



Five Words that Can Change Your Life

This year I've been meditating on how to make the Presence of Jesus more of a reality in my everyday life. I firmly believe that if we knew that God was in us and with us, we would not be so afraid, or bored, so lonely, or lost. We would not be seeking pleasure in sinful ways, or stuffing our selves full of food or spending our money on more and more stuff, or looking for love in all the wrong places. Our lives would be rich and meaningful and full of purpose and direction. Jesus told us, "I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10)."

But truth be told, most of us, even as believers, don't live in that reality. Before Jesus left this world and his disciples to ascend into heaven, he said five words that changed their lives. **He said, "I am with you always." (Matthew 28:20)**

Let's look at these five simple words more closely and see how they can change us too.

He said, "I am with you always." **Who exactly is making this claim?** Jesus says this after his resurrection and the disciples now are starting to get the big picture. He is not just their friend, their companion, their teacher. Nor is he a religious leader or future king of Israel. Jesus proved that he is the Son of God. **He is the great I AM. He is the one who is omniscient, and omnipresent. He is sovereign, he is love, and he is good. It is HE who promises that He is with us always.** The disciples realized, if God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31).

How about you, dear ones? If you knew He, the great I AM, is always Present with you, what would you fear? How would you change? What would be different in the way you lived today?

Not only is Jesus declaring that the great I AM is with us, but that he IS with us, right here, right now. He doesn't say He will be with his disciples sometime in the future, or later on in Heaven but he said "I am (present tense) with you always. **If you believed that Jesus is with you right now, what difference would that make in the choices you make today? How would you feel differently?**

Jesus told his followers that **"I am with YOU always."** **Each individual is important to God** and he will never leave or forsakes us (Hebrews 13:5). He is at our right hand (Psalm 16:8). His Presence is promised. Paul speaks of that great mystery, Christ in us (Colossians 1,2). The reality of that promise is not our biggest problem in our spiritual journey.

Our problem is that we are not aware of his Presence. After Jacob's dream where he heard the Lord promising that he was with him and would protect him, he awoke from his sleep and said, "**Surely the Lord is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it.**" (Genesis 28:16). How about you? **If we only could only see (be aware) that the great "I AM is with US" it would make all the difference in how we feel, what we choose, and how we go about our day.** Our step would be lighter, our eyes brighter, because we would not only be looking at our day from our own vantage point, but we'd also have the eyes of God who gives us a wide angle lens on things. He infuses meaning and purpose into traffic jams and spilt milk, job losses and relationship pain.

Jesus said, "**I am with you ALWAYS. Not sometimes, not only when you're listening to him, not only when you're good and faithful, but ALWAYS. ALWAYS. ALWAYS.**" He says he is with us when we're sleeping and when we're awake. When we're in church and when we're watching something we shouldn't. He is with us when we are loving on our children, and when we're screaming at our spouse.

Friends, my prayer is that we would learn to be more aware that HE is PRESENT ALWAYS. **Knowing God's Presence changes the way we respond to difficult and stressful life situations.** We would not get so angry or aggravated. We would not feel so alone or rejected. We would experience peace not chronic anxiety and worry. We would feel joy instead of emptiness. We would be filled with hope instead of despair.

Sarah Young, the author of a wonderful devotional book, *Jesus Calling* wrote, "**A renewed mind is Presence-focused.**" I like that. Start today. You are not alone or helpless. God is with you always. **Let your mind dwell on and heart be filled with this truth. If you do, I promise, it will change you.**