

I Am With You Always – John 14:15-27

Do Not Be Afraid

Pastor Dave Shepardson, Calvary Chapel Nuevo, Bec08

This is our eighth and final message looking at the Great Commission, which is the commissioning of all Christ-followers by our Lord and Savior.

The Great Commission has a strong start seven messages ago with the absolute authority of Jesus Christ as he commissions us to both *be disciples* and to *make disciples*. And today we finish just as strong. After all that we've studied in the Great Commission, at the end is the guarantee that as we receive this commission for our lives that the Lord of Heaven will always be with us.

The last words of the Great Commission are our core truth today.

At the end of Matthew 28:20 Jesus says,

Matthew 28:20 (NLT)

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

The Great Commission is about us joining Jesus in his mission to make disciples of all nations. And as we do, Jesus bookends our commissioning with two of the most incredible promises in all the Bible.

- #1) *As we go* In HIS NAME – we go with *HIS Authority* (verse 18)
- #2) No matter what we face *AS we go* – His Promise is that he will *ALWAYS be with us* (verse 20)

And so here is the question we want to answer today.

AS we join Jesus in the Great Commission, what do these 2 incredible promises ADDRESS in our lives?

(the Promise of His Authority and His Presence)

They both address the same thing that the most frequent command in all of scripture addresses. Both these promises address our fear!

The command that occurs more often than any other in the Bible is some form of the words – “Fear not.” In fact, some list 365 occurrences of the command to not be afraid in the Bible. Enough to apply one to our lives for each day of the year, which is at times how often we need to hear the command “to not be afraid.”

Fear cripples us. It paralyzes us. It keeps us from joining God in his work and it keeps us from the blessings of God’s work.

And here is God’s answer to our fear. Again, and again, throughout the Bible, the way God deals with our fear is by assuring us “***I will be with you.***”

God’s answer to our fear is the promise that *he will be with us* in *whatever* we face in this life.

And most often, when God is addressing fear in a believer it is fear in response to God’s call (his commissioning) of that believer’s life.

When the Patriarch Isaac (Abraham’s son) is in the midst of three conflicts with three potential enemies, in Genesis 26:24 God appears to him and says,

Genesis 26:24 (NLT)

24 . . . “I am the God of your father, Abraham,” he said (there’s the Authority). ***“Do not be afraid, for I am with you*** (there’s the Promise)

When Moses is explaining to the Lord at the burning bush why God should *not* send him to confront the Pharaoh of Egypt in Exodus 3:11-12 we read,

Exodus 3:11–12 we read (NLT)

11 But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

12 God answered, “I will be with you . . .

Notice *God doesn’t disagree* with Moses. God’s like, “Yeah, you’ve got a point, you are a nobody. But... *I will be with you.*” Over and over again throughout the Bible God’s answer to his followers who are afraid is “***Fear not, because I will be WITH YOU***”

Then why are we still so often controlled by our fear – especially a fear of *truly following Jesus*? Here is maybe a hint of the answer to the question “Why am I still fearful?” The promise of “***I will be with you***” is only as good as the trust and faith we have in the person who’s making the promise.

If a stranger comes up to one of my grandkids and says, “It’s okay, I will be with you” they’re going to say, “Who are you?” and then (hopefully) they’ll scream, kick that guy in the (shin), and run away.

But if I say to one of my grandkids, “It’s okay, I will be with you every step of the way. Hold my hand and we’ll walk together.” I promise you they’re going to say, “Okay Pop-pop. I trust you, let’s go.”

The question is . . . Do we have *THAT TRUST* in the Lord?

Do we *know* him and *love* him and *trust* him enough to say, “Okay, Lord, if you will be with me every step of the way, then I will hold your hand, and I will have no fear.”?

I think one of the many problems with the me-centered culture that we’ve created is that we are *not moved* by the *promise* of the Lord in Heaven when he guarantees to *be with us, always* no matter what comes our way. I think in reality we’re more like, “No it’s good that Jesus is with me and all, but I just hope he *does* what I ask him to do *when* I ask him to do it and *how* I ask him to do it... If he’ll do things *my way* then it’ll be great if he tags along.”

I think in our inflated ego we still tend to see Jesus like Robin Williams as the Genie in the Lamp in Aladdin.

But when we begin to truly understand *who* Jesus Christ *is* and when we begin to truly understand the *authority* he has over all creation, and when we truly (and finally) surrender to *his Lordship* over the entirety of our lives, then the *confidence* and the *assurance* and the *faith* to do what Jesus is calling us to do will come from knowing *who he is* and knowing that *he will be with us* always. And if he is *with us* then whatever we face we will know – he will *walk us through it*.

