



The Advent of Love

December 24-30, 2023

MAIN POINT

God meets our deepest needs and is our ultimate source of satisfaction through His great love for us.

INTRODUCTION

How would you describe yourself?

What names or descriptions do you think are true of you?

In this series, we have looked at what J.D. calls the names of salvation. They are the ways God described Jesus through the prophet Isaiah. As we finish this series, J.D. explains how we should put our faith in Jesus when we are in need.

Watch Session 4: I AM (9 minutes).

DISCUSSION

The name Yahweh, meaning “I am,” was the name God gave himself—he used it over 6,500 times to refer to himself in the Old Testament. It may seem like a strange name, but through it we see that God is the fulfillment to our deepest needs. He is the source and supply for our security, courage, strength, and most importantly, salvation and love.

In what ways do you feel insufficient for, vulnerable toward, or anxious about your current circumstances?

In this session, J.D. mentioned a few times when God came to his people in need and said “I AM.” He is love, our healer, our sanctifier, our righteousness, the ever present one, our shepherd, our provider, and our defender.

In what ways do you need God today?

When we pray, we sometimes ask only for the things we think we need to solve our problems but forget to ask God to be our I AM.

In what ways can you seek God’s presence and ask for his involvement in your current circumstances?

Jesus also used the name I AM for himself. He called himself the bread of life, living water, the door to salvation, the good shepherd, the way, the truth, and the life. In our greatest areas of brokenness and pain, our needs are met in Jesus.

What do you feel like you need right now to be secure, happy, whole, or even to feel loved?

In what ways could Jesus meet that desire?

J.D. finished this series with two questions, the first of which he directed towards Christians: “If you know Jesus, are you living in the fullness of his name?” Jesus wants us to trust him as Emmanuel, our Wonderful Counselor, and our Everlasting Father. Think back on the names of Jesus we have studied so far.

In what ways can you trust Jesus more deeply as Emmanuel, God with us? As your Wonderful Counselor? Your Everlasting Father?

The second question J.D. asked was directed to those who have not trusted Jesus:

What does your heart call Jesus?

Who is Jesus to you?

If you were to pray to Jesus, what “name” would you call him?

The names in this study are the names of salvation. Jesus is Emmanuel, your Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, and your I AM. If you aren't a Christian, consider this question this week: Will you believe on Jesus's name for your salvation?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Let's take a deeper look at Scripture and figure out how we what it looks like to live “in the fullness of Jesus's name.” **Read [Colossians 3:1-17](#).**

What is the command for Christians in verses 1-4?

What do you think it means to be “hidden in Christ”?

If you are a follower of Jesus, you are meant to identify with him. In all the ways that we are weak, he is strong. He is our righteousness and our redeemer.

What does it look like for you to define your identity in Jesus?

Verses 5-11 describe who we were before trusting Christ.

As you read through these verses, which of the listed characteristics best describe you apart from Jesus?

Which of these characteristics do you still carry with you?

What would it look like for you to put them aside?

Colossians goes on to list who we should be now that we know Jesus. Verses 12-16 describe what it looks like to be hidden in Christ.

Which of these characteristics is most difficult for you to “put on”?

What can you do to practice that characteristic, especially in times when it is not easy?

What role could your community play in helping you grow in these Christlike characteristics?

Verse 17 ties a bow on this passage by giving us an overarching principle to follow as we seek to be more like Jesus.

What practical steps can you take to remind yourself to do everything in the name of Jesus today? This week?

In what ways are you showing love to God the Father in everything that you do?

LAST WORD

The Advent season is a bright sign pointing to Jesus. In the darkness of winter, a light has dawned. Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. He is Emmanuel, God with us, so we never have to be alone or afraid, but hopeful in our days to come. He is our Wonderful Counselor, eager to guide, comfort, and heal us, offering us peace that only He can give. He is our Everlasting Father who loves us more deeply than we can imagine and longs to be near to us, an amazing joy for all who put their trust in Him.

Jesus is our I AM. In our greatest deficiencies, brokenness, and darkness he is our way, our truth, and our life love. He simply asks we take on his name and live in the fullness of who he is. As we celebrate Christmas—in carols, time with family, decorations, and gift giving—let's look for all of the ways Jesus is the source of our hope, peace, joy and unsurmountable love.

LIVE IT OUT

READ: Read the Christmas story in [Luke 2:1-20](#). As you do, think of the gift Jesus is to us and the good news this holiday announces.

PRAY: Pray that you would take on the names of Jesus for yourself and trust God to be all love-giving that you need each day.

MEMORIZE: Memorize Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."