

SERIES           Sharing Christmas  
 SERMON        **With Resolve (Matthew 28.16-20)**<sup>1</sup>  
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 LOCATION      Church of Christ at Manor Woods (Rockville, MD)  
 DATE            25-Dec-2022

## 1. THE DAY HAS COME

Christian comedian, Michael Jr recently said: “Some people don’t like [it] when you say, ‘Merry Christmas,’ so instead I may try saying, ‘Happy Jesus Birthday’.”

*[segue to the focus for the morning]*

—PRAY—

## 2. RESOLVED TO SEE

Last night, for our Christmas Eve service, we focused on the shepherd being the recipients of God’s gospel announcement of Peace coming to the world in and through Christ the Lord. And in the closing verse we considered, we heard this: “*When the angels left them and went back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us’*” (Lk 2.15). Thus, they didn’t respond to the experience with the angelic visit by saying, “*Wow, that was amazing.... Which field are we taking the sheep to tomorrow?*” And they certainly didn’t blithely receive the news about the birth of the long-awaited truly Anointed, God-incarnate Savior and King of the world like SNL’s church lady: “*Well, isn’t that special.*” Instead, because they understood what happened, what the message means, and how all of it fulfills so many promises, prophecies, and hopes; the shepherds could not be passive or remain in place. They had to see Word of God for themselves.

And then comes a part of the story often overlooked, but it’s one that necessarily defines an expectation for all who faithfully come to see Christ. Look with me at what Luke describes: “*So they hurried off and located Mary and Joseph, and found the baby lying in a manger. When they saw Him, they related what they had been told about this child, and all who heard it<sup>2</sup> were astonished at what the shepherds said. So the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; everything was just as they had been told*” (Lk 2.16–18, 20). Notice that this glorifying and praising God is because the shepherds know God’s word is true. He does exactly as He promises, and the shepherds have just seen the greatest fulfillment of God’s greatest promise: the glorious (*though extremely humble*) arrival of the long-awaited Savior of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations will follow the New English Translation (NET).

<sup>2</sup> To build on what was mentioned in an extended footnote in the message, “Sharing Christmas with Peace” (see p.6 n.6), the phrase, καὶ πάντες οἱ ἀκούσαντες ἐθαύμασαν (“all who heard it were astonished”—emphasis added) would be superfluous if we maintained the (not biblically endorsed) traditional view of Jesus being born in some random stable loaned to Joseph and Mary by some random inn-keeper. If that setting were truly the case, then there would be no need to say “all who heard” the shepherd’s news because the recipients of the news would only be two people: Joseph and Mary. And keep in mind: they already knew the good news because of their own angelic revelations—cf. Mt 1.18–25 for Joseph, and Lk 1.26–38 for Mary (And that latter passage is cause enough to scuttle the otherwise popular, sappy Christmas song: “Mary Did You Know.” Yes, she did know. Scripture reveals that she knew). However, if we follow the historical (and biblically endorsed) view—i.e., that Joseph and Mary went to Joseph’s family home in Bethlehem, which was jammed packed with other family members—then it would be appropriate to say, “all who heard” the news, especially since everyone outside of Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds did not know about the angelic revelations.

But also notice that the shepherds cannot keep quiet about what's been revealed, fulfilled, and personally experienced. They have to tell everyone they encounter. And given how things are described, it wouldn't take much for people to see how what's happened with the shepherds has dramatically changed their lives. They are no longer the same people. They have a strengthened faith in who God is. They have a deeper awareness of what God is doing in and for the His people and the rest of the world. And they have a renewed hope for what all of this means for life in this world and especially eternal life in God's everlasting kingdom of peace. And all of that would be taken with them wherever they go, and be a constant part of their conversations with others. So, in that sense, we could easily say: the shepherds were some of the first (*human*) evangelists to announce the coming (*or better: the arrival*) of the promised Savior, Lord, and King. And with that in mind, here's why I say: this part of the Christmas story necessarily defines an expectation for all who faithfully come to see Christ.

