

You Don't Have to Quit

by Warren Wiersbe

Jesus is with us in times of difficulty and trouble, and his presence is revealed in his person, providence, people, and power.

Duration: 33:59

Scripture: Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 9:37-38, Acts 18:9-10, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 4:17

Topics: "Christian Community", "Gods Providence"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the difficult times that people are facing both personally and nationally. He emphasizes the importance of Christian friends and the support and encouragement they can provide. The speaker also highlights the role of Jesus in our lives, stating that he is with us in his person, providence, people, and power. He uses the example of Paul and how God took care of him and provided for him in his ministry. The speaker concludes by expressing confidence in God's plan and purpose, stating that God has many people in the city of Chicago.

Transcript

It had snowed in the city, and a man was out shoveling his walk, and two boys came along carrying snow shovels, and they said, Mr., we'll shovel your walk. He smiled and said, Well, I'm doing it myself, but thanks anyway. They said, That's okay.

We get most of our work from people who are half through. I think they've hit upon a very important point. It's interesting to start something new, and it's fun to finish something new, but it's hard to keep going.

And the greatest temptations we face are the temptations to quit when the going gets tough somewhere in the middle. The Apostle Paul came to a difficult place, Corinth, and it was a difficult place. It would have been much more fun to stay in Athens with the philosophers and the artists and debate with the religious crowd, but Paul went to Corinth, a commercial city, a shipping center, a capital city, a corrupt city.

If you wanted to call somebody a bad name back in Paul's day, you called him a Corinthian. It was a luxurious place where people wasted their money and spent their lives. Paul went to Corinth, a difficult place at a difficult time.

Rome was persecuting the Jewish people, and Paul was a Jew, and Paul was a Christian Jew. And so here is a man going to a difficult place at a difficult time, and at some point in his ministry he became

afraid. I don't think Paul was afraid for himself.

Paul was never afraid for himself. Paul was afraid for his converts. Paul was afraid that the kind of persecution was going to break out in Corinth that had broken out in Thessalonica and some of the other places where he had been.

At this point Jesus spoke to Paul, and Jesus said to him, Be not afraid, speak, hold not thy peace, for I am with thee. That's a wonderful thing because I'm speaking to people right now who are going through difficult times in difficult places. Our whole country is going through a difficult time.

We listen to the news and we search the newspapers looking for some ray of hope, and yet somehow we keep hearing the same thing. Prices are going up, and people are out on strike, and people are losing jobs, and people are being laid off, and our nation is going through some difficult times politically and morally, and some of you are going through difficult times personally. When you come to the Moody Church and you start shaking hands and greeting people and you see a smile here and a smile there, you don't know what lies behind that smile.

You haven't the slightest idea. You shook hands with someone today in Sunday school whose heart is broken. You talk to someone today before the service who's going through a tremendous battle.

You know nothing about it. I know nothing about it. Each of us at some time in life comes to a difficult place at a difficult time, and the clouds begin to gather, and the wind begins to blow, and we wonder what's going to happen next, and it's at that point that Jesus says to us, now don't be afraid.

I'm with you. The thing that carried the Apostle Paul through was his faith in Jesus Christ. God didn't make the situation easier.

In fact, the situation got harder, but Jesus Christ saw Paul through, and he's going to see you through. I don't know what it is that you're battling today. I don't know what it is that you're carrying today, but I know this much, that when you put your faith in Jesus Christ and let him direct you, he's going to see you through.

Now, I want to ask a question today and try to answer it. The question is this, how is Jesus with us? How many times I've walked into a funeral home, and a sorrowing family has been there, and I've said to them, you know, the Lord is with you. How many times people have said to me, now pastor, the Lord is with you.

How many times have you prayed, oh God, be with me. How is the Lord with us? When we ask him, oh God, be with us, how does he answer? What are the ways by which the Lord Jesus is with us in our hour of need? I think Paul discovered that there are five different ways by which the Lord was with him, and the Apostle Paul is one of God's children, and we're God's children, and so what God did for Paul, he's going to do for us. The Apostle Paul did not have a corner on the market.

How is the Lord Jesus Christ with us? Well, first of all, he is with us in his person. We can't see him, we can't always feel him, and I'm just a little bit leery of these people who depend upon their feelings, but he's there. You see, this is part of the agreement that he made.

When he came and was born on this earth, he was given the name Emmanuel, God with us, and just before he went back to heaven to make sure his followers would not forget it, he said, now all authority in heaven and on earth is given to me. Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them, teaching

them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. And someone has well said that is not a promise, it's a fact.

