

Matthew 28:20b | “Big Task, Big Comfort”  
*Preached on September 22, 2024 by Pastor Matt Brown*

Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew 28, verse 20. *[pause]*

We are finishing out the Great Commission today, as well as the whole book of Matthew.  
*[pause]*

It has been a long, but good journey together, as we have seen what being a disciple is all about.

And now we are going to end on a comforting note, for that’s how the book ends—with comfort.  
*[pauseeee]*

I remember when I was a little kid, I was so scared of new situations because there was so much uncertainty, and the thought of being alone in those new situations was terrifying. *[pause]*

I remember whenever I had to go to the doctor as a kid, I was so nervous because I thought that I would be by myself.

But what comforted me was when my mom said, “Don’t worry, I’ll come back to the room with you.” *[pausee]*

The truth is that we get comforted by the presence of other people. *[pause]*

Often babies cry when they are all alone, but are soothed when a parent walks into the room.  
*[pause]*

Even adults are comforted to know that they have a friend with them if they go far away somewhere. *[pause]*

If we could choose, we would rather have a companion on a long road trip.

For we don’t like being alone, and there’s comfort in having others with you. *[pauseeee]*

This is especially true when it comes to big tasks...

It’s daunting to try to do a big task by yourself, but a comfort to know that someone else will be helping you and be with you. *[pausee]*

Well here in the Great Commission, Jesus has given us a big task, but also big comfort. *[pause]*

He shows us that we will not be alone as we live for Him and serve Him in His mission in the world.

So we don’t have to worry, fear, or fret. *[pause]*

We don’t have to be overwhelmed with the daunting nature of the task, for we have someone with us—Him—and there’s no one better. *[pausee]*

So let's READ the whole Great Commission one more time, starting in verse 18 and going through verse 20. *[READ]*

As we think about the Great Commission, there's a reason why it's called "great". *[pause]*

It's great because it's so important, I mean, the Lord Himself has called us to this, so how could it NOT be important? *[pause]*

It's His final instructions to His disciples here in the book of Matthew before He ascends, so it's obviously critical.

He really wants us to be about this. *[pauseeee]*

It's also great because it's a *global* task. *[pause]*

He has called us to make disciples of all nations, so this is not some small mission, but it has an impact upon every nation, and upon every people group. *[pauseeee]*

The Great Commission is also great because of how in depth it is. *[pause]*

This is not a task that is simple and uninvolved like simply handing out some pamphlets and walking away, or merely shooting out some emails. *[pause]*

We must share the Gospel, baptize people, and then teach them to be committed followers of Jesus Christ.

That takes time, effort, intentionality, grace, and patience, among many other things. *[pauseeee]*

When you truly grasp the Great Commission, you realize how big of a task that we have been called to. *[pause]*

If you let it, hearing the Great Commission could lead you to become totally overwhelmed to the point where you think, "This is impossible."

Yet Jesus doesn't stop talking after He tells us to make disciples, for He adds in some final words of comfort, and they make all of the difference. *[pause]*

Every word in the Bible matters, and these words of comfort definitely matter, for they promise His presence, as we make disciples. *[pauseeee]*

So let's think through this short, yet encouraging statement of Jesus at the end of the Great Commission, as He says, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *[pause]*

*There are some amazing truths that are found in that statement, and the first one we observe is...*

### **I. The certainty of Christ's presence.**

It matters if you can count on someone being with you, doesn't it? *[pause]*

Have you ever met someone who you never knew if they would come through? *[pause]*

They would say that they were coming to something, but then just never show up. *[pause]*

They would even act like it was a *for sure* thing at times, but once again, you would look around and they were nowhere to be found. *[pause]*

When it comes to people like that we become jaded and we no longer trust their word.