Everything that happened from the angel proclaiming the gospel to the shepherd to the shepherds going out and declaring the gospel they've seen fulfilled; all of that represents what's to take place with all who encounter the true Savior, Lord, and King. It reflects what the gospel is. We are called to come and see Christ for who He truly is and to glorify God for all that He does. And in all of that, there ought to be a change of heart and life—not just because the unchanging God keeps His unchanging word, but also because the eternal, unchanging Word-made-flesh has radically changed everything about us. If we truly come to Christ and faithfully acknowledge Him for who He truly is, we can never be the same. And it's largely because of that radical transformation that we do not dare to cling to Him and try to keep Him only to ourselves. Instead, we dare to go out into the world and spread the good news so that others might come and see Christ and be forever changed by Him. Thus, even in the story of Christmas, we see the groundwork laid for the post-Easter Great Commission.

### 3. RESOLVED TO SHARE

And that brings us to where we need to go next, which is to a renewed understanding of our passage for this morning. A passage that's gotten a fair amount of usage over the past year or so, but one that never loses its voice or relevance. Let's read the whole thing once and then back up to take a closer look at its key parts. It reads: [“So the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came up and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always—to the end of the age’”](#) (Mt 28.16–20). To pick up the theme of Christmas Eve's message: this is a call to declare the gospel of the promised truly anointed Savior-King who brings salvation and eternal peace.

#### a. Summoning the Few

With that in mind, let's take a few moments and consider the significance of the key parts of this passage. First, there is the summoning of the few. Verse 16 says, [“So the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain Jesus had designated.”](#) These are the ones who faithfully belong to Jesus and have been specially called for His kingdom purpose. These are the Ones who know Him to be the way, the truth, and the life, as well as the One who equips them to declare to the rest of the world the life-changing message of the truly risen Savior, Lord, and King over all things. And here we see them remaining in faithful obedience to Jesus and His

instructions for them. They go to where He's called them. And in this case, it's to a "mountain" somewhere in Galilee. *(There've been loads of guesses, but no one today really knows which one. All that matters is that the disciples did, and they went).*

Now, this calling the disciples to a "mountain" should remind us of at least two things—and it's likely Matthew intended them to be recognized. First: if we recall the start of Jesus' earthly ministry, we know He summoned the first disciples in Galilee, who then followed Him to a mountain where He preached His sermon on the nature of true discipleship. Especially it's exacting cost. A sermon whose primary recipients were God's chosen people: the Jews. And now here, in the final days of His earthly presence, Christ—on a mountain in Galilee—calls the disciples to go out into the world and make more disciples, with the message of the true gospel. A message whose audience is not just the Jews but all nations. For it was always the redemptive plan of God, promised to Abraham and fulfilled in Christ's complete atoning work, that Jews and Gentiles would be made into one people—a holy nation, in a holy kingdom, and fellow family members in an eternal household. And that leads us to the second reminder.

In this post-Easter summons of the few disciples to a mountain, we see the picture of a new beginning with the faithful few—something that has clear connections with OT themes. One connection is revealed by Jesus—through His life, ministry, death, resurrection, and coming ascension—ushering in the promised new covenant age for a renewed Israel, along with the deliberate choosing of 12 disciples to represent the new tribes. Another connection deals with the idea of a faithful remnant, though whom God will reveal His truth, glory, and blessing. These faithful disciples on the mountain with Jesus serve as a contrast to the mere fans of Jesus. Those who only followed Him when it suited them, or when His teaching didn't disrupt them or require too much sacrifice from them. However, when His teaching became difficult and the cost too much to pay, they left Him. But not these faithful few. So, it's no surprise that Jesus entrusts the grand and challenging work of kingdom ministry not to those who are only in it for themselves, but to those who are faithfully devoted to God and His kingdom.

