

- ❖ The remnant people desperately needed to hear these simple words from the Lord ... **STEAD: WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE WEIGHT OF THIS TINY ORACLE. THE FAILED CROPS SEEM TO SAY, 'THE LORD IS AGAINST US,' AND THE UNBUILT TEMPLE SEEM TO SAY, 'THE LORD IS ABSENT FROM US.'** ... In our own life, each of us have come to similar conclusions ... It's not uncommon for us to allow our circumstances to dictate what's true ... In these times, we need God's word to set us right, to build our faith, to provide assurance and hope ... **I am with you**
 - Despite the temple lying in ruin, the Lord is present ... Despite the hardship, the Lord is present ... He was with them in exile ... He was the One who released them, and who called them to return home ... Not once did He abandon them ... Not once did He forget them ... **I am with you** ... This is **the Lord's declaration** ... The truth we need to hear and take possession of
- ❖ **Through His word, the Lord stirs up the spirit of those who hear** ... This stirring up is faith and assurance and hope ... **Faith comes by hearing** ... It's God who instills faith within His people ... Faith to obey ... Faith to press on ... Faith to follow Him ... **My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me** ... God's voice is His word
 - **If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word ... and we will make our home with him** ... To keep His word is to keep trusting Him, keep following Him, keep holding firm to Him ... This is obeying Him ... This is putting our faith in Him ... We do this because we love Him ... We love Him because He first loved us ... Everything flows from our union with Him ... **CALVIN: WE SHOULD NEVER BE ATTENTIVE TO HIS WORD, WERE HE NOT TO OPEN OUR EARS; AND THERE WOULD BE NO INCLINATION TO OBEY, WERE HE NOT TO TURN OUR HEARTS; IN A WORD, BOTH WILL AND EFFORT WOULD IMMEDIATELY FAIL IN US, WERE HE NOT TO ADD HIS GIFT OF PERSEVERANCE**
 - Promise to make His home in us speaks of becoming God's temple ... Where He dwells with His people ... **I am with you**
- ❖ **The Lord of Armies is their God** ... Speaks of restored relationship and remembrance of covenant ... The Sovereign Lord who ordains all things and sustains all things and works through all things – **He is their God**
 - Nothing indicates that their situation has changed ... The crops are the same ... The hardship is still there ... What's different? ... The people have the Lord's assurance → I dwell here, with you, among you
 - I dwell here in this ruin ... I dwell here in this hardship ... I dwell here in this uncertainty ... I dwell here _____