

The Presence of God

Adapted from *Truth for Today Commentary*, Exodus pg 644-647

I. The presence of someone you love

- a. Did God's people in the past take lightly his presence? Do we take lightly the presence of God?
- b. What did it mean to them? What does it mean to you?

II. Exodus 33 - God's presence taken away?

- a. **1-6- God's threat to withdraw his presence**
 - i. Vs 3
 - ii. Vs 4- Peoples response
- b. **12-17- Moses makes intercession**
 - i. His intercession seeks a commitment from God that he will go with the Israelites- vs 12
 - ii. His intercession sought to know God better- vs 12-13
 - iii. His intercession was also based on the fact that these people were God's people – vs 13
 - iv. His intercession changes God's mind- He will go with them!- vs 14
- c. **Points and Lessons**
 - i. Mankind is sinful and God is Holy
 1. This makes for troubles
 - ii. Sinful mankind desires God's presence
 - iii. Moses makes intercession on behalf of the people
 - iv. God's mind is open to mankind's petitions – vs 14
 1. As a results, God's mercy is shown and he does not withdraw his presence

III. Exodus 40:33-38- God glory comes upon the tabernacle

- a. God demonstrated his presence by filling the temple
 - i. When God was dwelling there, it was known to all.
 1. It was filled with glory
 2. It was covered in a cloud/lit by a fire
 - ii. God's presence dictated where they would go- vs 36-37
 - iii. **Points and Lessons-** Is there a lesson for us in that?
 1. Should God's dwelling in us be known to all?

2. Should God's presence lead us?

IV.I Sam 4:21-22- God's glory departs from Israel

- a. The poor leadership and unwise decisions had cost Israel the Ark of the Covenant. They viewed this as God's presence.
- b. When it departed, the nation mourned.

V.I Kings 8:6-11- God's glory returned

- a. Here the Ark is placed in the new Holy of Holies in the Temple.
- b. The cloud "*filled the house of the LORD... for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.*"

VI.Ezek 8:4-6, 9:3, 10:4, 18, 11:23- God's glory leaves the temple

- a. In these passages, we see God, moving in stages, further and further away from the people.
- b. **8:4-6-** God is there. He is showing Ezekiel sins- sins that seem to keep getting worse
- c. **9:3-** God's glory moves away from the cherub "*on which it rested*" and was now on the threshold of the house.
 - i. The cherubs were God's throne. The image then is God standing and moving away from his throne-his seat.
- d. **10:18-19-** God's glory now moves to the entrance (or the exit) of the east gate of the temple.
- e. **11:23-** God's glory now leaves the city and departs to the mountain on the east (Mount of Olives) side of the city
- f. **Points and Lessons:** Some have suggested that the stages of his departure are indicative of how God gives every opportunity to repent.
 - i. He does not immediately remove his presence from us when we are weak, when we sin. Rather he gives every chance for us to repent.
 - ii. "*In a sense the false prophets were right in believing that their enemies could never take Jerusalem because that was the location of the temple, the dwelling place of God. However, they were wrong in assuming that God would continue to make His abode in the midst of a lawless and rebellious people.*" D. Petrillo

- iii. We are strong and powerful when God is dwelling in us. However when God departs because of our sinful and stubborn ways we are open to disaster.

VII. God's glory returns

- a. **Mt 1:23**- *"they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us)"*
- b. **Jn 1:14**- *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father, full of grace and truth."*
 - i. *"dwelt among us"*- more literally *"he pitched his tent"*
 - ii. What did it mean to the Jews in the desert when God pitched his tent among them in the tabernacle?
 - iii. In the past God gave them his presence in the tabernacle. Then later in the temple. Finally, Jesus *"pitched his tent"* here among mankind by putting on the tent of flesh.

1. John said that Jesus arrival came with "glory".

VIII. His presence in our lives today

- a. We become the "temple". The dwelling place of God.
 - i. **Rom 8:9-11**
*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the **Spirit of God dwells** in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
¹⁰ But if **Christ is in you**, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If **the Spirit of him** who raised Jesus from the dead **dwells in you**, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who **dwells in you**.*

1. Notice the repeated phrases demonstrating an "indwelling"

- a. Spirit dwells- v 9
- b. Christ is in you – v 10
- c. Spirit of him who raised Jesus... dwells in you – v 11

b. Eph 2:19-22

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole **structure**, being joined together, **grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.***

i. We, as a body are growing into a holy temple. The dwelling place of God.

1. Q- If we, as a body, grow together into a dwelling place for God, should we make it a priority to be with the saints to grow?

ii. We as individuals are also being *built together into a dwelling place for God*

1. There is an individual responsibility to grow as well as a corporate role we play in the group. Growing together and growing individually.

c. What did God's presence mean to the Israelites?

i. They mourned at the thought of God's presence not going with them (**Ex 33:4**)

ii. They repented and stripped themselves of their ornaments (**Ex 33:6**)

iii. So we see how much God's presence meant to the Israelites.

d. What should it mean to us to have his presence?

i. It mourned Israel to lose his presence- It should give us joy to have it!

ii. It should compel us to live Godly lives- Exodus 33:6 (I Co 6:17-20)

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You

are not your own, ²⁰ *for you were bought with a price.*
So glorify God in your body.

iii. It should comfort us

1. God's presence comforted the Israelites. It gave them courage. It gave them strength.

2. Do you let him dwell in you in the same way?

iv. Q- If God dwells in us, does that mean he leaves every time we sin?

1. One thing we learned from Ezekiel (8-11) is that He is patient with us even in our sinful state. He does not quickly abandon us.

e. God dwells in his people. God dwells in those who are *in Christ*.

i. Paul said in **Gal 2:20**- "*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but **Christ who lives in me.***"

ii. Is Christ living in you? Are you letting his presence in your life dictate the life you live?

iii. Have you been crucified with Christ through baptism?