

Do Not Fear For I Am With You

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Date: 01 January 2017

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[0 : 00] Open your Bibles with me to Isaiah 41. If you open right in the middle of your Bible, you should come close. Isaiah 41.

I'll read the first 16 verses. Be silent before me, you islands. Let the nations renew their strength. Let them come forward and speak.

Let us meet together at the place of judgment. Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service?

He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to wind-blown chaff with his bow.

He pursues them and moves on unscathed by a path his feet have not traveled before. Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning?

[1 : 06] Ah, I the Lord, with the first of them and with the last. I am he. The islands have seen it in fear.

The ends of the earth tremble. They approach and come forward. Each helps the other and says to his brother, Be strong. The craftsman encourages the goldsmith, And he who smooths the hammer, Spurs on him who strikes the anvil.

He says of the welding, It is good. He nails down the idol so it will not topple. But you, O Israel, My servant, Jacob, Whom I have chosen, You descendants of Abraham, My friend, I took you from the ends of the earth.

From its farthest corners I called you. I said, You are my servant. I have chosen you and have not rejected you.

So, Do not fear, For I am with you. Do not be dismayed, For I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you.

[2 : 28] I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced. Those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish.

Though you search for your enemies, You will not find them. Those who wage war against you Will be as nothing at all.

For I am the Lord your God, Who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear, I will help you.

Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, For I myself will help you, Declares the Lord, Your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel.

See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, New and sharp, With many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, And reduce the hills to chaff.

[3 : 36] You will winnow them, The wind will pick them up, And the gale will blow them away. But, You will rejoice in the Lord, And glory in the Holy One of Israel.

Our friend, Stuart Elliott, Is on a mission to get preachers to preach more simply, With words that people can understand, And he challenges ministers to choose small words, That children can understand, And even grown-ups.

And this morning, Our text is just eight words, And none of them have more than four letters. Now, children, You know a lot of words that have one, two, or three, or four letters.

God's words to his people in Isaiah 41.10 are these, Do not fear, For I am with you.

Say that with me. Do not fear, For I am with you. The verse goes on to say, Do not be dismayed, For I am your God.

[4 : 59] I will strengthen you, And help you. I will uphold you, By my righteous right hand. Here in Isaiah chapter 41, The mighty nations were flexing their muscles, And smaller nations like Judah, Were trembling in fear.

And well they might, When their trust is in an idol, That somebody has to hold, And say to the guy with the hammer, Nail it! And he nails it, So that it will not topple.

And that's where their help comes from. But no wonder God can say to his people, Do not fear, For I, The living God, The creator of heaven and earth, The maker and ruler over all, I am with you.

Well this was the message to Judah of old, But I can assure you, It was far from a unique message, That was just for Judah of old.

Rather, Do not be afraid, Is the most often repeated command, Of God in scripture. No other command is repeated more often, Than those words, Do not fear, Do not be afraid.

[6 : 12] And when God gives his people, Such a command, Forbidding fear, He always has good reasons, For giving such. And, Out of all the reasons, Found in the Bible, None are repeated more, Than these words, That are in our text.

Why should you not fear? For I am with you. I, Am with you. So when famine strikes, The promised land, And Isaac has to leave, And go into Gerar, The land of the Philistines, Pagans, He's afraid for his life, He's afraid for his possessions, He's afraid he won't get enough to eat, But the Lord appears to him, And says, Do not be afraid, For I am with you.

Well his son Jacob, Left his homeland, To go through a dangerous wilderness, To a strange country, Some 500 miles away, He went for two reasons, First to find a wife, Second to escape, From his brother Esau, Who wanted to kill him, For having stolen his birthright, And as Jacob laid down his head, For the night, On a rock for a pillow, The Lord appeared to him, No doubt, Trembling with fear, With his brother seeking his life, And a dark wilderness, In front of him, And who knows what, And the Lord said, I am with you, And will watch over you, 21 years later, The Lord tells him, Okay now, Go back to the land, Of your father and mother, Your relatives, Oh but that meant, The fearful prospect, Of meeting up with his brother Esau again, And so again,

