

Engaging the Presence of the Lord

10-08-15/ Life Church/ Denny Stevens

I was wrestling with what to I should speak about. I usually have an idea that God gives. I've written a devotional book (The Speaking God) about hearing the Lord speak. That was making it all the more frustrating, because I was not getting a witness about what I had come up with to that point. Then last Saturday night, I went into my room & turned on the Prayer Room (IHOPKC) and listened to Misty Edwards worship on the piano. The presence of the Lord became so evident. It was what I needed. The P of the Lord is what my soul was crying out for. And then I *knew* what God wanted me to share with you. For me, knowing/dwelling/experiencing the presence of the Lord is an essential.

1. Alone in His presence I find perspective and peace.

Psalm 73:16-17 *When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.*

Written by Asaph, a worship leader, after wrangling over why the wicked are allowed to prosper- that's the context.

But whatever it is you are wrestling with, rationalizing things in your own mind doesn't always equate. You get stressed. You get uptight. When Asaph got alone with God and got **His** perspective, it was no longer a burden to bear.

I have found that if you want to hear from the Lord, you might want to pull up a seat...

God is not in a hurry. With God, it's more about relationship. He treasures that time.

We are just not geared to sit still for very long. (*But that's our problem.*)

Review verse 24ff.

Psalm 139:7-12 David acknowledged the presence of God.

He said, "*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*"

You can never be lost. You are never alone. God is near, because God is omnipresent.

David draws a good conclusion. He equates the *Spirit* of God w/presence of God.

Exodus 33:12-17 *The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

Leading a nation is no small task. He knew this was bigger than him. God had to be there.

And actually, God's peace is a great indicator that you are following in His will.

His presence quiets your spirit, brings peace, settles your nerves, neutralizes disruption.

When my hectic life needs calm and order, then I need to get before the Lord.

Moses: "*If your Presence does not go with us, don't even send us. What else will distinguish us?*"

If God has not initiated and authorized my agenda, I better cut bait and get on track.

If He isn't in it, I have no business wasting my efforts on something that will not have eternal value.

My best effort, if it's not done out of faith and obedience, is futile.

Moses had it right. The HS is what distinguishes a practicing believer from a non-believer.

The Holy Spirit is the difference maker. It is the life and counsel of the Spirit that marks us.

2. The presence of God gets personal.

I hope this isn't strange to you. The Spirit of God is active in my life.

Now, the activity of the Spirit was sporadic in the OT. But in the NT, it gets a lot more intense.

John 14:15-18,25-26,29; 16:6-7 Listen to Jesus regarding the Holy Spirit, "*you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*" He is called a counselor/advocate/ comforter.

Now the Spirit resides within every believer. "**The Holy Spirit of God lives within me.**"

We kind of know that, but we don't realize the impact of that. We have this treasure within...

He is uniquely positioned within us to counsel and speak to our spirit to influence us.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?*

1 Corinthians 6:19 *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?*

3. The Spirit of God dwells where He is welcome and takes His job quite seriously.

It's been said that the HS is a gentleman, because He never forces His will upon you. It is true that the Holy Spirit wants to be welcomed in. I like that song "Welcome Holy Spirit." But you can neglect/ignore/insult the Spirit of God. That is why I am bringing this to you today. Mostly out of neglect or ignorance we just do not consider what the Spirit of God desires. Many times, it is not out of abject rebellion; we just don't think about what God wants. We think in our own terms, our own strength. We have our own agenda/ ideas. The Spirit of the living God who dwells within you will not sit back disinterested and absent.

The Spirit can be quenched (*1 Thess 5:19*), grieved (*Eph 4:30; Isa 63:10*), insulted (*Heb 10:29*) and blasphemed (*Mk 3:28-29*).

a. The Holy Spirit repels sin. We need to understand the Holy Spirit is holy. He is God. When the Spirit is active within you, He makes you feel uncomfortable to engage in sin. The Spirit will cause you to develop a love for what He loves/a hatred for what He hates. And then, He gives you the power to resist the temptation.

Psalm 51:10-12 *Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

David felt the weight of conviction when he sinned against Bathsheba. He tangibly felt the lifting of His presence. It was agonizing. Agonizing because he knew the joy of God...

The presence of God is a tangible presence that you can feel/ sense in your emotions. I will not downplay the feelings associated with the presence of God. God created them. We just have to have a right perspective. You don't want to make decisions based on them.

Another example is even more frightful. One of the Judges who led Israel (after Joshua) He knew the Spirit of God who came on him in power (*14:6,19; 15:14*).

Judges 16:20 *When Samson awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as I have before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him.*

Samson took the presence of the Lord for granted. He had grown calloused and insensitive.

b. The Holy Spirit cries out for our wholehearted devotion.

James 4:5 (choosing to be a friend of the world is hatred toward God v.4.) *Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely/ yearns jealously (NKJ)?*

The HS a gentleman on one hand, but He is also described as having a holy jealousy for you. He is the hound of heaven. That's why He convicts us of sin.

4. What can I do to experience God's presence? (proactively)

I would say that it is not a formula as much as the climate you create that welcomes the HS. The goal is always = to fellowship with the Spirit (*2 Corinthians 13:14*).

- Approach with humility. The posture of
- Invite/welcome the Holy Spirit to have His way. Remember, He dwells within.
- If possible, create an environment that is free from distraction. I put on instrumental music. (You cannot always do that.) The presence of the Lord can be felt at work or in traffic.
- Pray/sing in the Spirit. (**Jude 20**, *1 Corinthians 14:15*) Have a 30-sec prayer conversation. The Spirit intercedes on our behalf (*Romans 8:26-27*).

- e. Worship. Thanksgiving. Gratitude expressed. Speak forth exaltation with your words. We were made to worship. It's what your spirit craves. You must have personal times of worship in your life outside of church. Think about what the angels are doing right now in the very presence of God before the throne in heaven. They are crying, "*Holy, holy, holy...*" (*Revelation 4-5*)

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1. Alone in His presence I find _____ and _____.

Psalm 73:16-17

Psalm 139:7-12

Exodus 33:12-17

2. The presence of God gets _____.

John 14:15-18,25-26,29

John 16:6-7

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

1 Corinthians 6:19

3. The Spirit of God dwells where He is _____ and He takes His job quite _____.

a. The Holy Spirit _____ sin.

Psalm 51:10-12

Judges 16:20

b. The Holy Spirit cries out for our wholehearted _____.

James 4:5

4. What can I do to experience God's presence?

The goal = _____ with the Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).

a. Approach with _____.

b. _____ the Holy Spirit to have His way.

c. If possible, create an _____...

d. _____ / _____ in the Spirit (Jude 20, 1 Corinthians 14:15).

e. _____ (John 4:23-24, Revelation 4-5)

Questions

1. Describe a time when you felt the peace of God that brought reassurance that you were acting or obeying rightly.
2. Describe a time when you felt the peace of God lift.
What were the circumstances that surrounded that?
What did you do in response?
3. How important is it to you that you sense God's presence in a tangible way?
Is God absent if you do not feel Him?
4. Have you sensed the joy of the Lord keenly in your emotions?
5. Have you felt the tug to go deeper into fellowship with the Holy Spirit?
Describe how that feels.
6. What can you intentionally do to engage with the presence of God more?