



CrossRoads Notes:

Title: Hungering for His Presence

Theme: Praying for the Sunday Morning Service

Series: Girding up the Church

Introduction: *I love the heart of the psalmist who wrote "I rejoice with those who said unto me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" (Psalm 122:1) This is the heart expression of Christians who share the Apostle Paul's revelations of Christ and His work in the children of God.*

We read about his heart and of his prayer in Ephesians 3:14-20, "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us..." (Ephesians 3:14-20)

Proposition: *I would propose to you that the Sunday morning service is meant to be a time when the children of God can see the Lord do a powerful work among His people. It should be the desire of all who attend the Sunday morning worship service to see God do a great work among those who live in Norton County Kansas because Jesus Christ was obedient unto death and gave His life for the lost in our area as well as sinners all over the world.*

It is my constant prayer that God would do a work in Norton and make CrossRoads Church a literal spiritual hospital. That is, a place where God is doing the powerful work of spiritual heart surgery, taking away hearts of stone and putting in hearts of flesh, where He is putting His Spirit in them moving born again Christians to keep His decrees and follow His laws. (Ezekiel 36:26,27) I pray we are church where believers in Christ are crying out "Jesus teach me to pray" and exercising Spiritual gifts out of sacrificial love.

Interrogative Sentence: *Just how can this come about? Just how can we be like the Apostle Paul who was in constant prayer for the Church of Christ? (Colossians 1:9-12)*

Transitional Sentence: *The Sunday morning service that is going to touch lives and cause people to say, "The Lord was among us" has Christians who are hungry for the presence of God. There is a phrase in the Old Testament that shares God's heart. (Exodus 25:8) (Exodus 29:46; Numbers 5:3)*

The term “I will dwell among them” gives a truth that God longs to be so present with His children to receive petitions and give them His response. He longs to anoint all that is being done to enable worshipers to be aware of His presence. All through Biblical history the Lord God has granted different dispensations so mankind can prove their love for Him as they congregate to seek His presence and enjoy His work alongside others who love Him and are hungry to witness Him manifesting Himself in very revealing ways.

There is a truth of Scripture presented in what theologians call “The Shekinah Glory of God.” This doctrine found throughout the Word of God is like the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit being the key source for attaining the perfect will of God, yet the word “Trinity” is not found in Scripture. The word “Shekinah” (*skina*) although not occurring in the Bible is a transliteration of a Hebrew (*skn*) active verb meaning “The One who dwells” or “that which dwells.” In noun form (*miskan*) it means dwelling place. In rabbinic literature this word signifies God’s presence. (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

The term “The Shekinah Glory of God” is described in other phrases such as “Presence of God” or “The Glory of God” or “Glory of the Lord” or “The Dwelling Place.” After the obedience of Moses, Aaron and Aaron’s sons, “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” (Exodus 40:10) The symbol of the Lord’s presence was a cloud. This cloud contained fire at night. The Bible says this was “in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.” (Exodus 40:38)

The radiance of the Shekinah is most revealed where there is and hunger for the Word of God and a desire to do the will of the Lord. T.B. Berakoth writes, “The Shekinah resists the proud, rebellious, sinful and the lazy.” It took hard work and planning for Moses, Solomon, the Priests, Aaron and his sons to make the proper preparation so they could enjoy the presence of the Lord in their corporate services. Although worship is set in a different in this dispensation, it is those who allow the Holy Spirit of Christ to destroy rebellion, cleanse out sin and overcome laziness who will enjoy the presence of God in their corporate worship services and personal lives.

It must be understood that the temple, like our places of corporate worship, are only symbols of God’s presence, only He can make His presence known “so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other.” (1 Kings 8:60)

Transitional Sentence: *Church services that have the presence of God among them in a way that has life changing experiences has Christians who work hard in preparation and have submitted to the Word of God. This Body of Christ also knows in whom God has made His presence known today. (John 1:1 / John 1:14)*

The word “dwelling” (*skenoo*) means to dwell as in tents so as to be transient. Another form of this word “dwelling” (*skenoma*) gives the application of literally an encampment, the temple as God’s residence, the body as the dwelling place of the soul...” The blessing we have in Jesus Christ being God in the flesh is God making His presence known among mankind. The Holy Spirit gave Paul this revelation and it is passed on to us, “For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him,” (Colossians 1:19) He also writes, “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form...” (Colossians 2:9) The word “Deity” (*theotetos*) is a strong word used only here in the New Testament calling Christ the essence of God.

Mark Lowry was given a wonderful truth worth grasping concerning the presence of God being among us in Christ. This revelation is powerfully presented in the song, “Mary Did You Know.” In that wonderful song we read this stanza, “Mary did you know when you kissed your baby, you kissed the face of God.”

Transitional Sentence: *Christians are to seek God’s presence through Jesus Christ only and not demand a certain performance from Him. They are to enjoy God’s presence by true worship. (John 4:23)*

If we desire to be aware of God’s presence in our Sunday morning worship service, our focus must be on Jesus Christ and not on the style of worship or the beauty of the facilities in which we have the opportunity to congregate. Just as Jesus was articulating to the Samaritan woman that her worship must not focus on external rituals alone, but must be connected with God’s Spirit, so Christians must be connected by seeking worship in spirit and truth.

Jesus, the manifestation of God in the flesh teaches Christians that it is through the Holy Spirit they can have true life. (John 7:37-38) (John 7:39) After the Holy Spirit’s raising Christ from the dead, the next greatest work that God can for His children is to send the Holy Ghost into their spiritual hearts. (John 14:15-21)

Just as God in the Old Testament had revealed His presence to those who sought Him in accordance to His will, and God revealed His fullness in Christ being God in the flesh, Christians can enjoy the presence of God and Christ within them, working within their spiritual hearts through the person of the Holy Spirit of Christ. Romans 8:11 tells us, “And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you.” (Romans 8:11) Jesus called the Holy Spirit “Counselor” (*parakletos*) meaning He is the representative of Christ. Jesus uses the word “another” (*allos*) meaning another of equal quality.

Just as Christ was God’s presence in the flesh, the Holy Spirit of God, in Christ’s name has His presence indwelling Christians. The Holy Spirit wrote through the Apostle Paul giving us this revelation, “In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:21)

After looking at all God's Word has to say about enjoying God's presence in the Old and New Testament, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia gives this description of the Holy Spirit, "The presence of the Holy Spirit is also a representation of the Shekinah."

During this dispensation the Lord has chosen to bless us with His presence through the power of the Holy Spirit bringing revelation and illumination of the Word of God, so Christians may be a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit enables Christians to live in a way that allows the peoples of the earth to know that the Lord is God and that there is no other.

In Closing: *Psalm 89:15 says, "Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord."* T.B. Sanhedrin wrote, "The Shekinah, like the rays of the sun, is at many places at the same time and more present at some places than others." God is with His children "always." However, there are times and seasons when He chooses to make His children more aware of His presence. The presence of the Lord is usually experienced where there is a hunger for God and for His will as well as full surrender in obedience to the whole counsel of the written Word of God.

Hungering for the presence of God in the Sunday morning service begins with obedience in prayer and diligence in what He calls us to do with a life that says, "*I rejoice with those who said unto me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'*"