

Session 5

WITH YOU ALWAYS IS THE KING

TEXT

Memory Verse

“Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

– JOSHUA 1:9, CSB



With You Always is the King

THEOLOGICAL THEME: For believers, God is with us *always*, and *nothing* can change that.

CALL TO ACTION: We are accompanied by the Lord through our days and our nights. As we are engaged in service of the Lord and His gospel, we are accompanied by His presence. He is before us, behind us, and beside us.

Immanuel. *God with us.*

Have you ever really thought about the gravity of this truth? God is with us. For believers, the Holy Spirit dwells inside of us and helps and guides us. We are never alone. This thought is mind boggling and humbling!

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit would come upon (and leave) people for certain purposes at certain times (for example, the Holy Spirit left Saul and came upon David in 1 Samuel 16:13-14). Israelite history is full of close calls and consequences, but it's also full of hope.

The promised Messiah was coming, and His name would be Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), which means, "God with us." The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible says this about Immanuel: "The name symbolized the fact that God would demonstrate his presence with his people in this deliverance."¹

By the time Jesus came on the scene, there hadn't been written prophecy in Israel for some 400 years, and Israel was under harsh Roman occupation. For a first-century Jew, it was likely tempting to think that the God of their ancestors wasn't with

them at all, but this was not true. Jesus was on the way. And He would demonstrate His presence and deliver not just them, but believers from every generation since.

Today, we're going to look at both Old and New Testament examples that show us God is always with us, to help us think about what this means for us today.

 How often do you think about the reality of God being with you daily?

 What difference should this reality make in our lives? What gets in the way of this?

Session Summary

The Bible is full of stories of God's faithfulness with His people. In the Old Testament story of Joshua, God doesn't just call His people to hard things, He goes with them through everything. Jesus echoed a similar promise to His disciples in Matthew 28:20.

God doesn't abandon His people. He won't fail us. He goes with us, through the good and the bad, the easy and the hard, and the messiness of our everyday. Absolutely nothing can change that.

1. I Will Not Leave or Abandon You (Joshua 1:1-9)

 What reassurance did God offer Joshua in this passage? Why might that have been especially encouraging/needed for Him at that moment?

 When was a time you felt particularly in need of God's presence in your life?

This is just one of many Old Testament examples of God promising to be with His people (Isaiah 41:10; Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 43:1-2). In the ups and downs of human life, there is perhaps no greater comfort than God being with us. Joshua, on the precipice of the promised land, was surely comforted by the promise of God's presence.

Joshua followed Moses as God's chosen leader of the Israelite people. Just as God worked powerfully through Moses to bring the Israelite people out of slavery in Egypt, God worked powerfully through Joshua as he led the people out of the wilderness and into the promised land. In our passage, Moses had died, and the baton was passed to Joshua with a word of encouragement from the Lord.

At this point, Joshua had been faithfully following and trusting God in the wilderness for about forty years. When the Israelites scouted the promised land in Numbers 14, Joshua was one of only two scouts who didn't cower in fear of the people currently living there. Joshua (and Caleb) had full faith that if the Lord was with them, they were sure to be victorious. Because of his faith, Joshua not only was able to enter the promised land while all but one of his peers died in the wilderness, he was also chosen by God to lead the people as they occupied the land.

This was a huge task, and lots of hard work was ahead of them. People occupied the land God had promised them, and for the Israelites to live there, they had to conquer these enemies. God gave them the land, but they still had work to occupy it. In this moment, the work stood before Joshua and the Israelite people, and they had to walk in faith to complete it. God had a plan and wanted to work through Joshua. He picked Joshua and the Israelite people to work in and through.

Note God's reassurances:

- "I will be with you . . ." (v. 5)
- "I will not leave you or abandon you." (v. 5)
- "... the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (v. 9)

God went with His people as they were working out His plan. This is just one story among many in the Old Testament where God faithfully remained with

His people. He was with them then, but He had an even greater plan to be with them for generations more.

 Application: How have you seen God stick with you in moments where you were especially worried or scared? How does that reality change your perspective on those moments?

2. I Am with You Always (Matthew 28:16-20)

 This passage is likely familiar to us, but take a moment to carefully read it again. What stands out to you fresh from the Great Commission?

 What instruction and reassurance did Jesus offer His disciples? How does this compare to God's reassurance of Joshua in our previous passage?

