

God With Us? Msg 5  
 In The Future  
 Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl  
 Eagle Rock Baptist Church  
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Welcome!!!

Over the last few weeks we've been looking at the biblical truth that **God Is With Us**, and the difference that makes in our lives.

Today we are finishing up our series by examining **what it means that God will be with us in the future.**

In thinking about the future, I've got a very straightforward question for you.

Now, you can answer this silently.

You don't have to yell back to me.

But the question this morning is —

**Are you worried about your future?**

Some of you are nodding your heads.

**I came across a poll recently** that asked this very same question.

**And though a few people said "no",**

81% of those who responded said "yes, I'm worried about my future."

In fact, some of them actually wrote in their reasons and I thought I'd share some of them, just because you may be able to identify with a few of them.

One person simply said,

**"I'm very worried and try not to even think about my future."**

Another one said,

**"I worry immensely about the future."**

And they went on to list some of the things they are worried about.

**"I worry about my parents getting older and passing away one day."**

**"I worry about finances."**

**"I worry about finding a girlfriend or a wife one day."**

**"I worry about getting sick."**

And here's the one that they capped it off with.

**"I worry about this anxiety never going away."**

Another person said,

**"Yes, I'm almost exclusively worried about whether I will find a well-paying job when I get out of school and how I'm ever going to pay off these student loans."**

And then another person, initially responded with a one word answer —

They simply wrote . . .

**Gasp!**

And then they ask the question,

**"I have a future?"**

Well, can you identify with any of those responses this morning?

Worry, frustration, confusion, expecting the worst, all these things come about really quickly whenever we start thinking about our future.

The truth is, it's easy to feel stuck when you're thinking about your future.

Here's what I've noticed.

When we feel stuck today in our present, it's really tempting to think that we are going to be stuck forever.

See, being stuck today threatens all of our confidence in the future.

We become hopeless, impatient, discouraged and we worry about where our life is headed.

And maybe that's why you are here.

That's where you are at today.

Maybe you're not fully happy with the circumstances you're dealing with right now and you are trapped worrying about, anxious about, thinking about what's going to happen in your future.

**Maybe you feel stuck in a job** and you just, you are wondering if you are ever going to have a job that you like.

**Or maybe you are stuck in loneliness** and you are wondering if you are ever going to have a family, or a close relationship.

**Maybe today you're here and you are financially stuck.**

And you are just wondering if you are ever going to have enough to get by.

Here's what I want you to know today, listen closely.

**Your present is not your future.**

**Your present is not your future.**

See, you may feel stuck today, and you may feel like your future is going to be no different.

But God sees your future differently.

This morning I want us to look at **three truths from the Bible** that can **help us face the future with courage, hope, and anticipation** rather than fear.

Truth #1

When it comes to the future we can . . .

**1. We can face the future with Courage because God is with us.**

If you have your Bible or mobile app turn to Joshua chapter 1.

Joshua is the 6th book in the Old Testament, so it is near the beginning of your Bible.

Let me give you a little background before we read the beginning verses of Joshua 1.

The people of Israel, God's chosen people, the people God had rescued from slavery in Egypt, have been **wandering around in the wilderness for 40 years.**

They have been **unable to enter the land that God promised** to them because of their unbelief.

They **didn't trust that God** would do what He said He would do, so a whole generation missed out on the promise that God would give them a land and make a way for them to defeat their enemies.

**During this time in the wilderness**, and even before that, when they fled from Egypt, **Moses had been their leader.**

**God spoke to Moses**, gave him plans, and empowered Him to lead the people.

But **Moses has died**, and his right-hand man, Joshua, has taken Moses' place.

**When we come to the first chapter** of the book of Joshua, God is giving Joshua plans for the future.

Take a look at verses 1-4.

*After the death of Moses the Lord's servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them." Joshua 1:1-2*

*"I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you - from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.'" Joshua 1:3-4*

God's plan to Joshua was **pretty specific**, cross the river Jordan and enter the land.

**I'm going to give it to you.**

But **there were a lot of unknowns in the land**, there were **enemy armies** who would stand in the way of Joshua fulfilling God's plans.

The **people of Israel themselves were often difficult** to lead.

How was Joshua going to be able to accomplish what God was calling him to do?

Take a look at verses 5-9.

