

I JUST WISH THAT...

WK ONE - 11.26.23
IT WAS EASIER

INTRODUCTION

When you were a kid at Christmas, you made your "wish list." Remember what was on it? As adults, we've still got our wish lists; they just look a little different. During the Advent season, we're going to talk about a few things that are probably on yours – and what Jesus has the power to do with them at Christmas. In week one, Pastor Jesse spent time navigating the wish that time with our families was easier.

DISCUSSION

1. What was the dream item or experience at the top of your Christmas wish list as a kid? What are some of the items at the top of your wish list today?
2. Many of us have difficult dynamics to navigate during the holidays. If you're willing, take a few moments to share what you're anticipating, worried about, or are already navigating with your family in this season.
3. **Revisit and read Matthew 1:18-20 and Mark 3:20-21.** From the story of Jesus' birth to His family tree, there's no shortage of drama and messiness. Have you ever noticed or considered the "mess" in these stories? How does it feel to know Jesus also had family drama to navigate?
4. **Revisit and read Matthew 1:22-23.** Immanuel means "God with us." He didn't come to make it easier; He came to be **with us** in the real, complex, messy, and tough stuff. As you enter the holiday season, how real is this truth in your life these days? Do you believe, feel, and sense God with you as you navigate the uniqueness of your family? Why or why not?
5. What might change for you in this season if you allowed Jesus to meet you in the gap between what you wish and what reality is regarding your family?

APPLICATION

- **Stop chasing "easy."** Start chasing Jesus. Make time for Him to meet, guide, and support you in the holiday season. He will be the most valuable relationship to invest in.
- **Keep your hands open.** You can't control your family, but you can control your reaction. Ask Jesus to help you surrender your priorities, preferences, and maybe even some comfort to stay present with your family.
- **Let grace lead the way.** You're not going to be perfect, and neither is your family. Be ready for mistakes, misunderstandings, and missed expectations. Then, be ready to lead with grace first – which may open the door to some opportunities to speak the truth in love.