He didn't say now if, if, if, if, then. He said while you are going, win people. And when you win them, baptize them.

And after you've won them and baptized them, teach them. And lo, I am with you always. And this is what Paul was doing.

Paul came to Corinth, verse one. He won people to Christ. He baptized them.

He taught them. And along came the Lord Jesus saying, Paul, I'm keeping this commitment. I'm with you.

He's with us in his person. Now I've noticed something in my Bible, perhaps you've noticed it, that whenever the Apostle Paul got into a tight spot, the Lord reminded him, Paul, I'm with you. Over in Acts chapter 23, Paul was arrested by his own people and a riot was about to take place.

And Paul was taken before the Sanhedrin. And the next night, Acts chapter 23 and verse 11, the Lord Jesus came to Paul and said, Paul, don't be afraid. I'm with you.

I don't care who may be against you. I'm with you. On board that ship, storming and, and they were almost about ready to lose their lives.

And, and an angel comes along and says, don't forget, Paul, he's with you. Paul got the whole crowd together on board ship and said, I told you so. Don't you love people like that? I told you so.

You should never have left the harbor, but I want you to know something. The Lord whom I serve sent his angel to say to me, don't be afraid. I'm with you.

You get to the end of Paul's life. Second Timothy, the last letter Paul wrote, he's a prisoner of Rome. The next footsteps that he hears could be those of the executioner.

Paul's on trial for his life and for the life of Christianity. And Paul writes to Timothy and said, in my last defense, no man stood with me. I wonder where all the Christians were in Rome.

No man stood with me, but the Lord stood with me. You see, at every juncture, when the Apostle Paul faced a problem, the Lord was with him in his person. Jesus was there.

It's like those three Hebrew children back in the Old Testament, thrown into the fiery furnace, and they turn on the monitors outside and say, what's going on in there? One, two, three. There are four in there, and one of them is like the Son of God. Why, of course, he promised when you go through the waters, I'll be with you.

When you go through the fires, I'm going to be with you, and you won't be burned. That's a good promise to take into 1975. Isaiah chapter 41, verse 10, fear thou not, for I am with thee.

Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right arm of my righteousness. The Lord Jesus is with you in his person.

You can't always feel him, you can't always see him, but he's there. That was the promise that David Livingstone claimed. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

And Livingston said, these are the words of a gentleman, and he shall keep them. There's a second way the Lord is with us when the going is tough and you feel like quitting. He's with us in his providence.

Now, providence simply means to see beforehand. It's two good Latin words, pro-video. You all know what video means.

That means to see. Pro-beforehand. God's providence is he sees to it beforehand.

Jesus said when he puts forth his sheep, he goes before them. By the way, the situation you are in right now, in the will of God, Jesus was there before you were. And in his providence, he took care of Paul.

Now, Paul had no board to support him. Paul had no contacts in Corinth. Paul had no travel agency.

He could phone and give a credit card number and say, get a motel for me. Paul started going that 50-mile trip from Athens to Corinth. He probably went by ship.

He may have had one of those shipwrecks that he tells us about. It's not recorded here. He gets to Corinth and says, now, Lord, here I am, this great big city, all of these people, it's a cosmopolitan place.

What do I do next? The Lord says, I want you to go down here. The Lord found him a place to stay. The Lord brought to his life a couple of people who were kicked out of Rome.

Isn't this amazing? Caesar issues an edict that forces Priscilla and Aquila to leave Rome. They come to Corinth. Paul leaves Athens and comes to Corinth, and the three of them meet.

That's the providence of God. I've seen this happen time after time after time. When you just lay it before the Lord and say, Lord, we've got to have this, he takes care of it.

Isn't it wonderful that in the providence of God, Paul's father had taught him a trade. The rabbis said, if you don't teach your son a trade, you teach him to be a thief. And so Paul was a tent maker.

And so Paul found a place to stay the home of Priscilla and Aquila. And lo and behold, they were tent makers. That's not a coincidence.

That's not luck. That's providence. The thing that tied Priscilla and Aquila with the apostle Paul was not just that all three were Jews.

You need something deeper than that. Not just that all three were tent makers. You need something deeper than that.

You see, all three of them were Christians. And God brought them together and said, now, Paul, I'm going to give you a place to stay, friends to stay with, and I'm going to give you a job. I don't doubt that some people are listening to me right now saying, I wish God would find me a job.

