

Immanuel to *Messiah*



Immanuel

In the next three weeks we will be looking at Jesus' life as a baby, young boy, and adult. It will be a look at Jesus being called Immanuel (God with us), Jesus as a boy at the temple asking questions, and being called the Messiah to save this world. It is sometimes hard to think that Jesus was this little baby that grew up into this amazing teacher, but Jesus definitely grew physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually to be a model for us in our own lives. So in the next several weeks we want to survey Jesus' life to help us grow in our own faith this Christmas season.

What will you give?

Hypothetical situation: think for a minute about someone you really admire, but someone who probably doesn't know who you are. Maybe it's a famous musician, or athlete, or a movie star. Now imagine that one day, out of nowhere, they just show up at your house and want to hang out with you. Apparently, they not only knew exactly who you were, but they were a huge fan of yours. And now they just want to be able to hang out with you and get to know you. Am I the only one who thinks that scenario would be just a little bit crazy? Now what if that person was God Himself? And what if this wasn't hypothetical at all?

Isaiah 7:1

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

What does “Immanuel” mean?

How does Jesus' birth, God being with us, give us hope?

Specifically in your life, how does this give you hope?

Matthew 1:22

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” –which means, ‘God with us.’”

How would you feel if God Himself was physically walking around with you right now? If He went with you wherever you went?

All the people that Jesus interacted with while He was on earth actually had the privilege of being able to see and feel God because while Jesus was completely human, He was still completely God.

A few weeks ago we talked about humility. What kind of humility would it take for the Almighty God to come down and limit Himself, become a human, so that He could be *with us*?

What's more amazing about Jesus' humility is that He didn't just become human so He could hang out with mankind for a little while. He became human so He could die *for us* so He could *always be with us*.

It's getting close to Christmas time again so people are probably already talking about giving each other gifts.

How can you share the hope of Christ with those around you?

What or how can you give a gift to The One who gave everything for you?

What gift do you have that is good enough for God?

Read Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

At the time, would it have been acceptable for Joseph to leave Mary?

What was Joseph's reaction to his dream?

Do you think you would be able to obey like Joseph if you were in that situation?

Even though it could have been embarrassing for Joseph to stay with Mary, he listened to God and chose to obey anyway.

What situation have you been in where you were embarrassed or made fun of for your faith in God?

Let's take a look at Luke's account of the story.

Read Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

How do you think Mary felt when she found out she was going to have a baby before she was married?

How do you think Mary felt when she realized that her baby was going to be the Son of God?

What was Mary's response to the angel?

Mary didn't understand how God's plan was going to work and she didn't know yet if Joseph would still marry her but she chose to submit to God and serve Him anyway.

If God asked you to obey Him through something life changing and you couldn't imagine the outcome, would you still choose to obey Him?

What if He asked you to go to a different school? What if He asked you to hang out with the weird kid that sits alone at lunch? What if He asked you to live your entire life devoted to Him?

How did Mary have so much faith? **"I am the Lord's servant."**

Read Matthew 2:9-12 to see the Magi's side of the story?

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The Magi brought Jesus gifts, but what was the main reason they came to see Him?

Although the gold, incense, and myrrh were nice, the most important gift they brought was their worship.

What are some gifts that we can give to God?

What are some ways that we can use what we have to worship God? Find ways over the next week to do just that.

It doesn't matter if we think that our gifts aren't good enough for God to use. If we give willingly, He can use us. Sometimes we become so concerned with trying to give God the right kind of gifts that we forget that the most important gift we can give is our sincere worship.

Christ became human to redeem us to the Father. His birth gives us hope that one day, we will be made new creations in Heaven.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

***"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."***

Growing Up

What are going to do with your life? What do you want to be when you grow up?