The Lord says to him, I will be with you, Moses, There at the burning bush, Sent by God, To the mighty Pharaoh of Egypt, To rescue his people, The Israelites, And he responds in fear, Well who am I, That I should go, To Pharaoh, And bring the Israelites, Out of Egypt, To which God said, I will go with you, It's not who you are, Moses, It's who I am, Who's going with you, Forty years, After the wilderness wandering, Moses dies, And God chooses Joshua, To be the man, To lead Israel, Into the promised land, But the land's still filled, With enemies, With cities, That are walled up to the skies, With giants, In the land, Joshua had seen them, For himself, Remember he was one of the spies, Forty years earlier, That he had gone on, And seen all of this, And so Joshua,

Faced with this fearful prospect, Of taking these Israelites, Into this land, Is told, Do not be terrified, Do not be discouraged, For the Lord your God, Will be with you, Wherever you go, Jeremiah, It's a young man, Called to be a prophet, He had never spoken, For God before, Now he is called, To speak the very words, Of God to the nation, The nation that was stubborn, And turning their backs on God, And not just to Israel, But to speak to the nations, I'm going to speak through you, To the nations around you, And Jeremiah, And fear begs off, Saying, Aha, Sovereign Lord, I do not know, How to speak, I am only a child, To which the Lord responds, Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you, David, Who lived much of his life, In the valley of the shadow of death, Is able to say, I will fear no evil,

[10 : 03] Why not, David, Because you are with me, The eleven disciples of Jesus, At the great commission, Being sent by him into all the world, To make disciples to Jesus Christ, From all the nations, The pagan Gentiles, But to start among the Jews, In the very city that had murdered Jesus, Just forty days earlier, Cause for much fear, And yet Jesus says, With those last words, Before he ascended into heaven, I will be with you, Always, Even to the end of the age, The apostle Paul preaching in Corinth, Where he meets with great opposition, And one night the Lord appears to him in a vision, Do not be afraid, For I am with you, You see these words are not just something for Israel, In Isaiah 41.10, But they're for his people, In all different situations, In all different generations,

And years that have come and gone, And they are for the people of God yet, In 2017, And so, This simple, Repeated message, I believe, Is just the tonic we need, As we are setting out, Into another new year, A year of uncertainty, As it always is, So let's draw several lessons, From this repeated command, First, The Lord knows where you live, And how you feel, He knows that this fallen world, Can be a scary place to live, He knows the specific problems, That cause fear to well up in your heart, The growing threat of terrorism, War and rumors of war, Things that cause men's hearts, To fail them for fear, What we call natural disasters, Storms of all sorts, Bugs that can't be, Bacteria, And other things that can't be healed, And fatal health diseases, Financial and job stresses,

Concerns for loved ones, And it all brings fear, Moral, Political, Societal changes, That are happening so quickly around us, That we wonder, How's it all going to end?

And how's it going to affect me, And my family, And my grandchildren, And some of these fearful problems, We are taking into the new year, Aren't we? And we'll meet plenty of new ones, As we go into this year, And the first thing I want you to see, From these repeated words of God, To his people, Is that they reveal, A God who knows every detail of your life, He knows the things that cause you fear, Not only the things, But he knows your heart of fear, And when you need to hear these words, Do not fear, For I am with you, The second lesson, God's presence with his people, Is not an occasional thing, God's presence with his people, Is not an occasional thing, We should not think that, Well just because God came occasionally, To his people, And told them these things, That it's only occasionally, That he's with them, No he's just reminding them, Occasionally of it, But he's with them always,

This is, His presence is not a once in a while thing, It's not something that comes and goes, No God is with his people, All day, Every day, He's not just with us, In those unique, God moments, As some like to call them, When we're, When we're, Made especially aware, That God is with us, He knows my circumstance, He knows my heart, No, The reality for every child of God, Is that every moment, Is a God moment, Every moment, Is no less, God present, With us, Than those moments, When he seems like, we could reach out and touch our Lord Jesus.

[14 : 09] For he's always with us. I will be with you always. He's always watching over. He's never slumbering or sleeping. He's watched care over his people. I'll be with you always.

An abiding eternal presence. Now, just how near he is with us is seen in the Bible's clear teaching that the living God indwells his newborn people.

So God is present. How present? Well, he has taken up his residence and lives inside of all of those who put their trust in him. He's just that near, that present, ever present.

Now, explain that. How does God dwell in the heart of a Christian? I'll explain that when you tell me how your soul dwells in your body.

Do you understand that? I can't explain that, but it's true. And it's just as true that the living God, by his spirit, dwells in the hearts of his people. It's the clear teaching of Scripture.