He will. He will. This is the providence of God.

God is with us in his providence. You see, my friends, God rules and overrules. And we walk into an unknown future in spite of prophets and prophetesses and tea leaves and cards and crystal balls.

Everybody walks into an unknown future. We've never walked this way before. Now, some of us might be saying, oh, I hope the future is like the past.

I'd feel much more secure. It may be different. God may be about to bring into our lives something that's going to shake everything up.

You say, what's already happened to me? Well, if it has, remember this. The Lord has already gone before. I don't find anybody in the Bible who ever stepped out to do God's will, but that he discovered God was there before.

So God is with you in his providence. All things are still working together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. That thing you're worrying about right now, that gnawing, aching thing down in your heart that you're worrying about, God knows all about it.

And he knows the way that you take. And if you're trusting him and obeying him, he prepares the way for you. There's a third way that God is with us, that Jesus Christ is with us.

He's with us in his person and he's with us in his providences. He goes before us and prepares the way. Did you notice here how that Jesus Christ was with Paul in his people? Now we forget this.

Sometimes the Lord Jesus Christ has come to me through the life of another Christian. Hebrews talks about entertaining angels unawares. I think sometimes we have some of God's flesh and blood angels around us all the time and we take it for granted.

You see, the apostle Paul could never have done what he did by himself. We talk about the great work that Paul did, but what about Priscilla and Aquila and Timothy and Silas and Justus and Crispus and Galileo? Paul couldn't have done what he did apart from these people. As you know, one of my hobbies is reading Christian biography.

Of late I am rereading the biography of Alexander White. 54 years ago tomorrow Alexander White died. Great Scottish preacher, great man of God, and yet behind his life were other people who helped him to do what he did.

Someday I'd like to write a book about the great unknowns in Christian history. We say a great deal about Charles Haddon Spurgeon. We forget Mr. Fullerton, who was one of his assistants.

We'd say a great deal about G. Campbell Morgan. We forget Arthur Marsh, who ran the church while Mr. Morgan was in other places. You see, behind these men were other men and women who helped them do what they did.

Someday I'd like to do a study of the friends of D. L. Moody. D. L. Moody was not only a soul winner, he was a friend winner. He could get people around him and put them to work, and so could Paul.

God said, Paul, I'm going to be with you in the person of Priscilla and Aquila. Here's a husband and a wife who are going to take care of you. You can move into their home.

I'm going to be with you. I'm going to help you through Silas and Timothy. When Paul came to Corinth, he came alone.

He'd sent Timothy up to Thessalonica. He'd sent Silas up to Philippi. And then they came back and met him at Corinth, and they had good news.

Things were going great in Thessalonica, and that encouraged Paul. And then Silas reached into his saddlebag and said, you know, the Philippians took up an offering for you. Paul wrote to the Corinthians one day and said, I robbed other churches to take care of you.

He was speaking in irony, of course. The Philippians gladly took up an offering. And Silas said, here's the money.

Paul said, I can stop making tents for a while now. I'm constrained to devote all of my time to winning souls. You see, if it hadn't been for the Philippian church, what could Paul have done? By the way, the next time you're tempted not to share in a missionary offering, just think about the fact that the Lord can be with our missionaries through us.

And so God was with Paul through his people. Priscilla, a housewife, Aquila, a tentmaker, Timothy and Silas, Paul's assistants. I like this fellow, Justice.

He lived right next door to the synagogue. Titus Justice opened the door and said, come in here. And so Paul founded a church, St. Paul's, by the synagogue.

And the Gentiles came in and the Jewish converts came in. And on the Sabbath day, I'm sure Paul had a meeting in the house next to the synagogue. And I'm sure those two crowds used to meet.

And eventually, lo and behold, the ruler of the synagogue gets saved. It's amazing. And because he got saved, others were saved.

God is with us through his people. In fact, would you notice that God even used an unsaved Roman official to protect the Apostle Paul? I have noticed as I've studied the book of Acts that wherever you find a Roman officer, you find a gentleman for the most part. We have the idea that unless a person is saved, God can't do anything through him.

God used Cyrus. God used Galileo. This man had no understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and yet God used him to protect the Apostle Paul.

And when this deputy, who was the equivalent of one of our governors in a state, plus the Supreme Court, when this man made his decree, he was setting a precedent that protected the Christians. You see, God used him, even though he wasn't even a believer. My friend, God is with us in his people.

