

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Daniel Savage

SERIES

God With Us

PART

6

TITLE

To The End Of The Age

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:16-20



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On the mountains and in the valleys, in our highs and in our lows, God is with us.

Good morning, Providence. It's good to see you all. We're glad that you're here. Welcome. If you're a guest, we're especially glad that you're here, you've joined us, if you're joining us online, welcome. We're excited to be in the word this morning, continuing in our series. The sermon this morning is about how God is with us to the end of the age. My name is Daniel, I forgot to say that, I don't think I said it in the last service either. I'm Daniel Savage, I'm the pastor of discipleship and I'm happy to be here.

But, God with us to the end of the age. The end of the age is a fascinating thing that people have been fascinated with for a long time. There are whole series of books written about the end of the age. There are ministries and all kinds of things, radio shows, podcasts about the end of the age.

People are fascinated by it. They want to know about it, and the reality is we don't know a whole lot about it. In fact, one of the things that we know, Jesus was very clear, you won't know when it's coming. He was very clear. He gave us things to look for, signs that we could watch for, but he didn't say, "When you see this sign there'll be five more years." Or, "When you see this sign, there'll be one more generation." He just said, "Be watchful and be ready." But one thing he did tell us about the end of the age is he told us, he promised us that he would be with us until the end of the age. In fact, he promises us that, and that's how Matthew ends his gospel account.

There are four gospel accounts in the new Testament. Just eye witness testimony from some of the disciples that followed Jesus about the life and ministry of Jesus, and Matthew writes one of them, and it's interesting that he ends his gospel differently than the other gospel writers do. Mark and Luke end their gospel with the ascension of Christ, where Christ ascends into heaven. John ends his gospel with a flurry of appearances that Jesus made after the resurrection, and then he appeals to you to believe in this Jesus that he has been writing about. But Matthew ends his gospel with this commissioning. He ends with the disciples in Galilee on a mountain being commissioned by Christ with what we call, the great commission. And it's what we're going to look at this morning, Matthew 28 verses 16 through 20. We're ending our series, our advent series this morning, God With Us. And over the past several Sundays, we looked at God with us in our weakness, in the wilderness, in the darkness, in our trials, in our fears. And finally this morning, God with us to the end of the age.

And what I want you to walk away with this morning is a few things. One, I want you to be encouraged and comforted by the idea that God is with us. He is with us in all power, and I want you to be encouraged to be on the mission that he has given us, and I want you to be encouraged to enjoy his presence because he is with us forever. So let's pray. And then we'll read Matthew 28:16-20 together.

Heavenly Father, we pause now and ask for your help. God, would you speak through your word? God, we ask that you would attend to the word by your spirit. God, I pray that it would land on our hearts, and it would build our faith. That it would bring encouragement, that it would conviction, that it would build us up. God, draw us to yourself, as you reveal to us who you are. God, I pray that our eyes would be opened, that you would move through your word with power. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Matthew Chapter 28, the very end of his account of Jesus' life and ministry. This is what he says, "Now, the eleven disciples," starting in verse 16, "went to Galilee to the mountain, to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.'"

And first thing I want you to see this morning is that God is with us in power. God is with us in power. This section starts by Matthew describing what is happening. He says in verse 16, the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain, to which Jesus had directed them, and when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. Now Jesus had told the disciples to go to Galilee, or to meet him in Galilee back in chapter 26. He said he would go before them to Galilee, and then when the women came to the tomb, and Jesus was there resurrected, he told them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee to meet him there. Now they're in Galilee, where they had spent most of their time with Jesus as he did his ministry, they were in Galilee most of the time, and Jesus appears.

And we see this mixed response from the eleven, probably the most confusing part of this passage of scripture says that they worshiped him, but some doubted. Now what in the world does that mean? This mixed response that you see there is repeated over and over again throughout the gospel accounts. Jesus appears, and there's always this inclination to worship, but there's also, paired with it, always this doubt or it could be translated hesitation. Now this hesitation or this mixed response is there, and it's there really candidly. I don't want it to trouble you this morning, in fact, this honest account should add confidence to our reading of the word. The disciples do this over and over again, where they share things about their experience that aren't necessarily very flattering, and their honesty reassures us that they're telling us the truth.

When you think about it, the reality here is that, this is a very understandable human response. So these men have traveled with, and done ministry with Jesus for years now, they know him intimately, and yet now things are different, and they aren't quite sure how to approach him. In fact, they failed Jesus in his greatest hour of need. When he was being arrested and taken away, they fled. They abandoned him and then they didn't wait with great faith for him to be resurrected. They thought he was dead and gone. They thought the whole thing was over. They basically forgot everything that he ever told them. They failed miserably, and now he is back. Now he is resurrected from the dead, his divinity and his holiness are more evident than they've ever been, and they want to worship him and they do, but there's this hint of doubt or hesitation.