That is what Jesus gave his disciples on their last night before he faced the cross. In John Chapter 14, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his own death on the cross the very next day and he begins in John 14:1:

John 14:1 (NLT)

1 “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.

The disciples were scared and uncertain – they were full of fear and the remedy of the Lord is *trust in God and trust in Jesus as your Lord*.

And then, skipping down to verse 15, I want you to see the power of the promise of the *presence of God* in our lives. *This* is Jesus' answer to the fear that the disciples had about the uncertainty of things to come. I'm just going to read the verses that have to do with the promise that Jesus will *always be with* his disciples – not just the original twelve, but also his disciples today.

John 14:15–18 (NLT)

15 *"If you love me, obey my commandments.*

16 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you.*

17 *He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth . . . (then, at the end of vs 17) you know him (The Holy Spirit), *because he lives with you now and later will be in you.**

18 *No, I will not abandon you as orphans - I will come to you.*

First, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will be *with you*, and *in you*, and will *never leave you*.

Then Jesus says, "**I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.**" Jesus addresses the fear of the disciples with the promise of *always being with them*. Both he and the Holy Spirit as equal members of the Godhead and Jesus wants us to be on hundred percent certain that the entire Godhead will be *with us*. Look down at John 14:20 and 23.

John 14:20 & 23 (NLT)

20 *When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.* (words of complete identification)

...

23 *Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and WE will come and make our home with each of them.*

These are the words of God being permanently *with us* and now the entire Trinity is referenced all centered around one "*fear-ending*" point. *As a Christ-follower (a disciple) God will always be with you, no matter what, even to the end of the age.*

Guys, the gift that Jesus gave us to dispel all fear about being and doing what he calls us to be and do *is himself, with us always*.

And the gift of his always presence with us is meant to give us peace. Look down at John 14:27 and let me read it out of the ESV.

John 14:27 (ESV)

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Why can the world “not give” the Peace that Jesus gives? Because the Peace that Jesus gives – is himself. His presence *is* our Peace. And it is the Peace that comes from the assurance that he *loves us*, that he is at *work for good*, in our lives, and that he is *always with us*. And so, the end of verse 27 says, ***Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.***

God’s Word – *counters FEAR* – with *FAITH* that the *LORD is WITH US*

That he is ALWAYS with us
That he is AT WORK for our Good in all things
That he will go BEFORE us and BEHIND us
That he will be our SHIELD and our VICTORY
That he is our GOOD SHEPHERD
That he is the SOURCE of our Abundant Life

We have got to take Jesus out of the finite understanding of our minds. This is the God who loves us, who died for us and who gave us eternal life and he promises to *always be with us*. So – ***Don’t let your hearts be troubled Neither let them be afraid.***

But, do you want to know why I think we are still so fearful? Because we don’t *know* his presence – meaning we don’t *experience* his presence. And we don’t experience his presence because we don’t enter his presence and because we don’t enter his presence, we don’t sense his presence. But – when we do... then we do. When we do enter his presence then we do sense his presence.

Have you ever been so preoccupied with something that you don’t notice when someone walks into the room? Have you ever been so preoccupied that even when someone does enter the room and you acknowledge they are there you still don’t pay any attention to them? (Can you say... cell phone)?

Guys, we are so preoccupied with the world and we are so preoccupied with ourselves that most of the time – and I mean almost all of the time – we are not even aware that God is in the room! Not because he is not there, but because we are not paying attention to him.

Of the 40 or so separate series we’ve taught here, one of my absolute favorites is *Alone With God*. It is a six-part series on the importance and the process of truly getting alone with God. And when you do truly get alone with God you sense his presence. And the

more you are alone with God the more you know he is always with you and he will always be with you.

That is the promise of Jesus. That concludes the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:20(B) (NLT)

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

To close, let's read the entire commissioning of *all* Christ-followers one more time.

Matthew 28:18–20 (NLT)

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. (that's the power)

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. (that's the commission) ***And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*** – (that's the promise)

How does the commissioning of all disciples make you feel? Does it make you wonder if you are one? And does the *power* and the *promise* of the commissioning cause you to want to make sure that you are a part of it?

We're about to take communion, which is another picture of our identification with Christ and of him always being with us. But before we do, can I ask you to consider your own commitment to Jesus? If you stop at acknowledging that *he exists* or that he was a “Good Teacher” the Bible says that does you no good at all.

But ask him to be your Savior and commit to make him your Lord. *That* gives you eternal life along with the promise that the Lord of Heaven ***Will ALWAYS be With you, even to the end of the age.***