

# UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS

## GOD WITH US.

We've all had unexpected things thrown at us: a new boss, a big break-up, a huge project. And as all-consuming and surprising as these things may be, nothing quite hits the magnitude of, well, a pregnant virgin. Mary experienced some next level unexpectedness.

And in the midst of possible social shame, intense physical pain, and complete rejection from her betrothed, God did not promise to make things easy. He didn't promise to take the pain away. He didn't magically remove judgmental stares from neighbors or disappointed lectures from her mother.

He just promised that she would be the mother of the Savior of the world. And that He was with her through it all.

God never promises to make our lives easy or take away our problems. He doesn't promise to make people understand. He doesn't promise to reveal all the answers.

But He *does* promise to be with us. He promises that all things work together for good. He promises it will all be worth it.

God threw something very unexpected at Mary. But in that virgin birth, He came through on another promise - Jesus, Emmanuel, "God with us."

# IN THE BIBLE.

## **Luke 1:28-35**

28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 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, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

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

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on 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.

## **Romans 8:28**

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

## **Psalms 139:7-10**

7 Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

10 even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

## **Matthew 28:20**

And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

# QUESTIONS.

1. Dig into Romans 8:28. What do you think Paul saying there?
2. Have you ever seen God work through something unexpected or seemingly bad? When?
3. Have you ever felt like He *didn't* come through with a solution or "blessing in disguise" after something bad happened? When?
4. What does God promise when we're hit with unexpected or downright horrible situations?

**Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:**

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?