### **b. Honest Response**

We'll come back to that theme in a moment. For now, we need to look at the second part of the passage, which brings with it something of a surprise. And that surprise is the honest response of some of the disciples when they see resurrected Jesus on the mountain. Verse 17 says, *"When they saw Him, they worshiped Him, but some doubted."* What's wonderful about the Bible is that it doesn't sugarcoat things—especially when it comes to people. We are certainly a messy and messed-up bunch, who continuously get things wrong and even try to fight way above our weight-class. And the Bible is full of people who suffer in the same ways. It's full of real people, with real flaws, and it even showcases real people with real hang-ups when it comes to the life and ministry of Jesus. And while v.17 could be taken as an example of that very thing, we need to be a bit careful in how far we take what it means. But to know what it means, we need to be clear on what it says.

In this verse, we see two responses to Jesus' presence on the mountain—post-Easter. *(And both of these reflect what's happens on Christmas day).* The first one sounds perfectly reasonable from faithful disciples: they worshiped Him. *(This was the response of the shepherds).* Seriously, who wouldn't worship when they encounter the resurrected Messiah and Lord? Well, the second part seems to suggest that there are some who struggle with that

sensical response—a suggestion that seems to be at odds with the reality that we’re dealing with faithful disciples. How can they be truly faithful disciples of Jesus and yet have doubts when they see Him resurrected? That’s a legitimate question, but it’s admittedly one that only has weight if we rely on the vast majority of English translations, which routinely describes things as “doubt.” Now, in the Greek, there is a term for “doubt”: διακρίνω, which carries the idea of being separated, especially within oneself. Thus, one who doubts is one who is of two minds or even (conflicting) standards of judgment.

And it’s often because of such conflict that διακρίνω is often associated with unbelief. Thus, as James says: the one who doubts is one who is double-minded and therefore easily tossed by the waves of life because he is unstable in all that he does (cf. James 1.6–8). In fact, he explicitly says this about the doubter: “**that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord**” (James 1.7). Why? Because of his doubt, his instability, his unbelief, and his lack of true faith in who God is and what God provides. So, if that type of doubt were the case with the faithful disciples on the mountain with Jesus, then we would have a huge problem—not to mention a contradiction of terms and Scripture. But here’s the thing: διακρίνω is not the term Matthew uses in v.17. Instead, he uses a word that is exceptionally rare—not just in the NT but also in the whole of Greek literature. He uses the word, διστάζω.

To be perfectly fair: this a word that can mean “doubt,” but that’s not its primary meaning. It’s better rendered as “hesitant,” “unsure,” or even “confused.” This means, we’re not dealing with double-mindedness or even unbelief. Instead, we’re dealing with a normal sense of confusion in how to respond to a reality that’s otherwise understood to be impossible. (*This was similar to the response of those in Joseph’s family home when they heard the news from the shepherds*). That sense of personal inadequacy in one’s mental abilities for account for or explain what the eyes clearly see. Thus, the faithful disciples are not disbelieving Jesus’ physically resurrected presence with them on the mountain. They’re simply struggling with how to process that fact, what it means, and now requires of them. And if we’re honest with ourselves: that’s a breath of fresh air for us. Think about it: how many of us have ever felt like we’re unsure if we’re able to do whatever it is that Christ has called to do? That could be a vocational change, service in ministry, or simply living daily for Christ in a fallen world.

The breath of fresh air, also found in what happens in this text, is: despite our hesitations or even personal insecurities about our abilities, Christ still calls us into His presence. Christ still chooses to use us for His kingdom work. And in that calling, we are not summoned to trust in ourselves, our abilities, or our knowledge or wisdom. Instead, we are summoned to trust in Him alone and all of the provisions He mightily gives to us to be able to complete the work He has called and equipped us to do. And that’s effectively what we see the faithful disciples doing on the mountain—even those who were having trouble processing all of it. They didn’t allow that trouble or their confusion to cause them to give up and walk away. Instead, they remained in the presence of the One who alone has the power to reveal truth and to make the impossible a living reality. So, let’s not allow our limitations limit who God is and what He can do. Instead, let’s be faithful to the One whose limitless power can do world-changing good.

