives who spare the babies from Pharaoh's infanticide.

Exodus 3:12- he is with Moses and promises him, **"I will be with you."**

Exodus 25:8 God gives directions for a tent or tabernacle..a place where he will dwell with his people; to be right there in the middle of them.

Numbers- he led them as a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day as they traveled and he never left them.

Deuteronomy 31- Moses gives his farewell address to the people and he says, **"Be strong and courageous. Do**

not fear. For it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

In **Joshua**, God reaffirms his presence to Joshua and the people by saying again, **“I will be with you, I will not leave you or forsake you.”**

Judges 6:16- God tells Gideon, “I will be with you.”

I Samuel 12:22 in Samuel’s farewell address to the people he says, **“The LORD will not forsake his people.”**

In **Psalm 23**, King David said, **“The LORD is my shepherd so I have no needs”** and **“Thou art with me.”** Again in **Psalm 139**, David...contemplating the depths of God’s nearness said these words, **“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”**

In the end of the Minor Prophets in **Malachi 3:1** we have a promise of God being near his people in a way that we haven’t seen before. It says, **“The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.”**

When we come to the New Testament, we see that God actually shows up in a person. Not in a tent. Not in a burning bush. Not in a cloud.

The second person of the trinity, known as the eternal Word, the Son of God.. is incarnated. He takes on flesh. **John chapter 1.**

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor the will of man, but of God, 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

He has always been. He is not God the Father but he is God the Son. He was *with* the Father from the beginning. According to the Bible, He; Jesus, created all things. Wrap your heart around that. The world was made by him. And yet he became a baby. That’s beyond wonderful and beyond amazing. It is too wonderful for me.

But more amazing than the fact that he actually came is **why** he came!

Why did God the Son take on flesh and dwell among us?

Hebrews 9:26 “He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

1 Peter 3:18 says, “**Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God**”

GOD, (*not due to any deficiency in and of himself*), desires to dwell among his people. He did this in Eden but the Fall into sin made this impossible for everyone.

Sin is an impenetrable barrier to a relationship with God.

Jesus Christ took on flesh to successfully remove the barrier of sin by his sacrificial death on the cross for all who believe in him.

For all who do not believe, this barrier still exists.

[So, if you aren't a Christian you will never dwell with God unless you receive Christ.]

Jesus Christ rose from the dead and is alive today- seated at the right hand of God until he comes again.

Jesus Christ dwells *in* and *with* every believer through God the Holy Spirit, who is deposited to us- proving that we will dwell with him again, face to face in the new Eden, the heavenly city.

This truth should lead us to wonder and amazement. It should cause us to praise God. It should lead us to **ADORATION.**

If you are a Christian; if you are born again of God, have you ever contemplated deeply the promise of the presence of Jesus with you? He dwells with you. Let these words of Jesus in **Matthew 28:20** sink in.

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

APPLICATION

What would it look like if we lived like we believed that verse?

I think if we really believe that he is ‘with us always’ it will change us in 4 ways. This truth should give us:

1. COMFORT

You feel alone today? You feel anxious today? You feel uncertain today? Jesus says, “I am with you always.” Take comfort my friend in the presence of Jesus. You have that assurance. Trust by faith in the promises of God.

Isaiah 41:10 says, “**Do not fear I am with you nor be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**”

You are not alone. Jesus is dwelling with you because you have the Holy Spirit. He’s right there.

The reality of Jesus dwelling with us continually should give us **Comfort** but it should also give us:

2. COURAGE

What are you afraid of? Jesus has all authority and Jesus is with you always. Take courage my friend. Are you afraid to share your faith with others? **Acts 18:9** says, “**Do not**

be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you”

Afraid to go to the mission field; to give your life to this cause? Jesus says, **“I have all authority & I am with you always.”**

Afraid you can't pay your bills? Take courage. You are his child. Jesus says, **“I am with you always.”** & **“My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”**

2 Chronicles 16:9 says, **“The eyes of the Lord roam to and fro throughout the whole earth to give strong support to those whose hearts are blameless toward him.”**

In light of the fact that Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us and that he is still with us; Take **Comfort**. Have **Courage**. And be **Content**.

3. CONTENTMENT.

If we have him, we have all we need.

Are you content or are you striving?

Do you rest peacefully in the arms of the one who said, **“I am with you always.”**

You see the secret to contentment is not having enough but in the fact that Jesus is with you and will take care of you.

Hebrews 13:5-6 says, **“Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for**

he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So, we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

What's the secret to contentment? "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

Jesus Christ took on flesh and dwelt among us and as a believer in him, we have the assurance of the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. He is with us always. This should give us **Comfort**. This should give us **Courage**. This should make us **Content** people. And lastly, this should give us:

4. CAUTION.

You see....Jesus said, "**I am with you ALWAYS.**"

Always! He is with us even when we may not want him to be. There is not a single time in your life when Jesus is not with you. This should cause us to live carefully in the world. He sees what we do in secret. He is there. Nothing is hidden from him.

God the Son, took on flesh and dwelt among us to take away the sin barrier and open a way for us to eternally dwell in the presence of God-if we believe in him. This is **the Greatest Gift** we could ever receive.

Believers have the promise and assurance that Jesus continually dwells among us through the Holy Spirit. This should give the believer Comfort. This should give the

believer great Courage. This truth should make us Content in this world. And this truth should cause us to live with Caution- knowing that Jesus is with us 'always'.

If you don't know Jesus Christ, there is no assurance that he hears your prayers. And there is a certainty that you will not dwell with God forever but will be separated from him for eternity because of your sin. There is no assurance for you that God is ever with you. In fact, the Bible says that you are God enemy. Thankfully, God loves his enemies.

The good news of Christmas is this;

John 1:12- to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.