

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2026.08.02

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Speaker-AM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Observations from the
Water's Edge

Recording:



Speaker-PM: Josh Vinyard

Title: Disciplines of Godly People -
Submission

Recording:



Article

I Am With You, 07/28/2026 by David Gibson

Comforting assurance

By using a Bible computer program, you can type in the words, “I am with you,” and in just moments the screen displays every passage where this phrase is found. If you count all references to “I am with you” plus “I will be with you,” you will discover more than 20 occurrences altogether.

A study of these in context is impressive—and reassuring. Over and over God pledges His presence and His help to His people. Among those who received this assurance (and who really needed the encouragement) were Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Jeremiah, the twelve apostles, and Paul (Genesis 26:3, 24; 28:15; 31:3; Exodus 3:12; Deuteronomy 31:23; Joshua 1:5; 3:7; Judges 6:16; Jeremiah 1:8, 19; 15:20; Matthew 28:20; Acts 18:9-10). God also encouraged Israel with this promise through Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Haggai (Isaiah 41:10; 43:1-2, 5; Jeremiah 30:10-11; 42:11; 46:28; Haggai 1:13; 2:4).

In time of crisis

God promised to be with them in view of their facing tremendous difficulties and challenges. The normal human reaction to such hurdles would be discouragement and fear. In fact, in several of these passages God says, “Do not fear,” along with the promise, “I am with you.”

In other words, since I am with you, you need not fear. And so we can say with David, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me . . .” (Psalms 23:4).

The promise of God’s presence and help is conditional on our cooperating with His will (I Kings 11:38; 14:7-11). Let’s so live that God can always be with us. God’s presence may be invisible, but it is real. His promise “I am with you” may be ancient, but it isn’t dated. We need to hear those words today as much as those in earlier times. We too face great trials as we obey Christ. But as Jesus said in giving us the Great Commission, “. . . I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). To the end of the age.

Confidence in Men, 7/5/2026 by Sam Bunyard

God’s people have always struggled putting too much confidence in human leaders – politically (Isa. 31:1-3) and religiously (Ex. 32:1-2). For this reason, God has continued to teach His people throughout time of the folly of relying on human aid. Even the best of leaders fall short sometimes (Num. 20:10-12; Josh. 7:1-9; II Sam. 24:10-17).

Even when there are good leaders who take God’s people in a good direction, they won’t be around forever! “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish” (Ps. 146:3-4). God is the only leader that will never fail His people. His rule is perfect – both just and merciful (Ps. 146:5-9). And He shall reign forever, “to all generations” (Ps. 146:10).

Many leaders in Israel’s history seem larger than life – leaders without whom it seems the nation could not stand. And yet when they died, God’s people did not crumble. In fact, the death of a hero often signified the beginning of something rather than the end. Exodus begins with the death of Joseph, Joshua with the death of Moses, Judges with the death of Joshua, I Samuel with the death of Eli, II Samuel with the death of Saul, I Kings with the death of David, and II Kings with the ascension of Elijah. Even the book of Acts begins with the loss of the physical presence of Jesus.

And yet the work did not stop. It was just beginning. God’s people were not destroyed. They grew. The message was not lost. It spread. We are a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28) because we serve a never-changing, faithful King (Heb. 6:17-20; 13:8). This is the foundation of the good news of the gospel – “Your God reigns” (Isa. 52:7; Mt. 28:18)!