That says two things to me. Number one, I give thanks for my Christian friends. I give thanks for the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, where people can be with each other and encourage each other and pray for each other, where we can be a Jesus in flesh and blood to help somebody.

It says to me also, I want to be a better friend. I want to do the thing the choir sang about today. It's wonderful to have Christian friends.

It's even more wonderful to be a Christian friend. By the way, did Jesus come to anybody this past week through you? There's a fourth way that the Lord is with us. He's with us in his person and in his providence and in his people.

He's with us in his power. By the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul was winning souls. Now, I want to drop before you a very important principle.

It's this. Paul was having a difficult time in Corinth because he was serving the Lord. We have the idea that when you're serving the Lord, things go smoothly.

Life becomes a superhighway with no restrictions. That's not true. You can be sure that when you start to serve the Lord and witness and win souls, the devil is going to throw every obstacle in front of you that he can.

And yet the Lord Jesus Christ was with Paul in his power. He said, Paul, you can know I'm with you because I'm blessing your witness. People are being saved.

The church is growing. The enemy is fighting. That's an evidence that I'm with you.

I'd like to go on a little detour now. I'll not do it, but I'm tempted to go on a little detour and pay tribute to the Apostle Paul for his concern for the city. We live in a society that is oriented around the city.

It's a metropolitan world. Here in the United States of America, some 75, 80 percent of the people are living in big metropolitan areas or adjacent to them. And yet for some reason or other, we've changed the policy of the book of Acts.

In the book of Acts, the Apostle Paul found the metropolitan center. He built a church and he said to the people in that church, now you reach out. And they did.

When you read 2 Corinthians, you find Paul saying, everybody in Achaia heard the word of God through you. Timothy went out and Silas went out and various people went out and they ministered to that whole area. We've reversed that today.

Our churches are abandoning the cities. And we're losing. I thank God for people in Moody Church who believe in the New Testament pattern of evangelizing the city.

I thank God for people who are sacrificing, as did Paul, who could be attending a little more comfortable situation where there's more parking available, a little closer to home, but they have a burden to reach the city. That's the kind of a man Paul was. God was with Paul in his power.

Is it not interesting that the same gospel that worked in Athens also worked in Corinth? Paul didn't change his message. In fact, he writes in 1 Corinthians in chapter 2, he said, when I came to you, I came to you in much fear and trembling, but I was determined to do one thing. I was determined to preach Christ and Him crucified.

He'd preached this in Athens. He'd taken a different approach to it. And his work in Athens was not a failure.

There were people who were saved. But as Paul made his way from Athens to Corinth, he said, oh God, I'm going to a wicked city. I'm going to a city that's just filled with filth.

There's only one thing that can save people, the cross of Jesus Christ. Help me to be true to preach Christ and Him crucified. That's what we preach at Moody Church.

The thing that's going to save the city of Chicago is Christ and Him crucified. The thing that's going to change your life, rescue your life, change your home, is faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. God's power was with the Apostle Paul.

Finally, there's a fifth way that the Lord is with us when we're going through difficulty and trouble. He's with us in his person. He said, now I'm with you.

You don't have to meet any conditions. I'm with you. He's with us in his providences.

He goes before us. He prepares the way. He's with us in his people.

He brings to us those who can encourage us and help us. He's with us in his power. That's what the whole thing is about, to win people to Christ.

You say, I'm going through a difficult time. Then look for ways to witness and win people to Christ. We're going through some real hardships.

Then look for ways to win people to Christ. But the fifth way that the Lord is with us, he's with us in his promises. The Lord spoke to the Apostle Paul in verse 9, be not afraid, but speak.

Hold not thy peace, for I am with thee. Notice now, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee. I'm going to give you my protection.

And I have many people in this city. Now that verse bothers some people. They say, well, this sort of means that God knew who was going to be saved.

I think he does. I believe that the Bible teaches divine election. But would you notice something interesting here? When God said to Paul, there are many people here who are going to be saved.

Paul didn't sit back and say, well, Lord, save them. Paul worked harder. You know what keeps me going? It's not seeing things necessarily visibly.

We sow the seed by faith. We do thank God for visible fruit. I give thanks to God when Sunday by Sunday people come and give their hearts to Christ.

During the week, we have the privilege of leading folks to the Savior. You rejoice at this, and so do I. But you don't go by that. We sow the seed by faith.