[15 : 18] Jesus said it in John 14, 23, If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him. And we will come to him and make our home with him.

We. The Father and the Son coming and making their home with the one that loves him. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And God the Holy Spirit is not left out for concerning the spirit of truth. Jesus said, He lives with you and will be in you. And Paul says, Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God.

So let this truth sink in. All that God is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all that he is, is with you all the time.

He dwells within you. He's just that ever-present. That just means that every day that you live of the new year, you will live with him, dwelling with you, in you.

[16 : 32] And that means that he'll be with you wherever you go and whatever you do. So when you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you pass through the rivers, when you pass through the fires, with you.

You get it? You never walk alone. There's a song about that in there. We need to take it to heart. We never do anything alone, Christian.

He's always with us. You're never left to your own resources. You know, Asaph came to realize that blessed reality. He had forgotten it for a while when he was looking over at the wicked and seeing how good they had it and was sitting in self-pity at how sick he was and all the troubles he had in his life.

And he had forgotten the best blessings he had in life because he didn't have those blessings of health and wealth, like the wicked. He was almost wanting to trade places with them.

And then God took him into the sanctuary and he put everything right again. He came to his senses. And when he came to his senses, he says, how could I ever miss it?

[17 : 41] I'm the blessed one. For he says, I am always with you. You hold me by my right hand. I'm always with you.

You see, if God is always with me, then I'm always with him. And he holds me by my right hand. That was the great thing that Asaph had forgotten. And when he was brought back to reality, he begins to treasure it again.

This is my treasure. Better than their wealth. Better than their health. And all the things going for them. To live apart from God is death.

The best life on earth, apart from God is death. But to live with God is life. For in him is life. And this is eternal life, to know him.

And Jesus Christ whom he sent. So God's promise to his people is what? Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. That's just the same promise put in negative terms.

[18 : 39] I am with you. Never will I leave you. Telling us the same thing. And is that not our eternal security? Is that not our security for the new year? Is it not our eternal security?

Why is it that you are secure forever? Whatever happens this year, next year, the following year, for all eternity. What is it that secures your eternity with him? It's just that he will never forsake you.

He will always be with you. Precious lesson from these words. Do not fear for I am with you. God knows where you live and how you feel.

And God's presence with his people is not an occasional thing. Thirdly, God's presence with you is the cure for all your fears. His presence with you is the cure for your fears.

Now, that point can't be missed, can it? Do not fear. Why? For I am with you. In other words, my presence is the reason that you should not fear. How can you fear when I'm with you?

[19 : 51] Now, I think we sometimes come up against such a statement and we say, well, I understand. I understand the comfort found in this promise. But why, in my experience, does it not remove all my worries and fears?

I can understand it rationally here. Yeah. But some people seem to draw more comfort out of that promise than I do. Some people get more mileage out of that promise than I seem to be able to.

Yes, I know God is with me, and yet I fear. Well, how well do you know the one who is with you? How well do you know the one who says, I am with you?

Because that determines how much comfort you draw from His presence with you. So I went a free trip to outer space. Maybe not in 2017, but maybe it's coming.

And so I get a free trip. And I'm there cruising through outer space. But something drastically goes wrong with the spaceship, and it starts shaking violently, and the instrument panel lights up, and sounds of alarms are going off, and I'm just petrified, thinking we're going to shake into a million pieces.

[21 : 07] This is the end. But happily for me, I'm not alone. I'm not alone. There's one other person with me. The problem is I don't know him very well.

I just met him. In fact, I'm not sure if he's just another ordinary guy like myself who won some sweepstakes and got this free trip to outer space like I am. So though he's with me, I draw precious little comfort from him.

Unless it's just that we're both going to die together, holding hands. But no comfort to me in my fears, because I don't know him. I don't know who he is. But then I start talking to him, and I learn that he's an experienced astronaut, and he's an electrical and mechanical engineer.

And he's made many trips before, in and out into outer space. He knows everything about the spacecraft. He knows how to read the instrument panels, how to make in-flight corrections as needed, and none of this is taking him by surprise.

He's as cool and calm as a cucumber. And knowing all this about him, my heart stops beating so fast, and I start having my fears melt away into confidence and peace.

[22 : 19] I have great comfort just knowing that he's with me. He's with me. Makes all the difference because of who I know him to be.

So much of the peace and comfort of God's promised presence depends on who it is that is with you, and how well you know him.

