

Daily Devotional, April 22, 2020 I Am With You

Are there times during this hard season of coronavirus, or maybe in other situations of life when you didn't recognize that God was with you? Or maybe, if you're at all like me, you didn't realize that God's presence was enough. And yet, I know God's presence is enough, because God's answer to many people in the Bible is: "I will be with you". This was God's answer to the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan River. Imagine Joshua's reaction to, "*Do not be afraid or terrified...for the Lord your God goes with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you*" (Deuteronomy 31:6). Like any of us, his reaction was most likely feelings of anxiety and uncertainty; he didn't have the foresight to see the outcome, that has been written for us. And yet, so often, we have these stories to fall back on, and still find ourselves struggling to trust in God's protection over our lives.

There are numerous passages in both the Old and New Testament that conclude with, "But I will be with you," and, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you." Why does God say this so often? Why do we feel the need to hear it?

Maybe it's because God knows we don't like going through life alone, especially through hard events. Maybe God knows that what we are called to, terrifies us, but to know that God is with us is enough. God's answer to fear is God's very presence. But *do* we sense that God is enough? Do we see that when life gets chaotic, the very presence of God with us is the best thing? Maybe you and I are like the disciples who had Jesus with them in the boat and still chose their fear of the waves over trusting Jesus. I know I have had those kinds of days. We read in Mark 4:38, Jesus was right there in the boat with the disciples. When the waves were rising up over the boat and Jesus was sound asleep, they shouted, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" How many times I have found myself knowing Jesus was with me, yet questioned his protection and his promises based only on what I could see right in front of me.

Has it been enough just to have God walk with us through our hard days? I sure want it to be. **God's answer is always God, Himself.** When the Israelites were struggling, God said He would be with Joshua as he and the Israelites walked through the Jordan River (Joshua 1:5). Years later, when the Israelites were still struggling, he sent Jesus. In fact, Jesus' surname *Immanuel* means "God with us."

We serve a God who is faithful and who always delivers on what He promises. The common thread that we find all through the Bible is that the miraculous always occurs when God is present with us. He always shows himself in those moments. He made the waters stand up so his people could cross the Jordan, he spoke "Peace" to the waters and they stood still, and God sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and to lead us on our faith journey. God prepares us with a promise, comforts us in our fear by going with us, and then solidifies our faith with the presence of God's Spirit.

My challenge to you is to not allow your fear to outweigh God's presence. And trust me, I have lived many days of knowing this with my mind but not living it with my heart. But God's nearness will always be enough. It will always be the answer to our struggles, fear, and doubt. And when we walk with God through our uncertainty, fear, and hardship, we walk differently. We walk boldly, confident that the Lord will carry us through to safety and peace.

Prayer: O God, oftentimes, I am scared, I am in pain, I am uncertain. But I know you are with me. And I know you are enough. I choose to trust you as I wait in the middle of a promise and a miracle. In these moments of waiting, I thank you for walking with me in my most mundane, chaotic, and joyful moments. In the name of Christ my Lord. Amen.