And God has said, my word is not going to return void. We do a lot of radio ministry here at Moody Church. I think our Songs the Night program is probably heard by some 10 million listeners around the world, most of whom we never hear from.

Preaching over the radio is like standing at the top of the Sears Tower with an eyedropper full of medicine trying to hit somebody's eye down on the ground. It's just an act of faith. But you know what? God's going to bless his word.

I have preached in meetings and gone home and said, oh, what a failure, and discovered two years later God did something. I've also preached in meetings and gone home and said, man, what a great meeting, and nothing seemed to have happened. God said to Paul, look, I have many people in this city.

Election does not make us lazy. It gives us confidence. We know that our work is not in vain in the Lord.

I believe God has many people in the city of Chicago. I believe he has many people in the United States and over in Japan and the nations of the world. He's just waiting for someone to go there who will be the means of reaping the harvest.

God is with us in his promises. You've learned, I know, that when the going is tough, you open your Bible. Now, many people when the going is tough, they open their telephone directory.

No, don't do that. Not right away. It's good to talk to a Christian friend.

It's good to have somebody pray with you. But when the going is tough, reach for your Bible and open your Bible, and God will talk to you. In fact, God will talk to you in ways that you've never dreamed of.

Mr. Spurgeon used to say the promises of the word of God always read better in the furnace of affliction. Have you found that to be true? Sure, it's true. And God said to Paul, I'm going to give you a promise.

Number one, nobody's going to hurt you. They may try, but they won't. Number two, many people are going to be saved.

And so Paul called his group together and said, you know, God just gave me a promise. There are many people to be saved in this city. Now, Justice, you go over there and do some visiting, and Silas, you go over there.

And before long, they began to reap the harvest. Paul stayed 18 months. That's the longest he stayed anyplace except in in Ephesus.

18 months in Corinth. Oh my, I'd have a hard time spending 18 months in Corinth. Paul did.

You say, Pastor, for the last six weeks, I've been going through a rough time. Paul stayed 18 months in a hard place, doing a hard job. And you know what kept him going? The Lord was with him.

And how did he know the Lord was with him? He was with him in his person. Lo, I'm with you always. He was with him in his providences.

Paul said, whenever we make a step, God's got the way prepared. He was with him in his people. God raised up people to help the apostle.

He was with him in his power. People were being saved. And he was with him in his promises.

Paul said at the next church business meeting, God gave me a promise. Keep witnessing, keep praying, keep passing out tracts, keep holding jail services, keep ministering, because God has said, they aren't going to hurt you, and many people are going to be saved. Christopher Columbus was one of the great men who opened up exploration.

He headed for one place and ended up someplace else, but that's all right. Some people never end up anywhere. But it's interesting to read the log of Christopher Columbus's first voyage, 1492.

You know, his crew wanted to go back. His crew wanted to detour. It was rough.

It was difficult. And the one entry that is found more than any other in his log is this, today we sailed on. Next day, today we sailed on.

And I say that speaks of a great man. I haven't got Paul's diary, but I can imagine day after day for 18 months in Corinth, Paul was writing something like this, today we kept going. Today we kept going.

They lied about us. They tried to arrest us. They tried to break up our meeting, but today we kept going.

I want to suggest that's what you and I should be writing in our diaries this next year. It's going to be tough. There are going to be economic problems, and emotional problems, and physical problems, and social problems, and spiritual problems.

But with all of these problems, there are going to be tremendous opportunities. And Paul never looked at the obstacles. He always looked at the opportunities.

And then he saw the obstacles weren't too big. And you see, the Lord says, I'm with you. I'm with you.

Don't quit. Keep sailing on. I'm with you.

And I'll never leave you. Some of you here today don't know our Lord. You've never trusted him.

You've never been born again. You've never had your sins forgiven. Why don't you trust him? Why don't you enter into a new year just giving your life wholly to him and discover how wonderful it is when the Lord is with you? Gracious Father in heaven, we're thankful for these experiences of Paul written down by Luke, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to help us twenty centuries later.

We're grateful, Father, that you are with us. And our prayer is that we might be faithful to trust you, to obey, and not to quit. Father, when the going gets tough, remind us that you're with us.

Make the promises of your word to shine very brightly. And Father, we would pray one more thing today. Help us to be an encouragement to one another.

Help us, Father, to remind others that the Lord is with them, and we're with them, and there's no need to quit. I pray for those without the Savior that they might come to trust him and be saved. For this we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17630.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/warren-wiersbe/you-dont-have-to-quit/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net