*"No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them." Joshua 1:5-6*

*"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do." Joshua 1:7*

*"Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:8-9*

### How would Joshua find success?

Well, one thing that stands out is that **he was to be strong and courageous.**

**Three times in these first 9 verses**, God commanded Joshua to **be strong and courageous.**

When we think of someone who is courageous, we often **think of someone who is fearless**, but that is a misunderstanding of the word.

**Courage is not the absence of fear.**

If you didn't have any fears, you wouldn't need any courage.

Courage is **facing your fears with bravery.**

It is **doing the right thing, doing what needs to be done**, in spite of our fear.

Joshua's courage was to be **based on two things:**

**FIRST**, he was to **immerse himself in the Word of God.**

He was to **MEMORIZE** it, **MEDITATE** on it, **TEACH IT TO OTHERS**, and **OBEY IT HIMSELF.**

Look at verse 8:

***“Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”***

**Second**, I believe God wanted Joshua immersed in His word because it would **remind him of the promise that his courage was based on** –

The promise that God would be with him.

Twice in the space of 5 verses God says:

***I will be with you; I will not fail you or abandon you.***

***The Lord your God is with you wherever you go.***

Joshua could face the future with courage, because he wasn't going it alone.

God was going to be with Him.

The scriptures that Joshua would have had at that time, The Book of the Law, would have described God's faithfulness to His people in the past

They would have told of the bondage in Egypt, and God's miraculous delivery from Pharaoh.

Those accounts would have reminded Joshua that **the God who had been with him in the past would be with him in the future.**

Remembering God's faithfulness in my past can help you face the future.

Over the years I've realized that no matter how uncertain or insurmountable my future seems, there is nothing more powerful than to look back at how God has taken care of me in the past.

You probably know the story of Jim Lovell and the Apollo XIII astronauts.

This was a group of people and they were stuck out in space and no doubt, they were worried about their future.

And in the middle of that, frightening, scary, overwhelming experience, astronaut Lovell reflected on the story from his own past.

Let's check this out.

**Apollo 13 Clip (1:39)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N91ogCGpYI0>

Let me ask you this.

Which of the following words would you rather have describe your view of the future?

Uncertainty, fear and anxiety??

Or assurance, trust and peace.

See we all want assurance, trust and peace, but the truth is uncertainty, fear and anxiety often become our reality.

As a matter of fact, the more you think about your future, sometimes the more overwhelming it can be.

Why is that?

Could it be that we have forgotten all of the ways God has taken care of us in the past?

Could it be that we are listening to our own voice instead of remembering how God has met our needs?

Could it be that the overwhelming stress of your future could turn into peace, if you just remember what God has done for you in the past, and that he promises to be with you in the future?

Hebrew 13:5 tells us:

***“Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.” Hebrews 13:5***

When I am tempted to be fearful about the future, whether that is the future of the world or my specific future, I can do the same thing God commanded Joshua to do.

**I can immerse myself in His word**, so that I **remember His character and His faithfulness to His people**, and that will **enable me to face the future with courage** because I will be reminded that **God is with me and will never leave me**.

God's presence not only gives me **COURAGE** to face the future;  
It also gives me **HOPE** to face the future.

If you are a student of the Bible, when I use the words **hope and future** in the same sentence, chances are you are going to think of **Jeremiah 29:11**.

***"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11***

This is **one of the most-often looked up verses** on the Bible app YouVersion, as well as at the website Biblegateway.com.

God makes this promise to the nation of Israel as they are in captivity in Babylon.

They were in a difficult place, but God tells them to have hope in His good plans for them.

But to understand this verse, it's **important that we know the context of the verse** or we can give ourselves and others the **impression** that **God's plans for us include an easy fix** for all our problems.

And that is not what this verse is saying.

In fact, to see that, all you have to do is to look at the verse that immediately precedes it.

**Look at Jeremiah 29:10**

It says . . .

***"This is what the Lord says: "You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again."***

And then it goes on in verse 11, ***"For I know the plans I have for you. . .***

**Seventy years!**

The **people were going to endure captivity for 70 years**, and then they would be rescued because God had a good plan for them.

God has good plans for us as well.

And those plans give us hope, but **they may not be plans for an immediate rescue** or **change in our circumstances**.