And the reason is because you never knew if today would be the day that they would be with you or not. *[pause]*

Well when we look at Jesus' promise of His presence, it brings *great certainty*, so that we never have to feel that way. *[pause]*

Just listen to the certainty of Jesus' statement: "And behold, I am with you always." *[pauseeee]*

Now why does Jesus say, "Behold"? *[pause]*

To say "Behold" is to emphasize something, especially because it is so important and should not be missed. *[pauseeee]*

If a teenager brought out their completed school project to show their parents, they may say, "Behold! My project is done!" *[pause]*

This is to draw your attention to the project, and make sure that you see it. *[pause]*

It catches your attention and it's like saying, "Listen up! Pay attention! See, look, or hear this!" *[pauseeee]*

So Jesus is drawing our attention to what He is about to say. *[pause]*

He doesn't want us to miss this, but He wants us to see its importance in regards to the Great Commission. *[pause]*

We need to pay attention, hear it, and not miss it. *[pauseeee]*

When the Lord of Heaven and Earth says, "Behold," then it's time to take note.

So behold! What Jesus says here is significant! *[pauseeee]*

But why does He say it *here*? *[pause]*

Why say it before the promise of His presence because He could have said "Behold" at any other time in His Great Commission, or at no time at all, so why here and why at all? *[pause]*

Because He wants to draw our attention to the great, comforting *promise* of the Great Commission. *[pause]*

It's like He's saying, "You can count on this: I will be with you!" *[pauseeee]*

You see, you can rely upon Christ's presence because you can rely upon His Word.

His presence is as good as His Word, and His Word never falters. *[pause]*

He has made a promise, and He does not ever, no never, fail to come through on His promises. *[pauseeee]*

I love how Hebrews 6:19 reminds us that, "it is impossible for God to lie." *[pause]*

It's literally *impossible* for God to lie.

He can't, for He is truth, and therefore, no untruth can ever come out of His mouth. *[pauseeee]*

There are many times that people break their promises, and we don't know for sure if we can count on what they promised.

But when it comes to Jesus we can take His promises to the bank. *[pauseeee]*

Think of the most reliable thing in the world, and His promise of His presence is infinitely more reliable. *[pause]*

You can rely upon Him, and that means that you can rely upon Him being near at all times! *[pause]*

You can rest assured that He will be with you in your hardest, darkest moments, and in your highest, brightest days. *[pause]*

He is with you when the doctor says, "I have some bad news," and when your employer says, "I'm sorry, but we are going to have to do some layoffs." *[pause]*

He is with you when the tears won't stop streaming down your face, and you don't know what to do next. *[pause]*

He is with you when the pain feels too great to bear. *[pause]*

He is with you when the task in front of you looks so daunting, and all you can think about is, "How can I do this?" *[pauseeeee]*

What a promise! *[pause]*

This is truly a promise that you can stick in the pocket of your heart, and regularly repeat back to your mind.

And what a *certain* promise it is! *[pause]*

It's not like a politician's promise, or a slimy salesman's promise, but it's a promise from the Lord Himself, Maker and Sustainer of Heaven and Earth. *[pauseeee]*

It's a promise that you can hold onto and always feel it's reality, for you aren't grasping at the air. *[pause]*

When we trust that Jesus is with us, we are trusting in what is real and true and sure—He *is* with us. *[pauseeeee]*

Just listen to Jesus' promise, as He says, "Behold, I *am* with you always." *[pause]*

He didn't say, "I was with you," or, "I may possibly be with you." *[pause]*

He didn't say, "I wish I could be with you," or even that "I will be with you in the future someday."

No, He says, "I am with you."

