

With You Always Is the King

December 28, 2025

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Joshua 1:1-9; Matthew 28:16-20; Romans 8:38-39

Session Outline

1. I Will Not Leave or Abandon You (Joshua 1:1-9)
2. I Am with You Always (Matthew 28:16-20)
3. Nothing Can Separate Us (Romans 8:38-39)

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.



Leader Guide

With You Always s the King

Introduction

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 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?

The Great Commission

Verses 16-20 summarize all the major themes of the gospel—Christ's divine sovereignty and authority, the nature of discipleship, the universal scope of Christian faith, the importance of doing the will of God, and the promise of Christ's presence with His followers in everything they may experience. Verse 19 has understandably come to be known as the Great Commission. Believers' task in life in essence is to duplicate themselves in others, leading men and women in every part of the world to faith, baptism, and obedience to all of Christ's commands. But the final word of the book properly returns our focus to Christ rather than keeping it on ourselves. Even when we are faithless, He remains faithful.

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?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for His presence and unshakable love. Thank Him for choosing to work in and through us daily. Ask for His help as you step into the hard things He calls you to do with courage, trusting that you aren't alone because He goes with you. Ask Him to strengthen your faith and guide your words as you share Jesus with others.

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

Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Joshua* by Robert Smith Jr.
- *Romans* by R.C. Sproul
- *Exalting Jesus in Matthew* by David Platt

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



Historical Context of Joshua

Purpose

Just as Joshua's leadership begins with the death of Moses, so the book of Joshua follows and completes the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy serves as a means by which the new generation of Israelites renewed their covenant with God. The book of Joshua provides the means by which God fulfilled his part of the covenant. God gave them victories, but each victory required a step of faith. God's provision for the people as their leader and guide bore witness to later generations of the divinely willed leadership for Israel, and his gracious gift of the land showed how the people's faithful fulfillment of the covenant could result in abundant blessing.

Author

The author of the book of Joshua is not identified in the Bible and otherwise remains anonymous. If Joshua himself did not originally compose the book that bears his name, then it may be presumed that someone who knew him and his exploits recorded the work. There are numerous references throughout Joshua that suggest a final formation of the book after his lifetime. These include the death of Joshua and descriptions of memorials or names that are said to remain "still ... today" (4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28–29; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10; 22:17; 23:8).

Setting

The accounts in the book of Joshua occur in the period immediately after Moses's death. This was a new generation, not the one that had left Egypt. The story of Joshua is thus set when the nation of Israel first appeared in the land west of the Jordan River—the land that would bear their name. First Kings 6:1 states that the exodus occurred 480 years before Solomon's fourth year as king (966 BC). In Jdg 11:26, Jephthah said that Israel had been living in regions of Palestine for three hundred years. Jephthah lived around 1100 BC, thus dating the end of the wilderness journey and the beginning of the conquest around 1400 BC.

Special Features

The book of Joshua is named for the most famous member of the Israelites in the generation after the death of Moses. The book describes the history of the generation that crossed the Jordan River and entered the promised land of Canaan. Their battles and faithfulness have a place among the greatest stories of faith in the Old Testament. Joshua led the people to defeat the adversaries who opposed God's people. He then oversaw the division of the land into the tribal allotments. Finally, Joshua renewed the covenant between the people and God.

Extended Commentary

Joshua 1:1-9

1:1 The death of Moses created a leadership vacuum. Moses's epithet, Lord's servant, was first applied at his death (Dt 34:5) as this epithet would first be applied to Joshua at his death (Jos 24:29). Used rarely in the earlier part of the Bible as an evaluation of a person's life, it became more common and was enhanced by Jesus (Jn 15:15), although Paul retained the title (Rm 1:1). Joshua son of Nun, Moses's assistant, identifies Joshua as the one who had been with Moses since Ex 17. "Assistant" (cp. Ex 24:13) translates a different term than "servant."

1:2 God commanded Joshua to prepare the people to cross over the Jordan. The key words cross over (Hb 'avar) ties this section together. The fact that all the people were involved emphasizes the importance of unity among the people of God. God emphasized that the land was something he was giving the Israelites; it was God's grace, not the efforts of the Israelites, that provided the land.