How will he receive us? What does he think about us now that we have failed him in this way? It's more clear than ever that he is different, and so there's a bit of hesitation. We should all be encouraged this morning by the idea that Jesus has patience for those who doubt or hesitate. Look at verse 18, where we learn that God is with us in power. It says, "And Jesus came and he said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." And Jesus makes this statement about his authority as the backdrop for what we call, the great commission, which we'll get into in a second.

He's about to give his disciples direction. He's going to give them a mission, but first he wants them to know about his authority. So what exactly is Jesus saying when he says, "All authority has been given to me?" Well, Jesus is declaring himself to be the sovereign King over all the universe. Matthew introduced Jesus as a King early on. In Matthew chapter one, we see that Jesus is in the line of David, and his point is for us to know that he is in the line of Kings. Three Kings... Well we say three wise men from the east come looking for a King who has been born. Jesus has been making statements about a coming kingdom all throughout the gospel of Matthew, and then towards the end of the book, Jesus was mocked and beaten and crucified for the accusation that he had claimed to be the King of the Jews.

Now he is resurrected, and he declares to his disciples that he is much more than just the King of the Jews. He is the King of all. He is the King of all of heaven and all of earth, all authority and power has been given to him. He reigns over everything. This was comforting news for the disciples and it should be comforting news for us today. We face a lot of things in this world that caused us to fear. We face things like uncertainty. Just a few months ago, there was so much unrest in our country that police precincts and stores were being set on fire. Our nation is as politically divided today, as I have ever seen it in my lifetime, and uncertainty abounds.

We don't know what's going to happen. We don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, much less next week, or next month, or in the coming years. The future to us is completely uncertain, and what are we supposed to do? Well, we could sink into despair and give ourselves over to anxiety or depression. We could numb ourselves with more entertainment and just binge watch the next great Netflix series that comes out, so we don't have to think about these things. Or, we could turn our eyes to the one who holds all authority. We could run to the sovereign King, who has authority over all of heaven and all of earth. We could pray to the one who knows and reigns over the future that we cannot see. Church family, this is a far better alternative to the answers that the world is offering us.

The world says, watch more news and keep worrying. The world says, buy more stuff so that you don't have to think about these things. The world says, run to sin to ease your pain, but let's not do any of those things. Instead, let's run to the one with all power. The first point of application I want you to write down and think about this week is, let's run to Jesus, the one with all power. Let's run to Jesus, the one with all power. Let's forsake running to these other lesser things. Let's forsake the world solutions to our problems, and run to the one with all authority that has been given to him.

And Jesus reminds us that God is with us in power, now he's going to remind us that that power is not just to comfort us. We should be comforted by this idea that Jesus reigns overall, but that's not the only thing it's for. It's not just... He doesn't just tell us that he has all authority so that we can have comfort, that's not the big idea. We should be comforted, but his power is intended for more, it's to aid us in the mission. The second thing I want you to see this morning is that God is with us for the mission. He's with us for the mission, look at verses 19 and 20. Verse 19 says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

So he starts with, go therefore. In other words, because all authority has been given to Jesus, we should go. His command is rooted in his authority. Our confidence to carry out this command should be rooted in his authority. Well, why is that so important? Why is this authority needed? Why did Jesus start by proclaiming to them that he had all authority? Well first, because this is not a small mission he's given us. He says, "Go make disciples of all nations. Take this good news of the kingdom to the ends of the earth, take it to every tribe and tongue and nation and people." All people need to hear about the good news of Jesus Christ.

It's a massive global mission. Not only is it big, but it's also going to be met with opposition. There's going to be opposition to this mission because there's opposition to the message. Think of all the worldly enterprises that will be up ended if everyone hears and believes the gospel. Think about those who rule through fear or oppression. They will lose their power if their people hear and believe the gospel. Think about all the power that will be lost if people submit themselves to the authority of Christ. That's why there's so much opposition to this message, and it's why he tells them first about his authority. Jesus is reigning over every government, over every spiritual enemy, over every circumstance. Therefore go. Go to every nation and tribe and make disciples, introduce them to Jesus. Call them to follow him and teach them to obey all of his commands because Christ has all authority.