It is a present, sure reality. *[pause]*

Present now, not simply in the past or only in the future, but NOW! *[pauseeeee]*

So how does this help us as we seek to follow Christ's Great Commission? *[pause]*

It means that we can be *certain* that Jesus is with us as we serve Him. *[pauseeee]*

We don't have to wonder or doubt, but can confidently say, "He is with me now." *[pauseeee]*

We don't have to stop and say, "Wait a second, is He here yet?" *[pause]*

No, we don't have to go looking for Him, wait for His arrival, or question if He is actually there. *[pauseeee]*

So behold, disciple of Christ—Christ's presence is sure! *[pauseeeee]*

*So there's the certainty of Christ's presence in this verse, but we also see...*

## **II. The comfort of Christ's presence.**

It matters *who* is with you, doesn't it? *[pause]*

Let's say that you were somewhere and another person got seriously hurt, so you quickly looked around and said, "Is anyone a doctor here?!" *[pause]*

A person spoke up: "I'm a doctor." *[pause]*

And so you say, "Whew, OK great. Can you help this person?"

But the person says, “Um, no. I’m Dr. Miller, but I only have a doctorate in philosophy, not medicine.” *[pausee]*

Would the presence of that person in *that* situation be comforting? *[pause]*

No way, for it matters who is with you...

You need a medical doctor, for philosophy doesn’t help a bleeding person. *[pause]*

So also, it matters who promises to be with us, and it’s Jesus Christ. *[pauseee]*

Note what Jesus says—He says, “I am with you.” *[pause]*

He didn’t say that some random person will be with us, or someone weak and powerless will be with us.

He promised His own presence! *[pause]*

Just think about that—Jesus Himself promises to be with us. *[pauseee]*

Remember back at the beginning of the gospel of Matthew when it promised the birth of Jesus and it quoted the Old Testament which says...

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us).”<sup>1</sup> *[pauseee]*

As “God with us” came, so now “God with us” never leaves those who have trusted in Him! *[pause]*

The One who is God promises His presence.

But it’s not only that, for we know that the One who perfectly resisted all of Satan’s temptations is with us. *[pause]*

The One who taught with authority and miraculously healed others is with us. *[pause]*

The One who rebuked the winds and the sea and they obeyed Him is with us! *[pause]*

The One who demons were terrified of, and had to flee when He commanded, is with us. *[pause]*

The One who could say, “Your sins are forgiven,” and it happened is with us. *[pause]*

The One who could heal by just a touch of His garment and who fed 5,000 with just 5 loaves and 2 fish is with us. *[pause]*

The One who walked on the water, strolling along it like a stroll in the park is with us. *[pause]*

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 1:23.

The One who shone gloriously on the mountain with Moses and Elijah is with us.

And the One who died for us, and then rose again victoriously is with us.

The great I AM says, “I AM with you”! *[pauseeee]*

To have God with us is the most comforting news possible! *[pause]*

We are not alone, and no matter what we face, we can remember, “He is with me.” *[pauseee]*

He’s not distant, but present.

He’s not far, but *near*. *[pauseeeee]*

Think about this—Jesus’ final words are not harsh directives. *[pause]*

They aren’t words of guilt and shame. *[pause]*

He doesn’t say, “Now get to work!” *[pause]*

No, He’s no distant, stiff, or aloof taskmaster. *[pauseeee]*

He could have said, “I’ve given you my commands, you’re on your own, figure out how to do it all.”

But that’s not Jesus, for He speaks words of comfort because that’s who He is—He’s a gracious, loving, caring Lord. *[pauseeee]*

Just flip through the Scriptures and notice how much of the Bible is words of comfort. *[pauseeee]*

He says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”<sup>2</sup> *[pause]*

He says, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”<sup>3</sup>

And just look at how many times He says, “fear not”. *[pause]*

He is truly “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in all our affliction.”<sup>4</sup> *[pauseeeee]*

Think about some of the great commissioning passages in the Old Testament, and note how similar they are to our commissioning as disciples. *[pause]*

When Moses is called to lead the people out of Egypt, Moses says, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

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<sup>2</sup> John 14:27.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 11:28.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:3b–4a.

And what is God's response?

