

Built On a Rock: The Heart of Christianity from Genesis to Revelation
Living the Message 2022-2023
February 2023 Study Guide for Participants and Facilitators

God con Carne: *Incarnation* with Pastor Lose

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

Before you Begin:

The doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity are complicated and challenging to comprehend. Don't be alarmed if you don't feel you fully understand them. It's most important to focus on **why** the doctrine matters, not simply what it means. That is, what matters in the Incarnation is twofold: God is the one who saves us, and God has been human and therefore knows and understands us.

Opening Prayer

Dear God, you have come to us in covenant, law, and community so that we might live in peace with each other and with you. And when we needed even more, you came to us in the flesh and blood of Jesus. Come to us now to help us further understand your coming to be with us and to feel your profound love for us and for all people. We pray in the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

Focus Statement

In Jesus, God becomes human and so understands our ups and down, our hopes and disappointments, our achievements and failures. Because God understands us so fully, we can be confident of God's great love for us.

Questions

1. What stuck out to you the most about Pastor Lose's presentation? What did you notice? What insights do you have? What has Incarnation meant to you in the past and what does it mean to you now?
2. Pastor Lose asked: *Did you know that Incarnation was hugely controversial for centuries?* What is your reaction to this question?
3. Spend some time reflecting on what it means that God became human. What difference does it make to your faith to say that God not only knows that you exist, but understands what it's like to be you and cares very much for you?

Birth of Jesus Scripture

By becoming human—even being born as we are—God in Jesus promises that God is totally for us, that God is on our side. Read [John 1:1-18](#), one of the most famous passages in the New Testament. It is sometimes called St. John’s hymn to the incarnate Word. Read it aloud. Note everything that it tells you about the Word, about God, and about the relationship between the two. Think about and discuss if in a group:

1. What are the most important details that stand out to you while reading this passage?
2. What claims is the author making about the Word?
3. This passage is often read at Christmas, the feast of the Incarnation. Why do you think that is?
4. How does John 1:18 help us understand John’s story of Jesus in relation to the Old Testament story?

Two other passages from the Gospels that are connected with Jesus’ birth are [Luke 2:1-20](#) and [Matthew 1:18-25](#). How are these stories of Jesus’ birth similar to and different from the other? How are they like or unlike John 1? What light do they shed on the Incarnation?

Deeper Dive with Pastor Ruud

Scriptures:

[Colossians 1:15-20](#)

[Philippians 2:5-8](#)

[Mark 1:15](#)

[Revelation 21:1-4](#)

What/when are the moments or circumstances you’ve felt God most near to you?

A possible prayerful practice: Pick a day and set an hourly alarm. Each time it sounds, reflect on how God is with you in the moment or has been with you in the last hour.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, thank you for becoming one of us. When things are hard or we struggle to accept ourselves, remind us that you understand us fully and accept us completely, and let that promise help us to accept ourselves and others. In Jesus name, Amen.

Next Month:

Love Wins: *Atonement* with Pastor Lose (*schedule switch with Pastor Ruud*)

In-person presentation Tuesday, March 7, 6:30-7:30pm at West Campus - Rehearsal Hall

Video emailed out on or before end of day Monday, March 6