So do not fear, for I am with you. Child of God, who is it that's with you? Well, he's the all-knowing, all-wise God. All-knowing, all-wise.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from him. Nothing in all of time is unknown to him. He knows the end from the beginning, so nothing takes him by surprise. He's unflappable.

He's prepared for every problem you'll face in this year. In fact, he's planned it. He's planned it. He knows how to work it all together for your good.

[23 : 22] And as for God, his way is perfect. And he knows just what to do in every trial that you'll face. He's not only all-knowing and all-wise, he's the almighty king of the universe.

And all things great and small are under his control, from the sun to your headache. It's all under his control. He reigns over it all. The warring nations, everything and everyone that personally affects your life, he rules and reigns over it every moment of this coming year, every event of your life.

And he's directing it all to fulfill his purpose and his plan. And since he's almighty, nothing is too hard for him. He has power to deliver his people.

The Lord, your God, is with you. And he is mighty to save. So, as Jeff Thomas says, here's the shortest bridge from despair to hope.

Our God reigns. What causes fear and despair? How do I get from here to hope? Just remember that the God who's with you is the one that's reigning.

[24 : 33] Over it all. Over it all. And he reigns with love for his people. An everlasting love. From everlasting to everlasting, the Lord's love is with those who fear him.

There was never a time when he was not loving you. There will never be a time when he is not loving you. He loved you before you loved him. You only love him because he first loved you.

And that love was a demonstrated love. For he demonstrated his love for you. And that while you were still a sinner, he sent his son, Christ. And Christ died for you.

It was a sacrifice. Sacrificial love for you. An unfailing love. A love that will never let me go. A love that nothing can separate me from.

Life, death, demon, angel, past, future. And it's an act of love. That will never stop doing us good. What a king. What a banner to march under.

[25 : 34] His banner over us is love. And so I march every step of this new year under the banner of his love. All wise, all knowing, almighty, and reigning with love for his people.

He's gracious. He's compassionate. He's slow to anger. He's plenteous in mercy. He's righteous and just. He's absolutely faithful, as we just sang. And there's so much more about him.

You see, we're just getting started. But he's all this for you, child of God. This is the God who's with you. This is the God whose presence is your comfort in fear.

No wonder God's presence with you is the cure for your fears. Moses, it isn't who you are. It's who he is. So, give to the wind your fears.

And the better you know him, the more comfort you'll draw from his abiding presence. And it begs the question, doesn't it? How do you get to know him?

[26 : 41] How do you get to know him better? The same way you get to know each other better. You spend time and you talk with each other. And you listen to each other. And I don't know anybody who's ever got to know God who didn't do that.

Didn't talk to him. Didn't listen to him. And in doing so, we come to know him. And then, when I hear the promise that I am with you, I can say, to the wind fears, this is my God.

And he's with me. He's for me. So, in the coming year, let's make it our goal to get to know our Savior better. The Apostle Paul can say, after being a Christian for some 30 years, I want to know Christ.

So, it doesn't matter how long you've been a Christian. Three months or 30 years. That'd be a good goal for this year. I want to know Jesus better. And as we come to know him better, we'll know more of the comfort of his promised presence.

The fourth lesson is that fear is a signal that we were never meant to live apart from God. It's like one of those lights on the dashboard. Something's wrong. And fear is that signal, that warning light that says, you were never meant to live without God.

