

**December 15, 2024**

## **Discussion Guide: Eternal Father**

SUMMARY: The message centers on the profound mystery and hope encapsulated in the prophecy of Emmanuel, as described in Isaiah 9:6-7. This prophecy, given 700 years before the birth of Christ, reveals the characteristics of Emmanuel—God with us. It is a reminder of the unimaginable love of God, who chose to step into human history, wrapping Himself in human flesh to live among us. This act of divine love is not just a historical event but a present reality that shapes our lives today. Isaiah's prophecy describes Emmanuel as a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. These are not just titles but conditions we experience because of what God has done for us. As our Wonderful Counselor, Emmanuel provides us with divine wisdom, enabling us to see clearly and make decisions aligned with God's will. As Mighty God, He offers us strength and might, reminding us that we are never alone in our struggles. The focus today is on Emmanuel as our Eternal Father, a concept that challenges us to wrestle with the mystery of the Trinity. This title does not compress the roles within the Godhead but highlights Jesus as our provider and shepherd, leading us into eternal life. The incarnation is a profound mystery that invites us to stand in awe of God's love and provision. Jesus, our Emmanuel, is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, yet He chose to become human, to live the life we could not live, and to die the death we deserved. This act of love provides us with the hope of eternal life, transforming our goodbyes into see-you-laters. As we celebrate Christmas, we are reminded that this season is about hope—the confident belief that God will fulfill His promises. In accepting the gift of Emmanuel, we are invited into a relationship with God that transcends time and space. This relationship is not about what we can do but about accepting what God has already done for us. As we reflect on this gift, may we be filled with hope and courage, knowing that our Eternal Father will provide for us for all eternity.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- *Emmanuel as Our Wonderful Counselor:* Emmanuel provides us with divine wisdom, enabling us to see clearly and make decisions aligned with God's will. This wisdom is not about intellectual knowledge but about discernment and obedience to God's word. It is a reminder that we have access to God's supernatural wisdom in every aspect of our lives.
- *The Mystery of the Trinity:* The incarnation challenges us to wrestle with the mystery of the Trinity, where God is one yet exists in three persons. This mystery invites us to stand in awe of God's love and provision, recognizing that Jesus, our Emmanuel, is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father.
- *Eternal Father as Provider and Shepherd:* As our Eternal Father, Emmanuel is our provider and shepherd, leading us into eternal life. This title highlights Jesus' role in making eternity accessible to us, offering us hope and assurance in the face of life's challenges.

- *The Hope of Christmas*: Christmas is a reminder of the hope we have in Emmanuel, who transforms our goodbyes into see-you-laters. This hope is rooted in the confident belief that God will fulfill His promises, providing us with courage and assurance in our journey of faith.
- *Accepting the Gift of Emmanuel*: The invitation to accept the gift of Emmanuel is an invitation into a relationship with God that transcends time and space. This relationship is not about our actions but about accepting what God has already done for us, offering us eternal life and a future filled with hope.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURAL TEXT: Isaiah 9:6-7; John 1:1-4; Revelation 1:8

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. According to Isaiah 9:6-7, what are the titles given to Emmanuel, and what do they signify about His role?
2. How does the sermon describe the relationship between Jesus and the Father in the context of the Trinity?
3. What does the sermon suggest about the significance of Jesus being called the "Eternal Father"?
4. How does the sermon explain the concept of Emmanuel as our "Wonderful Counselor"?

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean for believers today that Jesus is described as a "Wonderful Counselor"? How might this influence decision-making in daily life?
2. How does the sermon challenge traditional understandings of the Trinity, and what implications does this have for our understanding of God's nature?
3. In what ways does the title "Eternal Father" provide hope and assurance to believers, according to the sermon?
4. How does the sermon interpret the hope of Christmas in light of the prophecy of Emmanuel?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Reflect on a recent decision you made. How might seeking divine wisdom as described in the sermon have influenced your choice?
2. The sermon discusses the mystery of the Trinity. How can embracing this mystery deepen your relationship with God?
3. Consider a challenge you are currently facing. How does knowing Jesus as your "Eternal Father" change your perspective on this situation?
4. The sermon emphasizes the hope of Christmas. How can you actively cultivate and share this hope with others during the holiday season?

5. Think about your current relationship with God. How can you more fully accept the gift of Emmanuel in your daily life?
6. Identify an area in your life where you need to rely more on God's strength. What practical steps can you take to lean on Him as your "Mighty God"?
7. 7. How can the understanding of Jesus as both fully God and fully man impact your view of His role in your life?

### 5-DAY DEVOTIONAL:

Day 1: Divine Wisdom for Daily Decisions: Emmanuel, as our Wonderful Counselor, offers us divine wisdom that transcends mere intellectual knowledge. This wisdom is about discernment and aligning our decisions with God's will. In every aspect of life, we have access to this supernatural guidance, which helps us navigate through complexities and uncertainties. By seeking Emmanuel's counsel, we can make choices that reflect God's love and purpose for us.

Isaiah 11:2-3 (CSB): The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight will be in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, he will not execute justice by what he hears with his ears,

Reflection: Think of a decision you are currently facing. How can you seek Emmanuel's wisdom to guide you in making a choice that aligns with God's will today?

Day 2: Embracing the Mystery of the Trinity: The incarnation of Emmanuel invites us to embrace the profound mystery of the Trinity, where God is one yet exists in three persons. This mystery is not meant to be fully understood but to be marveled at, recognizing the depth of God's love and provision. Jesus, our Emmanuel, is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, and this truth challenges us to stand in awe of the divine relationship within the Godhead.

Colossians 2:2-3 (CSB): I want their hearts to be encouraged and joined together in love, so that they may have all the riches of complete understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery—Christ. In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Reflection: How does the mystery of the Trinity deepen your understanding of God's love for you? Spend time in prayer, asking God to reveal more of Himself to you.

Day 3: Jesus as Our Eternal Provider: As our Eternal Father, Emmanuel is our provider and shepherd, leading us into eternal life. This role highlights Jesus' commitment to care for us, offering hope and assurance in the face of life's challenges. By trusting in Emmanuel as our provider, we can find peace and security, knowing that He will meet our needs and guide us through every circumstance.

Psalms 23:1-3 (CSB): The Lord is my shepherd; I have what I need. He lets me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters. He renews my life; he leads me along the right paths for his name's sake.

Reflection: In what areas of your life do you need to trust Jesus as your provider? How can you actively rely on Him to meet your needs today?

Day 4: The Transformative Hope of Christmas: Christmas is a season that reminds us of the hope we have in Emmanuel, who transforms our goodbyes into see-you-laters. This hope is rooted in the confident belief that God will fulfill His promises, providing us with courage and assurance in our journey of faith. As we celebrate, we are invited to hold onto this hope, allowing it to shape our perspective and actions.

Romans 15:13 (CSB): Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection: How can you let the hope of Christmas influence your interactions with others this season? Consider one way you can share this hope with someone in need.

Day 5: Accepting the Gift of Emmanuel: The invitation to accept the gift of Emmanuel is an invitation into a relationship with God that transcends time and space. This relationship is not about our actions but about accepting what God has already done for us, offering us eternal life and a future filled with hope. By embracing this gift, we are called to live in the reality of God's love and grace, allowing it to transform our lives.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (CSB): For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

Reflection: What does accepting the gift of Emmanuel mean for you personally? How can you live out this acceptance in your daily life, reflecting God's love to those around you?