



**Title: Hungering for His Presence**  
**Theme: Praying for the Sunday Morning Service**  
**Series: Girding up the Church**

*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) Pray!

*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.*

I am fully convinced just as the Lord God looked upon the Israelites in Egypt and saw their misery because of their slave drivers, (Exodus 3:7) He can look down from heaven and see those who are in this world now and their misery as they are in slavery to the bondage of the flesh, the world, and the lies of the devil. Just as God sent Moses to do a great work in Egypt, in His mercy He can do a work in Norton to cause sinners to cry out to God, that He might send the Great Deliverer, the Holy Spirit of Christ to set them free from the bondage of sin.

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.

*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? We read one of his intercessory prayers for the Body of Christ in Colossians 1:9-12, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light." (Colossians 1:9-12)*

### **"The Lord among us"**

*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. We read that phrase in several passages, one of them being Exodus 25:8, "Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8) At least two other times the Lord God expresses His desire to dwell among His people. (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)

In Exodus 40:34 we read that, "...the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." "Glory" (*kabod*) is a masculine singular noun meaning surrounded with which [God] appears. (Genenius Hebrew-Chaldee) Throughout the Old Testament the glory of God is the transcendent God making His presence and nearness visible to His people. The Aramaic Targum translates "Yahweh" (Lord) or "God" as Shekinah (*skina*) giving us this translation of our key text for this division of today's message, "And they shall make before Me a sanctuary and I shall cause My Shekinah to dwell among them."

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." In the Old Testament we read of spiritual leaders who did as commanded of the Lord. Then God made His presence known to everyone there. In Exodus 40:1-38 we read that so familiar truth that is throughout the Word of God, "as the Lord commanded." 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)

In 1 Kings chapters 7 and 8 we read of Solomon and the priest making all the proper preparation. After the ark of the Lord's covenant was put in the "Most Holy Place" the "priest withdrew," the "glory of the Lord filled His temple." (1 Kings 8:11) The Bible says "the whole assembly of Israel was standing there..." (1 Kings 8:14) The response to God's presence was a message delivered by King Solomon. A prayer of dedication and a full consecration of the temple was made. (1 Kings 8:15-66) One of the key purposes of worship in spirit and truth is that God will do a work in us.

In the closing of Solomon's message just before the Dedication of the Temple we read what our hearts should be like and to whom we are to look to accomplish a great work in us. 1 Kings 8:57-61 says, "May the LORD our God be with us as He was with our fathers; may He never leave us nor forsake us. May He turn our hearts to Him, to walk in all His ways and to keep the commands, decrees and regulations He gave our fathers. And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that He may uphold the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel according to each day's need, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other. But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by His decrees and obey His commands..." (1 Kings 8:57-61)

After King Solomon had finished dedicating the Temple of the Lord, he had his own special “Shekinah” or presence of the Lord to enjoy. In this second appearance the Lord told Solomon, “I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before Me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting My Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. (1 Kings 9:3) “Consecrated” (*qudas*) is an active verb giving us the application that God by the anointing of His Holy Spirit sets things and people apart for Himself and for His purposes.

In this second visit, God is giving His response to the prayer of dedication of Solomon for the temple. God gives Solomon a powerful truth, Solomon and his sons may enjoy or lose God’s anointing, which is determined by their willingness to observe the decrees and commandments of the Lord. (1 Kings 9:4-9)

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 (is this the right word? dispensation) today, 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.

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)

## **Submitted to the Word of God**

*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 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.” John 1:14 tells us, “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” 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.

Paul affirms that Christ is fully God and truly man. Under the law, the presence of God dwelt between the cherubim, in a cloud which covered the mercy-seat; but now God's presence dwells in the person of Christ, who is made up of flesh and bone so that He may declare the fullness of God. Christians are not to look to anyone or anything else to enjoy God's presence in their lives and in their corporate worship services. They need to only seek Jesus Christ with all their heart, soul, and strength and they will enjoy the presence 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."

