

Text 'HERE' to # 208.297.7630 to record your attendance

Text to give to Real Life, simply text your amount to #208.261.7473

Christmas has become increasingly complex. There is a myriad of things that compete for our attention around Christmas time, and the simplicity of our devotion to Christ (be quickly compromised). This series aims to cut through the clutter of Christmas and get back to the basics of what Christmas is really about: Christ! Included in this series will be New Year's Eve weekend with the focus of new beginnings, featuring a special baptism emphasis! Let's go!

**“What is your goal for Christmas and will the way you celebrate Christmas accomplish that goal?”**

Week 1: A Simple Deception

This Week: A Simple Story

Simple Definition: (adj.) - clear, understandable, uncluttered, undecorated, childlike, pure.

Simple Antonyms – complicated, convoluted, complex, ornate, demanding, troublesome.

**3 Statements about 3 Stories:**

**3 Statements:**

1. The Christmas story has a simple statement, but the story of the statement isn't simple.
2. The story of the statement isn't simple - it's wildly complicated and troublesome!
3. Immanuel to Immanuel

**3 Stories:**

1. THE Christmas story (Matthew 1:2-12, Luke 1-2:20)
2. YOUR life story
3. Your life story and the story of THIS Christmas

**1. The Christmas story has a simple statement, but the story of the statement isn't simple.**

What is the simple statement of the Christmas story?

**Matthew 1:21-23 (NIV)** - 21She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” 22All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

What will the statement of your Christmas story be this year? Is it simply celebrating the birth of Immanuel?

**What is your goal for Christmas and will the way you celebrate Christmas accomplish that goal?**

What is the statement of your life story? Is it simply about Immanuel – God with you?

## 2. The story of the statement isn't simple - it's wildly complicated and troublesome!

- Angel Appearances (Matthew 1:20, Luke 1:11; 1:26-37)
- Marriage Doubts (Matthew 1:24)
- Blameless but Barren – (Luke 1:13,18)
- Pregnant but Unmarried (Matthew 1:18)
- Consequences of distrust (Luke 1:20)
- Doubt and Tension with God's truth (Luke 1:29-34)
- Public Pressure (Matthew 1:19)
- Trust and Obedience (Luke 1:38)
- Political Influence (Luke 2:1)
- Time & Travel (Luke 2:4)
- No embrace and No room (Luke 2:6-7)
- Invitation and Participation by the Least Likely (Luke 2:8-18)
- Gift Giving (Matthew 2:11)
- Praise! (Luke 1:45; 2:19-20)

Mary, Joseph, Zechariah and Elizabeth accepted the unexpected because they expected the unaccepted.

Is your story simple or wildly complicated and troublesome? Is God with you in it? Do you accept the unexpected by expecting the unaccepted?

Can your Christmas story this year be wildly complicated and troublesome, yet still have the simple statement of Immanuel? Will you accept the unexpected as you expect the unaccepted?

Why do you think God writes complicated and troublesome stories with simple statements?

## 3. Immanuel to Immanuel

At what part of the Christmas story did Immanuel arrive?

At what part of your story does Immanuel arrive?

At what part of Christmas this year will Immanuel arrive?

**We can have a simple Christmas statement – Immanuel – in complicated Christmas stories.**

### For Small Group Discussion

**Scriptures to Read: Matthew 1-2:12, Luke 1-2:20**

**Main Point:** We can have a simple Christmas statement – Immanuel – in complicated Christmas stories.

### Questions:

- What was/is your favorite Christmas tradition? Least favorite?
- Do you have a purpose for the Christmas celebrations? If so, what are they and why?
- What is a new action you can incorporate into your Christmas based on the message today?