- [28 : 06] But right now, you're trying the impossible. You're thinking of life in terms of the impossible. Man was never hardwired to face fearful situations without God with us.
- So, you have that presentation to make in front of people and you're scared stiff. And that fear is the symptom of your own inability and inadequacy.
- To face this alone. And if we understand this about ourselves, then we can make our fears work for us. Let them be a signal, awaking us to our need for God.
- A signal calling us to bring the unseen God into the picture and to trust in him to be my adequacy, my sufficiency.
- So, I bring my inadequacies into the light of God who's with me and I trust his full resources instead of my emptiness. And that's what David did.
- [29 : 03] He made his fears work for him. We're familiar with this song. I think Steve Green had it to a song that we sang around the house for the children. Psalm 56.3 When I am afraid, I will trust in you.
- When I am afraid. Not if. We live in a fallen world. We're going to be afraid. That comes with the territory. And when I'm afraid and when I feel fear, when I feel the first stir of worry, I'm going to do something.
- I'm going to shift my focus from the problem to you, Lord. And when I'm afraid, I will trust you. I will let fear be the trigger that reminds me. I wasn't meant to live with this problem without him.
- And maybe that's why I'm so fearful that I've been trying to put the pieces together in my problem without him. And when I am afraid, I will trust in you. And what a different orientation. And nothing looks the same with God in the picture.
- And now I'm back to my home base, the way I was meant to live and flourish as a human being, trusting in my Heavenly Father, a present Savior, a present Holy Spirit.
- [30 : 09] So let your fears direct your faith to your all-adequate Lord. Faith is receiving grace, isn't it?
- We're saved by faith. It doesn't earn anything. It's not a doing grace. Faith is an empty-handed, receiving grace. And that's what David did, you see.
- When he's afraid, he turns to the Lord and he holds out empty hands. I need help, Lord. And his trust is not in himself, but in him.
- And it puts his heart at rest when he sees the one that he's depending on and expecting help from. Courage, patience, strength, all that you need is in Jesus.
- And he's with you. So look to him. Turn to him. Depend upon him. And continuing fear is an indicator that we're forgetting something. Or more pointedly, we're forgetting someone.
- [31 : 11] Listen how God puts it to his fearing people in Isaiah 51. I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men? The sons of men who are but grass.
- That you forget the Lord your maker. The one who stretches out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. That you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor who is bent on destruction.
- If you're afraid, you're probably forgetting someone. Me, God says. Your maker. The maker of everything. Heaven and earth. You've forgotten me.
- The wisdom that I had to think of all this. The power to bring it forth out of nothing. You've forgotten me.
- And you have forgotten that these men that you're fearing are my creatures and their very next breath is in my hand.

[32 : 12] You've forgotten things. Fear is a, it's a signal that we have, that we've never been made, never been made to live apart from God and when we have it, it's a call back to set our faith in the living God.

Fifth, if God is always with you, then strive to live with the awareness of his presence. Wouldn't that be a pitiful thing that we would go through all of life and have this living God with us and never to think about it?

Never to lay hold of it. Just, and we get to heaven and we, you mean I had that? You mean I could have had this wonderful relation?

I don't know that that's even possible. I haven't thought that far but you get the point. How much of our lives do we live as if it's not true and we become the poor and God's glory is not praised and exalted as it ought.

How often we have reason to say with Jacob, surely God is in this place and I knew it not. Every day, wherever we're at, how many times we get home at night, boy, he was there with me and I wasn't even aware of it.

[33 : 27] I wasn't even thinking of it. Well, let's work in this new year being preoccupied with God and his presence with us. We need this truth to grip us every day since after all, it's true every day and it's true for us that we might lose our fears because of it every day.

The importance of realizing his presence. I think it's seen in the way that this command is repeated over and over again. Why does he say this? Do not fear for I am with you.

Do not fear for I am with you. Why can you not read far in your Bible before you're told again I'm with you? Because God is saying this is critical, Christian. If you're going to walk and live the Christian life, you've got to live it with me.

With me. With an awareness of my presence. So, it's seen in the repetition of these words but it's also seen then that it's the Lord's last words to us.

Or the very last words before Jesus left us and went into heaven was that he wasn't leaving us in one sense. Bodily, yes. But lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age.

[34 : 36] Those are his last words. They should be ringing in our ears like an echo until we meet him face to face in the flesh. I'm with you. I'm with you always.

I'm with you to the very end of this age. And then we'll be together bodily in the next stage. Oh, he's showing us the importance of these words.

You know, when Mary heard what God had said to the shepherds about her little baby, Luke says, Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

My son, the Savior, she treasured it. She pondered it. That means she returned to it often. My son, to you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord.

She pondered it. Should we not do the same with Jesus' words, his last words to us? I'm with you always. Oh, treasure, treasure.

[35 : 49] Draw aside and think about it. What's scaring you? He's with me. He's with me. He's with me. There's much more nectar in this flower than we have yet drawn from it.

You've seen the hummingbird zip, zip, zip, zip right around the corbels. There's a whole lot more sweetness in this flower of Christ's presence with his people than what we've drawn out. So let's not just hurry off to the next thing.

Let's spend some time pondering this wonderful reality that changes our whole perspective on life and the things that scare us. This is my comfort in life and in death.

He's with me. An ever-present help in trouble. That's a truth to wake up to. Psalm 139. When I awake, I'm still with you.