This command to go and make disciples of all nations is called, the great commission. People have made the mistake in the past of thinking that this great commission is only for the Christian elite. Almost like it's the marching orders for the special forces. Missionaries who feel called to go to unreached people groups and live in remote places, but this is not how we should think about the great commission. These instructions are for every follower of Jesus. You and I are called to go and make disciples. We're called to make disciples of all nations, and does that mean that you should move overseas? Maybe. Have you considered that? It will certainly mean that for some of us and I think everyone in this room, everyone who is a follower of Christ should consider, is God calling me to go? Some of us will move. Some of us will go overseas, but not all of us.

There are many ways to fulfill this command of making disciples of all nations. First, as a church, we have to keep our focus on the mission. It's easy for churches to turn inward and begin to think about themselves above everything else. It's easy for people in the church to begin to think this is my church. It's here for me. When in reality, this is his church, and we exist to bring glory to his name. We exist for the mission that he has given us. We must keep our eyes looking outward. We must keep this mission before us. Second, as

individuals, we have to consider the various ways that we are called to participate in this great mission. One of the ways that we can participate is through prayer. Are you praying for our mission partners?

You can call our missions office or email the missions' office here at Providence, and get a list of the names of our partners and their prayer needs, and you can pray over them. You could volunteer an hour a week to pray in the upper room, where they get frequent updates about our partner's needs. You could devote an hour to pray for the church and for our ministry partners. You can participate through encouraging our partners who live overseas. They're doing difficult work in difficult places. Pick one, write them, send them packages, enlist your life group to adopt them and keep up with their needs and try to bless them. They're in a difficult place. We can participate through giving. Like Phil just said, some of our dollars that are given collectively, some of each... Some of every dollar goes towards overseas missions, 20% of what comes into the church goes back out overseas.

Finally, we can participate by living on mission here in Raleigh. And one of the great things about living in Raleigh in the 21st century is that God has brought the nations to us. The nations are here. Think about who your neighbors are. Think about your coworkers, your classmates. The King of the universe didn't put you on your street, or in your cubicle, or at your desk at school on accident. You are there because he placed you there. So make a commitment this year to pray for your neighbors, to bless them with service and kindness, and to share the good news with them. Think about how you can prioritize the mission in your life.

The danger for most of us is that we allow life to push our mission to the sidelines. We get busy and distracted, and we start thinking that life is about our social calendar. It's about our kids, or it's about our entertainment, or our work, or our goals, or our priorities. We forget this is a very short life. We forget that some things are temporary and some things are eternal. Don't get so distracted by the temporary that we lose sight of the mission.

Second point of application I want you to write down and think about this week is, let's live on mission with God's help. In 2021, let's live on mission with God's help. The mission is all around us. The people God intends for us to reach are right there. Do you see them? Pray for them. Bless them. Share the good news with them. God is with us in power. He's with us for the mission.

Finally, I want you to see this morning that God is with us forever. God is with us forever. Jesus finishes this commission by reminding them, "And behold I am with you always, to the end of the age." Now first let's remember, that the true gift of Christmas is the idea of God being with us, but this is only a gift because of the gospel. The idea of God being with us is only good news if our sins have been forgiven, and we can stand before the all powerful, perfectly righteous judge of the universe without fear. If Jesus didn't come to earth and take on flesh and live the life that we were supposed to live without sin. If he hadn't died the death we deserved to die in our place then we would still be guilty, and we would be anxiously awaiting God's righteous anger and wrath.

If Jesus hadn't been raised from the dead, we would have no confidence that sin and death had been defeated, and the idea of God being with us would not be good news. It would be terrifying, crushing, hopeless news. It would only be a reminder that judgment awaits us, but Jesus did live a perfect life. He lived a life without sin. The life that you and I were supposed to live. He died the death that we deserve to die in our place. He was raised from the dead to give us confidence that he had paid our debt in full. And so, God with us forever, is incredible news. You and I were created to worship God and enjoy him forever. Seeing God and being near God is the food that your soul was created to feast on.

And Jesus coming in the form of a baby to live the life that we could not live and die the death that we deserved to die, makes God with us good news. Jesus gives us this incredibly difficult mission. Reach the whole world with this good news, but he reminds us that all power and authority have been given to him. And then he reminds us that he will always be with us until the end of the age. He will never leave us, he will never forsake us, and this is just the beginning. Not only will he be with us to the end of the age, but he'll be with us for ages and ages to come. Jesus gives us insight into the end of the story in Revelation when he is revealing to John how this story will come together. How his story of redemption will come to a close and it ends with God being with his people forever.

Revelation 21:3-5 says this, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, anymore for the former things have passed away, and he who is seated on the throne, said, behold, I am making all things new.'" Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." God will be with us forever. It is his heart's desire to dwell among his people, and to wipe away every tear from their eyes, and to make all things new.