### **c. Full Declaration**

From the honest response, we move to the third part of the passage: the full declaration—not only of Jesus’ identity but also what truly belongs to Him because of who He is. (*We’ll come*

back to this theme next week when we start the new series, “Operating the Church,” with the first message dealing with church belonging to Christ alone). Look again at v.18: “Then Jesus came up and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me’.” This too has connections with Jesus’ earthly ministry, as found in the Gospels. His authority often astounded people because of the way He taught—a way that was unlike the religious elite. Also, Jesus’ authority was revealed in His abilities to heal the sick, cast out demons, calm storms, and declare the forgiveness of sins. That last display got Jesus into some serious trouble with the religious elite, for it was understood that only God alone has the right and authority to forgive sins. (*The fact that Jesus did it says something about who He is*).

Now, prior to the resurrection, most who witnessed Jesus’ teaching ministry and miracles would have understood His displays of authority as particular or distinct moments where God enabled (*or empowered*) Him to do mighty things for limited durations or purposes. Thus, they would say that His authority was both temporal and dependent upon an external source. However, while He explained otherwise throughout His ministry, Jesus makes it abundantly clear—here in the mountain with His faithful disciples—that the full eternal authority of heaven and earth belongs to Him. And if there happens to be a bit of *διστάζω* among us, this means Jesus is declaring Himself to be God—the One who has the right to rule over all of creation. And He has that right to rule over the whole of creation because, as Scripture reveals, all of creation exists because of Him and belongs to Him (cf. Jn 1; Col 1; Heb 1).

And that right of sovereign rule over all of creation necessarily applies to the new creation that began with Jesus establishing the new covenant age (*which is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Dan 7 and Jer 31*). Thus, when Jesus speaks, His word and His summons are always given with full authority, and what He expects of those under His full authority is always complete devotion. More to the point: the disciples are not to put His authority to the test by throwing up all sorts of excuses for why they aren’t prepared to answer and fulfill His calling upon their lives. A throwing up that covers the reality that He’s been preparing them for this moment throughout His entire ministry with Him. Instead, they must know they are in the presence of the One who has nurtured, developed, taught, and equipped them with the authority of heaven and earth to do the kingdom ministry. They’ve truly experienced a “Master Class” in the message and reality of the gospel from the Master Himself. (*In fact, that’s basically what the term “disciples” means—i.e., one who learns the teaching, ways, and life of the Teacher*).

Therefore, they truly have no excuse and certainly no real reason to resist the call to be His faithful heralds of the greatest message about the greatest salvation from the greatest Savior there ever is and will be. And the same is equally true for us. When Christ calls us—not just to Himself but also to His kingdom ministry—we ought to be ready to say with Isaiah: “**Here I am, Lord, send me**” (Isa 6.8). A confession of allegiance and readiness made possible because we not only know the One in whom we place our lives in this world but also trust the One from whom we have the promise of eternal life in His kingdom. And that humble, faithful posture will ensure that everything we do is not done for our flickering sense of glory or with our own measly displays of authority. Instead, it will all be done for His all-consuming glory and with His inexhaustible authority over all things. Things we desperately need, for the kingdom task before us is greater than any one (*and especially all of us*) could ever achieve.

#### d. Commission to the Many

And that leads to the fourth part of the passage: Jesus commissioning the few to the many. This commission is a theologically rich and life-changing statement from Jesus. Look at what He says: “Go therefore and be happy in who you are. Don’t worry about changing anything about yourself, or requiring anyone else to change either. I love all of you just as you’ve made yourselves. Be nice to others, read my best-seller if you get a chance—even if it takes you a few years, go to church when it’s convenient, and maybe give a little charity when you can. Oh, and if it’s comfortable for you do so, don’t be afraid to tell others that we’re buddies—but don’t be offensive or intolerant about it.”... Hang on a second. I think I accidentally read from the wrong text. That must have been the Joel Osteen, or Oprah Winfrey, or some progressive version. Sorry about that....

