

SUNDAY WORD

APR. 16, 2023



Deuteronomy 31:6 "So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you." (NLT)

Being in the presence of death has a way of teaching people a lot about life. I'm not sure why we only grasp this promise of God when a crisis hits. But here it is: God says several times in the Bible, He will neither fail you nor abandon you. This promise is the secret to life: God will never leave you nor forsake you.

In times of crisis, we can only trust in the Lord. When we really get His promise, when we know God's promises deep in our hearts, it will revolutionize our life. When everything else is stripped away, when all the things we are attached to are gone, we discover that in the end, only God holds our lives. It's only God who matters. And His promise is certain. When all else is gone, there still is God. God's sweet voice is saying, "I will not abandon you."

It makes a great difference to know who is with you as you enter into a life of uncertainty. Whenever you feel worried about facing an uncertain future that is looming ahead, ask yourself: Who is with me? If you have accepted Christ as your Savior, the One who is with you is not just any earthly companion. The One who is with you is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who has promised never to leave you nor forsake you. Besides that, Christ also promised in Matthew 28:20b - "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (NIV)

Perhaps you may want to know more exactly why the presence of Christ with you should bring any comfort to your soul. It is because He is none other than the Almighty God Himself, who has full authority in heaven and on earth. When Christ lived on earth, He revealed His supreme authority over the winds and waves, over every kind of sickness that was brought to Him, and even over all the demons and spirits that trouble mankind.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 How has your perspective of God been impacted by this message?
- 2 How does this message help you to admire the depths of God's love for you?
- 3 What encouragement can you find in the Scripture, when your situation seems too difficult?

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.

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He who abides in you is the one who rules over all things, and who ordains all things to happen according to His sovereign will. No one can ever oppose God or stop Him from doing whatever He wants to do for you. And nothing can ever happen to you without His permission.

He who abides in you is the One who loves you very dearly. In fact, God loves you more than anyone else has ever loved you. He loved you with everlasting love long before you even knew Him. He loved you even to the extent of sacrificing His life for you on the cross of Calvary and shedding His precious blood to pay for all your sins. With such infinite love as well as infinite power found only in Christ, there can be no one else better to be with you, than the Lord Jesus Christ!

As you walk your life's journey, you must ensure that you go through it only with Christ by your side. You can go through life without many things - even without very much wealth or health. But you cannot go through life without Christ. If He is with you, you really do not need anything else in this world.

This truth provides the background for the promise given by God in Hebrews 13:5. Listen to the whole verse: Hebrews 13:5 - "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you (NIV)."" Many people today covet material wealth. They strive very hard to gain it. They work non-stop, day and night, and take several jobs, just to build up their treasures on earth. And in the process of doing this, they neglect their relationship with God and with their family. Some even resort to using unjust means to gain wealth, like cheating, lying, and taking advantage of others.

But after they have finally obtained all that they want for themselves, what do they really gain? They only find that their souls are still empty and dissatisfied. And when they die, they have to leave everything they have behind. When we die, we cannot bring anything with us. What a great disappointment awaits those who are covetous or envious!

As Christians, we should not be covetous. Our lifestyle should not reflect a love for money or worldly gain. God's Word teaches us to see the true value of all material wealth. Even if you were to gain all the material wealth in this world as your possession, they can only be yours for a while. They cannot satisfy you, nor can they stay with you forever. But if you are a Christian, you have the Lord Jesus Christ with you. And this is one possession you have that will never ever disappoint you. Unlike all the things of this world, Christ can satisfy you deep within your soul. And unlike all the things of this world, Christ can abide with you forever!

If Christ is yours forever, you have everything that you need for this present life and beyond. It doesn't matter anymore whether you are materially rich or poor in this world, because Christ Himself will enable you to be content with little or with much. Listen to what Paul wrote in Philippians 4:11-12 - "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." (NIV)

Are you experiencing the wonderful contentment that Paul mentioned here? Only those of us who have Christ in us are able to experience it because Christ is sufficient for all our needs. As we trust in God, He will take good care of us and provide sufficiently for all our needs. This does not necessarily mean that He will provide all that we want. It only means that He will provide whatever we need. Someone has put it this way - God provides for all our NEEDS, NOT for all our GREEDS!

Today, God is teaching us that the only place for your trust is in Him. Everything else will fade or let you down. He teaches us that over and over again in the Bible because for some reason, we humans have a hard time getting it. Our tendency is to put our trust in things instead of God. Our tendency is to put our trust in people instead of Him.

Notice how this Hebrews passage plainly links this promise - I will never leave you nor forsake you - to our attachment to stuff. Right there in Hebrews 13:5 - "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you (NIV)."" We tend to attach ourselves to things rather than attach ourselves to God. This is a painful reality.

That's just what the Israelites did. Do you remember the example of the manna (Exodus 16; Numbers 11)? God instructed the Israelites that He would supply their needs each day in the wilderness. And yet the first day that He supplied the manna, there they were trying to gather more, more than they needed - hoarding for the next day - just in case God didn't deliver on His promise, just in case God didn't deliver each day just like He said He would. To make His point, God allowed the unused manna to rot overnight, so that they had to learn to depend on Him each and every day. God said, "I will never leave you, never forsake you."

The Bible is full of people just like the Israelites, there is the fool who kept building bigger barns to store all of his stuff not knowing that he is dying tomorrow. King Saul spared the sheep, cattle, and King Agag even if God told him to wipe them out. The rich young ruler didn't want to let go of his wealth for Jesus. Ananias and his wife Sapphira lied about giving the money to the church for the properties that they sold. This is just to name a few people who trusted stuff, trusted things, more than they trusted God. They were convinced that they had life by the horns only to discover, too late, that they had trusted in things rather than in God.

And we do the very same thing. We accumulate stuff at an incredible rate. So fast, we can't keep up with all the stuff - no room for it all. Possessions mean so much to us. Our storage areas are getting filled every year. The more we have, the more we need, and the more we have, the more we worry about it. And it's never enough.

The lesson is clear: Don't put your trust in what you have. Life is not what you have. Hear it again: Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have. Learn to save. Learn to invest. But in the end, remember what God said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Trust God and Him alone.

Sometimes we put our reliance on people, human beings, and institutions. We trust our company to provide food on our table. We trust the bank, the pawnshop, or SSS for our loans. We trust our relatives who are working abroad when we're in need. Folks, it's not what you have, and it's not who you know. Trust in God, only in Him.

In whatever circumstance or situation in life you are in, you can find strength and comfort in knowing that you are never alone. I want you to remember that when God says NEVER, it's different from when we say "never". In this time of crisis, I believe you have experienced all sorts of challenges in life. God is saying to you, "Never, never, never will I leave you! Never, never, never will I abandon you!" When God says NEVER, He means NEVER. God is faithful. He is true to His words. He really cares for you. He really loves you. Our God will never leave you nor forsake you.