In fact, Paul tells us that hope is developed when we persevere through difficult circumstances.

Look at Romans 5:

***"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials,***

***Why???***

***for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." Romans 5:3-5***

**Christian hope** is **not wishful thinking**, rather it is a **calm assurance** that God is who He says He is, and will do what He says He will do.

It is the calm assurance Paul referred to as,

***"Christ in you, the hope of glory."***

Because of what Christ did for us in taking on humanity, **living a sinless life**, dying in our place, and defeating death through His resurrection, **we can have the calm assurance** that every other promise God has given in His Word is true.

It is the **calm assurance** that our sins are forgiven.

It is the **calm assurance** that the events of our lives are not governed by coincidence but by the all-powerful, all-wise, sovereign creator of the universe.

It is the **calm assurance** that we are not alone.

It is the **calm assurance** that our lives have purpose and value.

It is the **calm assurance** that this life is not all there is.

It is why Paul writes to the Romans,

***"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13***

We can **abound in hope**, because God is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do.

He has plans for us. . .

**They may not look like we thought they would, they may take longer than we think they should,** but we can rest in the fact that they are good.

Because God is with us. . .

**We can face the future with courage.**

Because God is with us. . .

**We can face the future with hope.**

Finally, though not exhaustively,

**Because God is with us, We can also face the future with anticipation.**

During Jesus' last meal with His disciples He gave them words of comfort about the future.

John 14:1-3

***“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.”***

**John 14:1-3**

***“I am going to prepare a place for you, and one day, when everything is ready I will come and get you.***

We may not know what the future holds, but we do know one thing with certainty, unless Jesus comes again in our lifetime, we are all going to die.

We don't know when, we don't know where, we don't know how. But we know it is going to happen.

For many people, death is something to be feared.

It is the ultimate unknown.

But for those who have put their faith in Jesus as their Savior, death does not need to be feared.

Death means that our faith will be turned into sight, and we will be with Christ in the place He has prepared for us.

That's why Paul tells the Thessalonian Christians that

***And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. 1 Thess. 4:13***

**We don't grieve as the rest who have no hope.**

It doesn't say we don't grieve - - we definitely do.

But as Christ followers, we know what is going to happen when we die.

We will go to the place that Jesus has prepared for us.

It is a place of **beauty beyond our imagination.**

It is a place of **peace and joy.**

It is a place **free from the troubles of this world.**

Listen to this description by the Apostle John:

**Revelation 21:1-5**

***Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”***

**Revelation 21:1-2**

***“I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”***

**Revelation 21:3-4**

***“And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” Revelation 21:5***

Isn't that something to look forward to?

**Because God is with us,**

We can **face the future with courage.**

Because God is with us,  
We can **face the future with hope.**

Because God is with us,  
We can **face the future with anticipation.**

Since this is the case, I challenge us to follow the example of the Apostle Paul found in our **MEMORY VERSE**, and make this our aim for our future:

***“For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.” Philippians 1:21***

***“Dying is even better”*** - that part is easy to understand in light of what God is preparing for us. What does it mean when we say, ***“living means living for Christ.”***

It means that **Christ informs every decision we make and every action we take.**

It means **when I go home after the service**, I’m going to **love my wife as Christ loves the church**, by sacrificing for her and serving her.

It means **when I go to work tomorrow**, I’m going to do my work heartily as unto the Lord.

It means **when I interact with my neighbors**, I’m going to love them as I love myself.

It means **when I make out my budget**, I’m going to do so with a kingdom perspective, asking myself **if I am investing in the temporal or the eternal.**

It means **when I need guidance**, I’m going to read the Bible, and seek counsel from those who exhibit godly wisdom.

It means **when I am worried**, I am going to pray.

It means there’s **not going to be a secular and a sacred** part of my life; there’s not going to be the **church me** and the **weekday me.**

It means I’m **going to intentionally seek to grow** by asking the **Holy Spirit to point out anything in my life that is not pleasing to Christ**, and when those things come to my attention, I’m going to cooperate with the work of the Spirit to make changes.

**When people look at me**, I want them to know **I am a follower of Jesus**, because **I think and talk and act more and more like Him.**

As believers, our future in heaven is going to be spent glorifying God, let’s make it our aim to live in a way that brings Him glory today while we still have opportunity.

Let’s pray . . .