He says, "But I will be with you..."<sup>5</sup> [pause]

When Joshua is appointed as the next leader of Israel, God says to Him, "The Lord your God is with you wherever you go."<sup>6</sup> [pause]

When Gideon is picked to deliver Israel, the Lord says to him, "But I will be with you."<sup>7</sup> [pause]

And when Jeremiah is set apart as a prophet, he's nervous about his youth and speaking ability, and God reassures him by saying...

"Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord."<sup>8</sup> [pauseeee]

Need I go on? [pause]

Need I remind you of God's presence among Israel in the wilderness as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night?<sup>9</sup> [pause]

Need I remind you of Isaiah 41:10?...

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." [pause]

He promised His presence with Isaac and Jacob, and Moses even refused to go any further unless God's presence went with Israel.<sup>10</sup> [pauseeeee]

What we need in life is the presence of the Lord, and He has promised His presence to His people...

He. Is. With. Us. [pauseeee]

But the question remains: *how* is Jesus with us since after Jesus says this, He ascends into Heaven? [pause]

It's possible through the Spirit. [pause]

In John, when Jesus is talking about the Spirit being sent to be with them and help them, He says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."<sup>11</sup> [pause]

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 3:11–12a.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua 1:9b.

<sup>7</sup> Judges 6:16a.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah 1:8.

<sup>9</sup> See Exodus 13:21–22.

<sup>10</sup> Isaac (Gen. 26:24), Jacob (Gen. 28:15), and Moses' statement (Exodus 33:15).

<sup>11</sup> John 14:18 (italics is mine).



For those who believe in Jesus, they have the Spirit, which means that they have Christ within them.

His promise of presence is possible by the Spirit, and what a comforting thing to know. [pauseeee]

*We saw the comfort of Christ's presence, but thirdly, we see...*

### III. The constancy of Christ's presence.

It matters *how long* someone is with you. [pause]

Let's say that you were going through something very hard. [pause]

If someone came to be with you for 1 minute, that would be nice, but it's very short, so their helpfulness and comfort would be limited. [pause]

But let's say that someone came to be with you throughout the entire time that you needed them—now that would make a big difference. [pause]

Well an amazing aspect of Jesus' statement about His presence is the *duration* of His presence with us. [pause]

He says, "I am with you always, to the end of the age." [pause]

He promised to be with us *always*.

So He won't come for just a temporary amount of time, but a lasting amount of time. [pause]

It's not like Jesus says, "OK, you've got 10 minutes with me, so don't waste it." [pause]

He doesn't say, "I'm here, but just so you know, I've gotta head out on Tuesday to make an appointment." [pauseeee]

Also, His presence isn't intermittent, but constant. [pause]

It's not like it comes and goes like a bad internet connection or like bad cell phone reception, but it would be a continual thing. [pauseeee]

He says, "always". [pauseeee]

What's interesting is that in the original Greek, the wording used isn't technically "always".

Rather, it literally says, "I am with you all the days." [pause]

I like that, and it emphasizes that Jesus will be with us *each and every day*. [pause]

Day after day after day He will be with us. [pause]

Whether it's today, tomorrow, on a Tuesday 5 years from now, or while we are laying in bed at night on a day in 30 years.

If the Lord tarries that long—He will be with us each day, each minute, each moment. *[pauseeee]*

There won't be a day that He's not with us. *[pause]*

He skips no days. *[pause]*

He doesn't take a vacation away from us, or have a sick day, or a personal day.

He is with us *always*. *[pauseeee]*

Think of any day or moment in the future, He will be with you. *[pause]*

What an amazing thought!

For anyone else in our life, we can't say that. *[pause]*

We don't know if someone will move away, pass away, or be gone for some reason or another in the future.

Yet Christ will always be present. *[pauseeeee]*

Now if I said that I was going to be with you each and every day until next Sunday that would be nice to know that I was going to be with you for the week, but after the week is over, I'd be gone. *[pause]*

Yet listen to what Jesus says, "I am with you always, *to the end of the age.*" *[pause]*

Jesus is not just with us all the days of September, or all the days of 2024, or something like that—He's with us always until the end of the age! *[pause]*

He will be with us until the closing time of this era—until it's completed and consummated. *[pauseeee]*

This age is characterized by sin, suffering, and the whole creation being fallen, but there is an age to come and it begins once Jesus returns to earth.