This passage is commonly known as the Great Commission—the mission Jesus gave all His disciples (including us).

Does it remind you of the passage we just read in Joshua? In Joshua, God sent the people out to occupy the promised land according to His will. Here in Matthew, Jesus was also sending His people out, but with a new mission: sharing the good news. God loved us so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins, and He desires for as many as possible to be saved by hearing this message and putting their faith in Him.

It is amazing that God wants to use us in His plan to reach as many people as possible. You and I are a vital part of the ministry God is doing in the world at this very moment.

When reading and teaching the Great Commission, we often focus on the commands Jesus gave. We are to go (take action) and make disciples (teach people what it means to follow Jesus). This is important for us to know and understand, but don't miss the encouraging promise Jesus issued at the end of this passage:

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (v.20)

God gave us a very important mission, but we don't go alone. Thankfully, our success doesn't rely on our own abilities. The Holy Spirit is here to guide us and work through us. There are no perfect words to say or a specific model we must use to tell people about Jesus. As we are obedient, the Holy Spirit can work through us in many ways.

Just like God was with His people in the Old Testament, He is with us today too. We are never alone. Even in the messy moments of life, He hears our prayers and He goes with us, in the good times and the bad.

 Application: How does it encourage you to share Jesus with others as you remember He has promised to be with you as you do?

3. Nothing Can Separate Us (Romans 8:38-39)

 What was Paul's “big idea” in this passage in Romans?

 How might that change the way we face daily life?

We've looked at some Old Testament promises from the Lord to be with His people, and at Jesus's promise to be with His disciples always. Paul reinforced this message in His letter to the Romans with a clear reminder: Nothing can separate us from God.

Paul, a devout student of the Scriptures, in whom the Holy Spirit worked powerfully, was persuaded of this truth. Note each implication of this proclamation:

- When we die, we will be with God in heaven, and He will still love us.
- While we are living, even when we mess up and sin, even in the darkest valleys this world has to offer (Psalm 23:4), God is with us and He loves us.
- No angelic being or emissary of the enemy can disrupt this: God is with us and He loves us.
- No human rulers (or any human at all) can change this: God is with us and He loves us.
- Nothing happening now or in the future (nor anything in our past) can change this: God is with us and He loves us.
- We can go anywhere physically, any height or depth, and God will still be with us. He will still love us.
- Not a single created thing can separate us. This truth is still true: God is with us and He loves us.

Once we are saved and found in Jesus, absolutely nothing can undo this—not sin, not our circumstances, not oppression, not our culture or public opinion. Christ has victory over all of this! These things have no power or hold on us. We are firmly rooted in Christ, and that will never change. God is with us and He loves us. Full stop.

 **Application:** How does this give you hope for today? Where do you feel most in need of this hope right now?

Conclusion

Joshua's story in the Old Testament is a beautiful example of God going with His people. It reminds us that God doesn't just call His people to hard things, He walks with them through it. Though the work ahead for Joshua and all Israel would be difficult and take years, God made it clear that He was not sending them alone—He promised to go with them:

- “I will be with you . . .” (Joshua 1:5)
- “I will not leave you or abandon you.” (Joshua 1:5)
- “. . . the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

Just like God sent Joshua into the promised land with a mission, God sends us into our daily lives (and sometimes beyond) with a mission, too: the Great Commission. He commands us to go (act) and make disciples (teaching people what it means to follow Jesus). And while we're doing this, He promises:

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (v.20)

We aren't going alone. He is with us, never abandoning us, and walking with us through whatever the life has in store.

Paul also emphasized this in his powerful words in Romans 8:

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

—Romans 8:28-29

As believers, God will always be with us. Full stop. Nothing can disrupt or stand in the way of this truth.

Let's circle back to where we started, learning about the word Immanuel, which means “God With Us.” “The name symbolized the fact that God would demonstrate his presence with his people in this deliverance.”²

God has a perfect track record of being with His people, He promises to be with us today, and nothing can change that in our future. These truths change everything for our daily lives.

 How has God demonstrated His presence in your life?

 How can we remind one another of the truth of God's presence, even and especially when it is hard to remember and believe?

 How does Jesus's promise to be with you always affect your confidence when it comes to sharing your faith? How does it relieve the pressure on you?

Memorize

"Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

- Joshua 1:9, CSB

References

¹Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Immanuel," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1020.

2. Ibid.