I never liked those questions growing up but they did make me think about my future. It made me think about who I wanted to be and what I thought I should do. It helped me set goals in my life to become what I wanted to be. In my eighth grade yearbook we had to write down what we intended to do for a job when we grew up. I couldn't figure out what to put. It was a tossup between being a professional runner, which my teacher told me I couldn't write down because that really wasn't a job, and Pastor. So I wrote down Running Pastor. I figured I could run on the side and be a pastor because it seemed easy enough. My dad was a pastor and he was pretty happy with it. I never really took it that serious but somewhere down the line, God read that yearbook and here I am, a pastor sometimes running after junior high students and sometimes running away from them because let's be honest they haven't all figured out the whole deodorant thing just yet. The things I did well and the things I did poorly in my life have made me the man I am today and the same will be true for you some day. What you do tonight, tomorrow next week, next month, next year, next 3 years, next 10 years etc. will help create who you will be when you get older. So the questions for you tonight is how do you want to turn out when you get older and what are you going to do today to make that happen?

Last week we talked about Jesus being Immanuel, "God with us", and the hope He gives each and every one of us. Even as a baby, Jesus had a purpose. Each and every day, Mary and Joseph took care of Him. It helped Him be who He was intended to be.

Read Luke 2:21-32

When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

Why did Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple?

What was revealed to Simeon?

What does Simeon think this baby has come to do?

What are you waiting for this Christmas?

Read Luke 2:33-40

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

What does it mean that Jesus will be the rising and falling of many people in Israel?

What does it mean that Mary's heart will be pierced as well?

What did Anna think Jesus was going to bring to Jerusalem?

Read Luke 2:39-40

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

What does this say about Jesus growing up in his town of Nazareth?

How do you think He became strong?

How do you think Jesus was filled with wisdom?

How do you think the grace of God was upon Him?

Jesus had two natures: one divine and one human. He was 100% human AND 100% God. But even though Jesus had that divine nature, He still grew strong and wise as a man. Even though we are not fully God, we like Jesus can grow as Jesus did.

Read Luke 2:41-52

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

What was Jesus focus as a 12 year old boy?

What was Jesus doing in verse 46? “After three days they found him..”

Do you think you are growing in your relationship with God?

How have you changed as a Christian from elementary to junior high to high school? Do you feel you are growing to be more like Jesus in your life or less like Him?

What was Jesus response to his parents after they found him?

How can this phrase help us in growing up in our lives?

First Century Jews took their faith very seriously and their faith was embedded into everything they did

Do we take our faith as seriously as we should? Is Christ embedded into everything we do?

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-3

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.

Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

What are the people supposed to obey?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie

down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

When are people supposed to tell others about God?

Where are people supposed to tell others about God?

What are they supposed to tell others about God?

Who is supposed to know about God?

When was the last time you told someone about God? Have you ever?

Read Deuteronomy 6:13-19

Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. Do not test the LORD your God as you did at Massah. Be sure to keep the commands of the LORD your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers, thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the LORD said.

How are people supposed to obey God? What will happen to you?

Read Deut. 6:20-25

In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the LORD sent miraculous signs and wonders—great and terrible—upon Egypt

and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers. The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness."

What are parents supposed to tell their children about the meaning of God's stipulations, decrees and laws?

Are you obeying God's commands in your life?

Do you even know what God expects you to do in your life?

How do you think God wants you to live your life?

Do you think He wants you to always stay the same, just as you are now?

Where are you certain you need to change? What is holding you back?

Read Ephesians 4:17-19

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

Why does Paul tell them to no longer live as the Gentiles do?

Do you follow the world more than you follow God?

What if Paul told you to no longer follow what your friends do? Would it help you have a deeper relationship with God or not?

Read Ephesians 4:20-32

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Do you speak truthfully to people or do you need to grow in this area?

Do you control your anger or do you need to grow in this area?

Do you steal from people or do you need to stop and grow in this area?

If you have unwholesome words coming out of your mouth, what advice does Ephesians offer to help you stop from doing this anymore?

What are some other things in this section to get rid of in order to grow in your faith?

Do you think you have a focused life?

What is your life focused on right now?

Why are you focused on this in your life?