So Jesus is saying that during this age, He will be with us, so we don't have to worry.

And once the new age begins, Jesus will be with us face-to-face forever. *[pauseeee]*

For Jesus to make this promise just reiterates His divinity. *[pause]*

Not just any normal person can say, "I am with you always, to the end of the age." *[pause]*

We are hindered by things to be present, and we are not always around.

We certainly can't promise to be with someone to the end of the age, yet Jesus can. *[pause]*

Jesus is not your typical, ordinary person, but He is the God-man, Jesus Christ!

And it's He who is with us "always, to the end of the age". *[pauseeee]*

Do you realize what Jesus is saying here? *[pause]*

He's saying, "The whole time that you need me, I'll be with you, each and every day."

There won't be a moment that we will be lacking His presence, all the way up through the end of this age. *[pauseeee]*

*You see, what Jesus says here shows us that...*

**Christ gives us what we need for our mission—His presence!**

We have been given a big task by Jesus. *[pause]*

We are called to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded. *[pause]*

What an important task, for it shapes people's eternities.

And it's a lifelong task, for it takes time and effort to teach and lead others to faithfulness and growth in Christ. *[pause]*

But though we have a big task, Christ gives us big comfort. *[pause]*

He has promised to always be with us as we seek to make disciples.

What more could we ask for? *[pause]*

He gives us *exactly* what we need for *exactly* the amount of time we need. *[pauseeee]*

So when you go up to that person to share the Gospel, you can conclusively say, "I don't have to fear, for Jesus *is* with me." *[pause]*

When you are striving to teach others to follow Jesus, you can rely upon His presence, knowing that He's there with you.

And even if you stood before the highest court of the land on trial for talking about Jesus, He'd be there—you can count on that. *[pauseeee]*

In the high's and low's of disciple-making, He's there. *[pause]*

In the seemingly chaotic times, times of discouragement, times of joy, times of hardship—in all of the times, in all of the days—He's there. *[pause]*

And He will be with you until the end of the age, comforting you and empowering you with His presence to minister for Him. *[pauseeee]*

So what's holding us back from being more intentional in making disciples? *[pause]*

What's holding *you* back from talking to that person about Jesus, when Jesus is with you? *[pause]*

What's holding you back from investing time in meeting regularly with another person to encourage them with truth, or study the Word with them?...

**You have the presence of Jesus with you!** *[pauseeeee]*

“Robert Louis Stevenson tells of a storm that caught a vessel off a rocky coast and threatened to drive it and its passengers to destruction. *[pause]*

In the midst of the terror, one...man...made a dangerous passage to the pilot house and saw the steerman at his post holding the wheel unwaveringly, and inch by inch, turning the ship out, once more, to sea. *[pause]*

The pilot saw the [man] and smiled.

Then, the daring passenger went below and gave out a note of cheer: ‘I have seen the face of the pilot, and he smiled. All is well.’”<sup>12</sup> *[pauseeee]*

As we strive to accomplish the Great Commission, we can know that “all is well”, for the pilot, Jesus, is with us and is in command. *[pause]*

**We may face hurdles as we seek to make disciples.** *[pause]*

We may face situations that are fearful, hard, or complex, but we can rest in the comforting thought: Jesus is with us. *[pause]*

**The One who died for our sins and rose again is with us.**

And the One who has all authority in Heaven and on Earth, who has commissioned us to the amazing, great, big task of making disciples, is with us. *[pause]*

**Do you know Him?** *[pause]*

Have you trusted in Him to be saved? *[pause]*

**If you have, you can know without a shadow of a doubt that He is with you always.**

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/c/comfort.htm>.