Let’s use the biblical version: Jesus says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mt 28.19–20a). Don’t miss the “therefore” that begins this command. It necessarily connects what Jesus is about to say with what He just said about having full authority over everything in creation. He is exercising that authority in commissioning (*i.e., authorizing*) His disciples to carry out a life of kingdom service in the world. And because the wording of this passage reveals it to be a command, this is not something that is optional, reserved for leadership in the church, or only done by the super-spiritual freaks of nature. This is something that must be done by all who belong to Christ. And all means all. And all must put aside everything that stands in way of fulfilling the call—especially those things that we often use as excuses for why we neglect this command.

That being the case, let’s make sure we appreciate why Christ’s great commission is so vital—not just for individual believers but especially the church as a whole. First of all, at the end of Mt 9, we find this transitional moment: “Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest’” (Mt 9.35–38). Not only is Jesus modeling for the disciples what kingdom ministry looks like (*teaching, preaching, healing, and spreading*), and for whom that ministry is to be done (*the troubled, the helpless, and the lost*). And if we give that last bit a moment’s worth of thought, we’d realize: that means everyone. But Jesus is also revealing the vastness of the need and the infinite supply available to meet that need.

However, Jesus is aware that not everyone’s going to sign up for the kingdom ministry that’s required in the world—either because they fear the vastness of it or they fail to know the One who supplies an infinite provision (*or sometimes both*). But that limited response from the many is not cause for anyone to give up on necessary task to be done. A task that’s not in its R&D stage or one for which the disciples need to wait for the opportune moment. Instead, as Jesus says: the harvest is plentiful—*i.e., the opportunities already exist now, and there is no shortage of those who need the gospel*. And even though Jesus tells the disciples to “ask the Lord of the harvest to send our workers into His harvest” (*and note, by the way, the explicit mention of who “owns” the field and to whom the workers are accountable*); Jesus is not

giving the disciples an out, where they can pray for someone else to do the work. Rather, He's telling them: go to God with the heart of Isaiah who says, "[Here I am, Lord, send me.](#)"

For without faithful workers in the field, those who need the gospel will not hear it. And if they do not hear it, they will not believe. And if they do not believe, they cannot know God's salvation (cf. Rom 10.9–10). That's the seriousness with which all faithful disciples must take Christ's Great Commission to go out and make disciples of all nations. A commission that's not seeking to sign people up for a club, an experience, an elective, or something they might want to try on for size to see if it suits them. Rather, the commission is about faithfully taking the sin-forgiving, life-changing, and eternity-giving message of the gospel to all who are troubled, helpless, and lost in the world—those who do not yet know God but are the ones for whom the Creator of all things has deep compassion and desires to give them new life. And such a faithfulness to this commission is not only made easier when we are fully reliant upon the One whose power and grace makes salvation possible, but also made effective because our own lives reflect in us the very thing we declare God is ready to do in others.

We need to be those who are made new because we have fully surrendered ourselves to Christ alone as Savior and Lord. Those who are humbly submitted to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Those who are faithfully learning from the word of truth in how to be Christ-like in all that we do and say. Those who are committed to a life of constant prayer to and worship of the one true God. Those who are firmly attached to the body of Christ and who harmoniously work with others for the cause and glory of God's kingdom. And we need to be those who are ready to enter the dark and chaotic world around us and declare the glorious light of God's salvation in Christ and the absolute peace that His salvation brings to people's lives. Thus, we need to be those who faithfully live the saved and redeemed life given by God in Christ, and who faithfully share that life with others so that they too might have new life and become Christ's true disciples, who then share their new life with others.

#### **e. Faithful Resolve**

And as much as I would love to end on that calling, we cannot miss the final part of our passage. A part that we must reflect in ourselves because Christ embodied it Himself. And that part is the need for a faithful resolve. What does that mean? To be resolved means to make a determined decision to be devoted to something with unwavering allegiance. Obviously, it's possible to be resolved about something that's not good or beneficial for life, and I'm sure we've all made resolutions of that sort from time to time. But here, we're interested in making truly meaningful and healthy resolutions—especially as they relate to our relationship with Christ. Let me illustrate what this looks like....