Read Jhn 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Why do you think Jesus gives a new command?

Do you ever feel there are so many options in life you don't know which one to choose?

Have you ever been in a grocery store with all that food and you still were not able to decide what you want? Have you ever stood in line at Wendy's and have all those options and you still didn't know what to order? Have you ever felt lost at what college you may want to go to because there are so many options? Have you ever wondered if you should really follow Jesus because there are so many other religions out there?

I think a lot of us have stopped growing in our faith because we have chased after every option there is in life and have lost our way with God. We have lost the single focus of following Jesus and we have taken different paths in life.

Take the rest of the time in your small group to talk about different ways you can continue to grow in your faith in Christ.

Messiah

I really don't know anyone that does not like Christmas. It is one of my favorite times of year besides the traffic and the crazy people that shop at stores. I don't know anyone that does not like to receive free gifts or eat lots of delicious food during the holidays. Most importantly though, Christmas time always makes me think about my relationship with Jesus. Often times it makes me wonder where I am in my commitment to Him. I say I follow Jesus with my whole life, but if I am honest with myself, I don't always live out my faith daily. Christmas is an amazing season for Christians because it helps us remember the commitment God made to us through His son. Hopefully, it helps to renew our faith in a God that sent His only Son to be born and die for our sins. So what is it about Christmas that makes you think about God?

What does Christmas really mean to you?

How do you celebrate Christmas with your family and friends?

Are you more committed to Christ during Christmas than the rest of the year, or do you become distracted by all the things happening?

What are things about Christmas that can help renew your faith and commitment to Jesus?

Now let's make a detour and read Matthew 26:36-46

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Why does Jesus get away for a bit and pray?

When is the last time you got away from things and just prayed to God?

Why is Jesus so overwhelmed?

What overwhelms you the most in your life?

How do you work through the things that overwhelm you?

Does it comfort you to know that Jesus needed to relax and get away for a bit?

How do you think God wants you to handle things that overwhelm you or that are difficult for you to do?

What does Jesus mean when He says "the spirit is willing but the body is weak"?

What keeps you away from a committed life with Jesus?

How do you think Jesus stayed committed in his life on earth?

How do you stay committed to God in your life on earth?

Read Matthew 26:47-56

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my

disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Why doesn't Jesus stop Judas from betraying Him?

Why does Jesus stop the disciples from defending Him?

What do you think of Jesus words to the crowd in verse 55-56? "Am I leading a rebellion..."

Why do think the disciples deserted him?

During this Christmas season, is your focus going to be on Christ, His birth, life, and death, or will you let other things steal your focus?

Read Matthew 26:57-68

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

Do you follow God at a distance like Peter does here? Do you feel like you are closer? Have you run away like the other disciples?

What do you think of the Sadducees and chief priests' actions toward Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus stays committed to not stopping them?

Read Matthew 27:27-31.

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Why do you think the soldiers did this to Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus stayed committed to us and endured all this pain?

Is He still committed to us?

Read Matthew 27:32-44.

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it,

he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.' " In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Why do you think people would insult and mock Jesus?

Once again why do you think Jesus would put up with all of this stuff?

Read Matthew 27:57-61.

As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

Why did Joseph, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stay committed to Jesus?

When everybody else forgets the real meaning of Christmas in our culture will you still remember the sacrifice He made for you?

Why do you think people forget Jesus life, death, and resurrection on Christmas?

Does Christmas bring you hope in your life? Why or Why not?

Read Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.

What is a recurring theme in this section?

Why are we called not to be afraid of telling people about Jesus' resurrection?

Leave here tonight with the words of Jesus in your mind and heart: "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." Don't be afraid of your faith this Christmas season and renew your commitment with Jesus tonight. Truly see Him in Christmas this year when you look at all the lights, putting up your tree, eating all that food, when you see a manger scene, when you are with your family, when you are watching the moving "Elf", and when you open your gifts because the greatest gift that you ever received was Jesus coming to this world and sacrificing His life for yours.

Close in prayer.