Final point of application that I want you to write down and think about this week is, let's enjoy God's presence now and look forward to enjoying it forever. Let's enjoy God's presence now and look forward to enjoying it forever. Well, why should we look forward to enjoying it forever? Well, because this life is hard. There are days that are hard, there are seasons that are hard. And we see in the Psalms... And David is trapped in difficult circumstances. One of the things that he often does is he thinks about his inheritance to come. He says things like, "The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance." And what he's thinking about is not what he has here in this life, but what he's thinking about is what he has in the life to come. He has God himself. A beautiful inheritance, and so when we face the difficulties of this life, remember that God will be with us forever.

He's making all things new, whatever hardship you're facing, no matter how long it may seem, it is temporary. Our joy in God will last forever, so take heart and persevere. Look forward to enjoying God with us forever. We can look forward to enjoying him forever, but we can also enjoy Him now. Enjoy his presence now, he is with you. How do we do that? There are lots of ways that God gives us to draw near to him. One of the ways

that we draw near to him is through reading his word. Did you know the Bible is not a normal book? It is God's word. Inspired by God. Hebrew says, it's living and active. God speaks through his word and we want to draw near to God. When we want to draw near to God, we can draw near to him through His word.

You can pick up a reading journal out in the lobby. We're going to read through the new Testament together as a church. I'd love for you to participate with us. Make a habit of reading God's word. He will speak to you through his word. There are tools in the journal that will help you meditate on the word and apply it to your life. Meet with God in his word. Meditate on it, memorize it, pray over the word, learn to sit in the Lord's presence and enjoy him. Go on a walk and pray. Make a list of things that you're thankful for and pray through them. Draw near to God. James chapter four says, "And he will draw near to you."

Another way that we can draw near to God is by drawing near to the people of God. It tells us over and over again in the Bible that God dwells among his people. So, one of the things that we can do to draw near to him is to draw near to his people. The next series that Brian is going to do, starting next week, is going to be a series about community called, We Is Greater Than Me. A series about how we were designed to be together, how we were created for community and how God is in that community. Enjoy God today. Enjoy. And through his word, through prayer, through thanksgiving, through community, enjoy His presence. And don't go running to other things to try to fill what only he can fill in your soul. The next time your soul aches with sadness, or loneliness, or depression, or fear, don't run to your phone. Don't run to food. Don't run to some other form of entertainment. Don't run to your computer. Run to God. Your soul isn't longing for those things. Your soul is longing for its creator.

One of the big jokes this time of year that dads love to tell is, anytime we see a kid playing with a box instead of the toy at Christmas, it's an ultimate opportunity for a good dad joke. It happens every year. Some kid opens a present with all these bells and whistles, and it talks and has buttons that you can push, and it lights up and it does all these cool things, and within five minutes of opening that thing, the kid is in the box. And every dad in the room wants to say it, and one of them can't help himself. And they say something like, "Well, you could have saved yourself a lot of money and just got that kid a box." My kids are really aware of dad jokes these days. They like to point them out to me and I can't help myself. But that picture that we see in kids, is something that we as adults do all the time. We have before us, the King of the universe. In James chapter four, like I said, it says, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you."

And you have Jesus saying things like, "Come to me all who are thirsty, and you will never thirst again." And then when our soul begins to ache, when our soul is thirsty we run to social media. And we think if I can just drink enough social media, maybe it will quench my thirst. Or we think, maybe if I could just achieve this goal, or if I could just get to that income level, if I could just have that amount of savings, if I could just win the approval of this person, then maybe I won't be thirsty anymore.



Providence, that's like playing with the box. The God of the universe has infinite resources to quench the deepest longings of your soul. Run to him. Let's enjoy God's presence and look forward to enjoying it forever. If you're a believer here this morning, I want to encourage you to run to the one with all authority, live on mission with God's help and enjoy God's presence today. If you're not a believer, then I would plead with you to turn from your own ways, turn from sin, turn from trying to find hope and meaning in other things, and turn to Jesus. Put your faith in him. He died in your place so that you could be forgiven, that you could draw near to God and he would draw near to you. And the idea of God being with you, would be good news. Let's pray.

Heavenly father, we pray that you would draw near to us now. God, that you would give us faith to believe your promises are true, that all authority has been given to Jesus. That he is with us for this mission that you've given us, and we can enjoy you both now and forever. God, would you give us faith? Would you move and work in our hearts? Would you help us not to be distracted by the temporary things of this life, but to press on towards the things that are eternal. God give us grace to live on mission by faith, and to do it with joy knowing that you are with us. I pray these things in the matchless name of Jesus. Amen.



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