So while I was sleeping, he wasn't. I've been with him all night. When I wake up, I'm still with you. Wonderful truth to wake up to. Good morning, Lord. I'm going to live this day with you.

[36 : 54] Wonderful truth to go to bed to. And as I lay down my head to sleep, he's not going to sleep, but he'll keep watching. So I can sleep. Wonderful truth to live by from morning till evening all the day long.

I wonder what a difference it would make if every morning when you wake up, there would be a knock at the door and there would be Jesus Christ in the flesh coming to be your helper for the day.

And so there he is. He's just always right at your right hand there. He's just there. And as you go through the day, he's there in all that he is for all that you need. And so, Lord, this child's acting in strange ways.

What do I do here? Well, let me tell you. Let me tell you. Lord, I don't have the patience with this one or that one. Can you help me?

Well, sure, let me help you. Lord, I'm all out of strength. I can't go on. Oh, I've just got what you need.

[38 : 00] I've got sufficient strength for you. And throughout the day, whatever your problems, whatever your fears, you just, Lord, what should I do?

Can you help in this situation? And because he's there, you see, you make use of him. He's your helper, your ever-present help. Now, you get the message. The reality is he is there.

He is your ever-present help. Are you using him? Are you making use of him as you ought? Wake up to this truth.

Go to bed to this truth. Live your day with this truth of his presence. And don't let the fact that he is unseen fool you.

You know, that's why he gave you faith. Because faith is being sure of what we do not see. It's being certain of what we do not see. Nothing more important to be certain of than the fact that he's with me.

[38 : 58] And faith lays hold of that unseen promise and it sees him as present with us. And that's why David could say in Psalm 16 and verse 8, I have set the Lord always before me.

You see, this was something he did in his mind. This is the way faith operates. I have set the Lord always before me. in the same way that I have set this book here right there before me.

So faith, my hand takes hold of this object, the material object and sets it before me. Faith takes hold of that which is unseen and sets it before me. The living Christ.

And because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. And so I never walk alone and I say, Lord, what should I do now?

I turn to him. Lord, I don't have what it takes for this one, this meeting, this stress. Can you help me? Because he's there.

[40 : 07] And so may we set him before us and see him at our right hand. Things look scary in the shadows of the night, don't they?

Kids, things are always scarier at night. But then the sun comes up in the morning. It's not so scary in your room anymore, is it? You know, when we live in this world without the light of the world shining in upon our consciousness, we get scared of a lot of things and we walk in the dark and it's scary.

But when we realize that the light of the world is with us, it sheds a whole new light on our lives and we're able to say, do not fear because he's with me.

So let's not only live for him in this coming year, let's live with him. And it's in that way that we live for him with our eyes fixed on Jesus. And lastly, I just want to remind you that the Lord Jesus paid an awful lot to give us the privilege of living together with him.

1 Thessalonians 5.10, he died for us so that whether we're awake or asleep, that's Bible code language for alive or dead, he died for us so that whether we're alive or dead, we may live together with him.

[41 : 31] That was the stated purpose for his dying on the cross, that we could live together with him. Now that was the whole unsolved problem of the Old Testament. How can this holy God live together with sinful men?

Prophets and temple worship pointed to the solution. It will be by an innocent suffering and shedding blood and dying in the place of the guilty. But Old Testament worship could not bring this about because the death of animals could never really atone for humans, but those animals pointed to the one who would, the Lamb of God, who would really take away sin, the dividing, separating thing between God and man.

And so Christ died for sin, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, to bring us so that we can live together with him.

You say, yes, I'm looking forward to that one day. No, no, not just, not just, if you're dead, you go to live with him. Christ died for sin so that whether awake or asleep, we might live together with him.

That means right now. That means all of our waking days, we might live together with him. Oh, but think what it cost our Savior that we might live with God.

[42 : 55] We might have him ever present with us. His constant source of comfort and joy and peace here on the earth was the presence that his Father was always with him.

In fact, it was something he enjoyed as God for eternity, to always know that inner Trinitarian fellowship of Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

And now here he is on the earth and sometimes men rejected him and his heart, his human heart falls back on the fact that my Father's with me. My Father's with me.

He's always with me. And so he said it in John 8, the one who sent me is with me and he has not left me alone for I always do what pleases him. He's always with me.

And he says to his disciples, you are those who have stood with me in my trials. You see, in his humanity he had this desire for social friendship and it was a peaceful thing to the Savior to know that in all of his trials these men stood with him.