1:3 Repeating the emphasis on the land as God's gift, it now included every place where the sole of your foot treads. Although the "promised land" is normally understood as something that God promised Abram, Isaac, and Jacob (Gn 12:1-3), here God attached the promise to Moses. Deuteronomy 34:4 refers to this promise made to Moses (Ex 3). The extension of Moses's promise to Joshua further establishes him as successor.

1:4 This wilderness is not the land of wandering. The term is used in 8:15, 20 and 12:8 to describe the area east of Ai and the "desert" region of Judah in the south. It thus designates the southern part of the promised land. Lebanon ("white") refers to the mountains north of Israel in the modern land of that name. The land of the Hittites seems not to refer to the Hittite Empire of modern Turkey but the Egyptian and later Assyrian usage of this term to describe the region controlled by the Hittites in the western part of modern Syria. These lands and boundaries identify Canaan as it was known both to the Bible (Gn 10:19; Nm 13:17, 21-22; 34:3-12) and to Egyptian writers of the second millennium BC.

1:5 The reference to as long as you live looks to the end of Joshua's life, concluding this "Table of Contents" in vv. 2-5. The promise I will not leave you anticipates the plea of Gibeon in 10:6, "Don't give up on your servants," using the same expression. Likewise the verb abandon occurs again in Joshua, in Israel's promise of loyalty to God (24:16, 20). This verse forms a hinge, concluding the previous sections of promises and introducing the next section of responsibilities. God's promise of his presence occurs again in 1:9 and thus provides an envelope to 1:6-9. All the responsibilities of these verses depend on God's presence that guarantees the mission's success, just as Christ's presence enables his disciples to achieve their mission (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15, 20; Ac 1:8).

1:6 God's command, Be strong and courageous, already spoken by Moses to Israel (Dt 31:6), appears three times here (Jos 1:7, 9). The expression is used before great undertakings like David's charge to Solomon to build the temple (1Ch 28:20), King Hezekiah's encouragement to his subjects to withstand the enemy's siege (2Ch 32:7), and Joshua's own charge to Israel to fight (Jos 10:25).

1:7 The word success (Hb sakal; cp. succeed in v. 8) is found frequently in the Wisdom literature to describe one's mastery of the world and insight into its challenges ("prudent" in Pr 1:3). The whole instruction (Hb torah) describes God's revelation in the form of the previous books of the law of Moses.

1:8 Two more references to the instruction affirm the key importance of God's revelation. Study and learning of it are to form so much a part of one's life that the words are fully obeyed as in Dt 6:6–9. The stylistic frame of God's promised presence in Jos 1:5, 9 indicates that Joshua's success will come because God is with him, enabling him to read and observe God's Word (Eph 2:8–10).

1:9 This is the third command to be strong and courageous. Moses also commanded the people twice not to be afraid or discouraged (Dt 1:21; 31:8).³

Matthew 28:16–20

28:16–17 On the significance of the disciples' worship, see 28:8–10. The lingering confusion among them about Jesus's resurrection undermines the skeptical theory that the disciples shared a hallucination of Jesus's resurrection because they all expected him to arise.

28:18 Before the resurrection, Jesus had authority (7:29; 9:6, 8; 11:27; 21:23). However, through the resurrection, the Father granted him all authority over heaven and . . . earth, an authority far greater than that which Satan had vainly promised him (see 4:8–9).

28:19 The command to extend their mission worldwide brings to a climax Matthew's repeated theme of Gentile participation in God's salvation. The inclusion of four Gentile women in Jesus's genealogy and the summons of the magi to worship the infant Christ foreshadowed the disciples' mission of making disciples of all nations. Baptism marked a person's entrance into the faith community. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is a reference to the Trinity. Matthew's language shows that a clear understanding of Jesus's nature and identity as God was required before baptism.

28:20 The Great Commission (vv. 19–20) is preceded by a reference to Jesus's authority and followed by the promise of Jesus's spiritual presence among us. Both are necessary if we are to fulfill our God-given mission.⁴

Romans 8:38–39

8:38–39 Paul's "grand persuasion" (Gk *pepeismai*) is in the perfect tense, which indicates a past action that has ongoing impact. Having been persuaded (by God), he stood firm in the belief that nothing could separate him from the love of God. Jesus conquered death and Satan on the cross, ensuring that nothing can change God's love or purpose for us. We "are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pt 1:5).⁵

References

1. Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Immanuel," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1020.
2. Ibid.
3. *CSB Study Bible*. Edited by Trevin Wax. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.