### **Enjoy God's presence by true worship**

*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 4:23-24 says, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23)

This powerful teaching of Christ came about as He spoke with a Samaritan woman who was concerned about where she was to worship the One True God. Jesus had informed her of the type of worshipers God was looking for.

Therefore, as 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. Jesus said, "...If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (John 7:37-38) John wrote with regard to this teaching, "By this [Jesus] meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive." (John 7:39)

Jesus said, "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (John 16:7) 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.

Listen to Jesus' promise, "If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you. Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him." (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.

*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.

The first step to enjoying Holy Spirit revelation of God's presence is to take that step of obedience in prayer. At this time I am going to give powerful prayer pointers supported with Scripture for enabling us to enjoy times of God's presence in our Sunday morning services so people can say, "God is doing a work among us."

**Begin with praise:** Psalm 100:4-5 says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the LORD is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations."

Thank the Lord for blessing us with the opportunity to congregate as the Body of Christ in such a beautiful facility and walk in obedience to His Word. "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)

**Invite the Holy Spirit:** To enable you to pray according to God's Word and with a disciplined mind. Ephesians 6:18 says, "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

**Pray For:** The Holy Spirit's anointing on the teachers and in the hearts of the Sunday School students, "God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2:10)

**Pray That:** Those who attend the song service will die to their own thoughts and grasp the Lord's will and be responsive to the Holy Spirit's enabling to sing in spirit and truth. Ephesians 5:19 says, "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."

**Pray That:** The bulletins and announcements will reflect the Lord's will with regard to providing opportunities for all to become involved in a local Body of Christ.

**Pray That:** the Body of Christ will take time to enjoy the Bible studies, the services and the Christian fellowship times offered through CrossRoads Church. The Bible says, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law." (Proverbs 29:18)

**Pray That:** Through the people who attend this church, God will provide for the needs of this church Body and that He will prove Himself faithful to those who are obedient to His will. "Jehovah-Jireh," the Lord will Provide found in Genesis 22:14. "Jireh" meaning to see or to provide or see as prophet, God always providing, adequate when the time comes. Malachi 3:10 says, "Bring in the whole tithe... 'Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.'"

**Pray That:** God would consecrate our sound system and everything in this church for His glory. "Consecration" is the separation of persons, utensils, buildings, or places from that of secular uses to be used for the worship of the Lord. The Bible says, "Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them. He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar and all its utensils and the basin with its stand, to consecrate them." (Leviticus 8:10-11) As the vessels were being devoted, symbolically Moses was presenting a picture of the Holy Spirit's anointing, using the vessels for blessing and grace.

**Pray That:** The message of the Lord through the spoken and written Word will spread and people will respond to it with a right heart. 2 Thessalonians 3:1 says, "Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you."

**Pray That:** The prayer time would be ministry to the Lord Jesus, to the Body of Christ and pleasing to God. Jesus said, "My [Father's] house will be called a house of prayer." (Matthew 21:13) Psalm 116:1-2 says, "I love the Lord, for He heard my voice, He heard my cry for mercy. Because He turned His ear to me, I will call on Him as long as I live."

**Pray That:** God will do a work in Norton and make us a part of it. Plead for His mercy and that He would deliver people from the bondage of the flesh, the lures of the world, and the lies of the devil; that He would make CrossRoads Church a spiritual hospital, where the Holy Spirit is doing spiritual heart surgery, taking away hearts of stone and giving repentant sinners a heart of flesh so they may be able to love the Lord and have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ; where the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ is giving Christians a powerful thirst and hunger for the Word of God, Where Christians are saying, “Lord Jesus teach me to pray,” where we are seeing Holy Spirit fruit being manifested in the lives of born again Christians and Holy Spirit gifts being exercised through sacrificial love.

**Close with Praise:** The call to pray is from God’s Word and we are given a sure promise, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16b) Our righteousness is accomplished by having Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. By His sacrificial death and victory over sin we are found to be righteous in God’s sight. For this be sure to thank God and Jesus Christ.

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.’”* Let us Pray!!!!

Let us pray! Visit our Free Website [www.standatthecrossroads.com](http://www.standatthecrossroads.com)