[44 : 12] They were with him when everybody else was leaving him. And when they forsook and followed him no more they continued with him and he found great comfort in their presence.

John 16, he says, but a time is coming and has come when you, you who have been with me will be scattered each to your own home. You will leave me all alone yet I am not alone for my Father is with me.

My Father's with me. And it came, didn't it? And did they ever scatter? And did they leave him all alone and yet it was his joy and his privilege to know that my Father is with me.

And then he takes our sins upon himself and he goes to the place of punishment. And when darkness covered the earth that I knew after those three hours of darkness he cried, my God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

the very thing that had been his comfort that when others left him alone, I'm not alone, he's with me, he's now left alone to suffer the wrath that we would have suffered forever.

[45 : 36] He is forsaken that we might never be, that never will I forsake you might be true of us because the Father forsook his Son, the Father poured out his wrath upon his Son and strange though it be, it's true, the Father never loved his Son more than when his wrath was being poured out upon him and as the Lamb he was willing to suffer it representing God as the sacrifice for man's sins.

This is what it cost, cost him being forsaken that I might never be. Now it's either him or you because God can't live with sinners. Some of you have been trying to live your life without him and you may make it all the way through 80, 90, 100 years but there's coming a day when you will need him and you stand before that great white throne and you look into the eyes of the one that made you and the one that gave you commandments that you turned your back on.

You will need him then. You will need his blood and righteousness to cover you and oh to be found outside of Christ in that day is to be left alone forever and ever and ever.

No one said those words more often than Jesus. It was he who warned people to flee the coming wrath. Why? Because he loves us. He doesn't want that happening to you.

He wants you to come and trust in him who bore the wrath that God might never have to say to you depart from me you worker of iniquity.

[47 : 20] Precious thing to belong to Jesus to be able to go into this coming year with all of his uncertainties and to know that after death is this judgment.

Wonderful thing just to know that Jesus is always with me and he will be with me in every day of this coming year. He'll be with me in the day of my death. He'll be with me in the day of my judgment and he will be with me through all eternity.

Let's wake up to that reality. Let's go to sleep to it. Let's live and encourage one another with these words. Henry Spafford was able to write a song in the face of darkness the darkness of the Atlantic Ocean that had swallowed up his daughters and when he got to the place in the Atlantic the captain of the ship he had asked him earlier to point out the spot where his daughters had gone down in a shipwreck and he pointed out the spot and they're alone on the Atlantic and yet not alone.

Spafford wrote the words that we're going to sing. I think they're precious words for us to sing. If Spafford could write these words in the face of such circumstances in his life it's only fitting that we can sing these words into the face of every unknown tomorrow.

Let tomorrow bring with it what it will. It is well with my soul. I'm in Christ. He's with me. He's in me. We're together forever. Let's sing that number 580.

[49 : 04] Let's sing it by faith. Let's stand and glory in the fact that we have a Savior who has made us right with God forever that we might live together with him both now and forevermore.

580. We do bow Lord in your presence and don't know what to say that we should be able to sing those words with assurance when not peace but panic should be our everlasting portion and to think what our Savior suffered for us that we might never know that panic and that that forsakenness and that we can can meet here.

Who are we? We're just a handful of people. We've gathered on this the Lord's day because we have a great Savior in heaven. He knows where we live. He knows the things that are troubling every heart here this morning.

Oh Lord Jesus for your great sympathy with us. You were once here where we are now and you know the scary place this is. Sin has made it and oh we thank you for all you've done to save us from our sin.

Nothing scarier than our own sin. Our own hearts. Thank you for what you've done to save us from sin. To save us from ourselves. To make us new creatures and to give us that confidence that one day we're going to stand before you and there will not be a trace of sin left in us.

[50 : 50] We will be covered with the blood and righteousness of Jesus a covering that will fully make us right with you.

And so we glory in Christ. We put no confidence in the flesh and we thank you for the peace and joy that comes from believing. Teach us what it is not to waste this wonderful reality that you have taken up your home in the hearts of your people.

Then give us to walk and to talk with you this year in a new way and to set you before us every day and to live in the glorious light of it and the wonderful peace and joy that comes from believing it.

And for those still walking alone have mercy upon them and draw them to faith and repentance and let this be not only a new year but a new creation where everything becomes new.

We thank you. We thank you in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.