

SERMON

Holy Trinity, A, May 31, 2026
Pastor James G. Bauman
Immanuel Lutheran Church - Bartlett, IL
Matthew 28:16-20

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

“ALWAYS!”

When the Cubs won the World Series

- for the first time in 107 years back in 2016,
- and the stands packed with crowds,
- one fan was holding a sign that read,

“I WAS HERE WHEN NOBODY ELSE WAS!”

Those words resonated

- in the hearts of many long-suffering Cubs fans
- who year after year had never wavered in their support
- of what had been a very disappointing and frustrating team....

“And remember, I am with YOU always....”

The promise of our Lord Jesus to His disciples.

“Always.”

- Not sometimes.
- Not only when faith is strong.
- But always.

That Jesus could promise such a thing and mean it

- tells us a lot about His identity.
- It tells us that he is one with the everlasting Almighty God--
- one with the heavenly Father.

The O. T. Psalmist once wrote

- about the ever-close presence of God with His people.....

“Where can I... go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?”

Now Jesus is identifying Himself with the ever-present God.

And, these familiar words, also from the book of Psalms.

“The LORD is my shepherd.....

“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me....
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Psalm 23)

“ALWAYS.”

Jesus has taught us,

“I AM the Good Shepherd”--

- one with the Lord of that comforting Psalm.

The word “always” reminds us

- not only of how Jesus is one with the eternal Father--
- but also of how Jesus promised his first disciples
- that He would be continue to be

- present among them through the ministry of the HOLY SPIRIT,
- whose coming on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after Easter,
- we celebrated this past Sunday.

“Always” reminds us of the Holy Trinity.

- It reminds us who Jesus Christ truly is--
- one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God forever.

“Always.”

It’s something WE would like to be able to say,

- but because of our human limitations,
- WE can’t truthfully promise anything “always.”
- Our years on earth run out.
- Our health can fail.
- Stress can take its toll on us
- so that the good that we want to do
- we find that we just cannot do.

But “always” IS something Jesus Christ CAN promise,

- and DOES promise to us disciples also.

Recall the words of Irving Berlin’s popular song:

“I’ll be loving you, always,
With a love that’s true, always,
When the things you’ve planned,

Need a helping hand,
I will understand, always.

“Life may not be fair, always,
That’s when I’ll be there, always,
Not for just an hour,
Not for just a day,
Not for just a year, but always.”

But only God can keep such a promise.

- And such a promise of UNDYING and UNRESTRICTED love
- is given US in the words of Jesus.

Could there be any more comforting word than this word from his lips--
“always”?

But why then are there times

- when we feel so alone,
- even abandoned by God--
- with prayers seemingly ignored--
- as though we are left to fend for ourselves
- feeling spiritually like anonymous nobodies,
- to cope as best we can against killing odds.

The Holy Scriptures identify our root problem with the word “sin.”

It is sin which...

- separates us from God,
- breaks up our ability to communicate with God,

- and blinds us to God's reality and God's presence--

not just the sins we commit by actions and inactions,

- but sin as a condition of our life.

- It is in the nature of things, our own nature.

- We were born into it.

Jesus Christ and his salvation are bigger than our sin,

- no matter how disturbing and persistent its power seems to be over us.

- Sin will not have the final word....

Did you notice that strange,

- even astonishing--

- comment in today's Gospel?

“When they saw him, they worshiped him, BUT SOME DOUBTED.”

Just imagine.

- On a mountaintop, in the presence of the Risen Lord--

- and DOUBTING!

What was the reaction of Jesus to this very weak faith among his closest disciples?

- Their trouble believing did not deter him from his saving purposes.

- In fact, he doesn't even comment on their doubts.

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth.... And remember, I am with YOU always....’”

Even with the doubters!

- The fearful.

- The weak.

These are clearly the confident words of the One

- who has conquered the power of sin to destroy us and our life with God.

- Our salvation does not rest in strength of our own.

So our

- feelings of abandonment,

- our own doubts,

- are met head on with this promise of “always”--

- even then, when we are at our lowest,

- at the end of our rope,

- beyond the limit of our own powers,

- some doubting.

Each celebration of Holy Communion

- renews that promise of our Lord’s presence-- “always”.

- AND here in the Sacrament, present ESPECIALLY “for you”--

- the Body and Blood given and shed to destroy sin--

- the Risen Lord promising “ALWAYS”--

- HERE for you.....

“Not for just an hour,
Not for just a day,
Not for just a year, but ALWAYS.”

And the peace of GOD which far surpasses our human understanding shall keep your hearts and minds IN CHRIST JESUS, BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT for life everlasting. Amen.