Surprisingly enough, one of my favorite people from recent history is Jonathan Edwards—the Reformed, Calvinistic preacher, not the Olympic gold medalist. In his memoirs, Edwards gave a list of 67 resolutions he desired to fulfill in his walk with God. Here is a brief sampling:<sup>3</sup>

- Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can (Res. 5)
- Never to do any thing out of revenge (Res. 14)

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<sup>3</sup> For all 67, see *Memoirs of Rev. Jonathan Edwards*, compiled by Samuel Hopkins (J. Black, 1815), 10–17—[found here](#).

- To examine carefully and constantly, what that one thing in me is, which causes me in the least to doubt...the love of God; and so direct all my forces against it (Res. 25)
- Never, henceforth, till I die, to act as if I were any way my own, but entirely and altogether God's (Res. 43)

Edwards was able to make these resolutions because of his belief in and commitment to God. He also made them in view of his own mortality and his reverence for the ministry to which God had called him. So, his resolutions for “not losing a moment of time” and “to improve it in the most profitable way” were based on his knowledge that life is temporary and everything in life should be done to glorify God. And if anything distorted his view of life or distracted his commitment to serving God, he would reject it. Such things would not be allowed to stand in the way of him fulfilling his call to God's ministry. And for what it's worth: Edwards knew that—unlike the typical practice of New Year's resolutions or special times of the year on the church's calendar—the things he resolved to do were not one-off experiences or something only surrendered for a short period, after which he could resume what he set aside. He knew the changes had to be permanent and that it would require devotion for his entire life.

Hold that in mind as we look again at the final part of Jesus' commission, which is itself a faithful resolution—but one of infinite proportions and eternal value. At the end of v.20 we read this: “And remember, I am with you always—to the end of the age'.” Please do not miss what this is clearly declaring and revealing. This is not some common “I'm cheering for you” type of encouragement we often give and even get, nor is it an otherwise generic closing word of, “Let me know if you need anything”—like we typically do when ending a phone call or email. To be clear: I'm not saying those things are wrong to say or that we're being insincere when we say them. (*At least I hope people are not being insincere with them*). Rather, it's to say: that's not what this verse is saying or doing. When Jesus says, “And remember, I am with you always—to the end of the age'”, we need to remember two things.

First of all, this “with you” promise takes us back to the start of Matthew's Gospel—from post-Easter to pre-Christmas. Although, truth be told: it goes back farther back than that. This promise to be “with you” is one made centuries ago in the prophecy of Isa 7: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa 7.14—ESV). This promise and prophecy were kept and fulfilled when an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”<sup>4</sup> All of this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us)” (Mt 1.20–23). A name that's not limited to what He does, but especially defines who He is.

Thus, Jesus' promise at the end of His time on earth to be with His faithful disciples is a faithful reflection of His revealed identity at the start. And leads to the second things we need to remember. When we remember exactly who's saying, “And remember, I am with you always—to the end of the age';” we quickly realize that this is a promise from God Himself—the Creator, Sustainer, and Provider of all things—to always be with us. And since He is the

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<sup>4</sup> What's sometimes missed here is that the angel's explanatory remark (“for He will save His people from their sins”) is an expansion upon the meaning of the name “Jesus,” which means: God is salvation.

One who has the full authority of heaven and earth, and He is the One who does not ever change and will never tell a lie (cf. James 1.17; Num 23.19; Titus 1.2; Heb 6.18); we have absolutely no reason to doubt His promise. We have no reason to question His Word. And we have no cause to trivialize His unfailing, faithful resolve to be our perfect Savior, Lord, King, and Protector. Instead, we have every reason to believe the revealed truth “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heavenly rulers, nor things that are present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8.38–39). Why? Because He promised always to be with us. And His word is final and unchanging.