

God's Presence With Man

Teaching given by Peter Warren at FGPC, July – August 2017

1. The Preciousness of the Presence of God

The Central Theme of Eden

- If you examine life in Eden or Heaven, you will see that there is one central theme that runs through them both - '**fellowship with God**', the relationship that God has with His people.
- That relationship or fellowship is often referred to as the 'Presence of God' - God present with and among His people.

Genesis 3.8

"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden".

- In Eden we see that God came down and walked and talked with Adam. Adam knew what it was to be in the presence of God.
- When Adam and his wife sinned, and fell, that fellowship was broken. They were driven out of Eden, out from the physical manifestation of the Presence of God. There is no mention of repentance nor that God spoke with him again.
- Cain's sin in chapter 4, where he murders his brother Abel, resulted in his going out from the presence of the Lord (vs13,14, 16) "**my punishment is greater than I can bear... I shall be hidden from Your face... Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord**" - separation from the presence of God.
- Yet David, after his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah, in his prayer of repentance prays: "**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me**" Psalm 51.10-11

Genesis 4.25-26

"And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, 'For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed' And as for Seth, to him also a son was born: and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord"

Although driven from the Presence of God and no longer in fellowship with Him, God is merciful to Adam and his wife in giving them another son. God cannot use Adam, Cain, Abel and so needs another man in whom to bring about His plan – Seth. The child has to come through Adam and Eve because the promise of the Seed was to her (Genesis 3.15)

Seth has a son Enosh and things begin to change – men begin to call on the name of the Lord - once again God is present among His people

'The Lord was with' them..

- This theme is not exclusive to Heaven or Eden; it actually runs through the whole Bible - we see it Enoch, in Noah, in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Genesis 39. 1-23

- Verses 1-5 says that ‘the Lord was with Joseph’ and the blessing made him prosper.
- Verse 5 connects God’s presence with the blessing.
- Even when his circumstance changed (through false allegations) Joseph still knew that the presence of God was with him and produced favour and prosperity in his life (vs 19-23)
- After he had been forgotten and left in the prison for two years – still the Lord was with him and the blessing elevated and promoted him (Genesis 40.23; 41.1,14, 37-41, 52)

Compare

- Genesis 26.24
- Genesis 30.43 – Genesis 31.5
- Judges 1.19,22
- 1 Samuel 3.19
- 1 Samuel 18.12,14
- 2 Kings 18.7

The Preciousness of the Presence of God

You cannot have the blessing without God’s presence with you - He is the Blessor.

A lot of people talk and think about material prosperity, healing, a spiritual gift or some other tangible thing as the blessing.

We must not confuse blessings with the Blessing.

These tangible blessings are only the results and benefits of the Blessing. Most

Christians seek the blessings: they seek the healing for their body, they seek the spiritual gifts, they seek the financial miracle to meet a need. They are trying to get the blessings rather than the Blessor.

But, it is the Blessing that makes us rich - Proverbs 10.22

“The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it”

Genesis 24. 1, 34-36, 40 The presence of the Lord caused the blessing to come upon Abraham and his family.

Seek God First

- Jesus is Emmanuel – ‘God with us’. (Matthew 1.23)
- Everything God is and has been, is wrapped up in Jesus. Jesus is the fullness of the Godhead and in Him there is completeness [the Blessing] (Colossians 2.9-10)

Matthew 6.31-33

“Therefore do not worry, saying ‘what shall we eat?’ or ‘what shall we drink?’ or ‘what shall we wear?’. For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”

- Seek first of all the ‘kingdom of God’ - seek God first, His presence first. Get into that place of fellowship with God, out of which will flow the Fullness of the Blessing. You’ll get the blessings, but they come as a result of the Blessing.

2. The Place of the Stronghold

2 Samuel 5.9-10

“Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.” (vs9-10)

Stronghold – place of refuge, safety, place to retreat

This was his dwelling place – this tells us David spent much time in the stronghold.

He became great, he prospered, his honour and wisdom increased – because the Lord God was with him. The stronghold for David was the place of the Presence of God (There was no temple in Jerusalem, there was no Tabernacle either)

In the stronghold David inquired of the Lord – he sought the Lord, he took refuge in God

inquire – consult, take counsel, seek information

The stronghold was the place where David heard from God.

The Targum* reads: “*the Word of the Lord God of hosts was for his helper*”

**Targum – an interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Aramaic*

The stronghold was the place that David was at one with God, enjoying the presence of God, he also calls it -

Psalm 27.5 - “His pavilion”

Psalm 32.7 - “hiding place”

Psalm 61.3 - “strong tower”

Psalm 91.1 - “secret place of the Most High”

Today we might call that place our secret prayer closet. It is the place that we get alone with God and fellowship with Him.

2 Samuel 5.17-21

Lord of the breakthrough.

In verse 20 we read that God is Lord of the breakthrough. When we need a breakthrough in a given situation we need the Lord to intervene

Too often we want the breakthrough without the stronghold. The stronghold is a necessary requirement for the breakthrough.

Nahum 1.7-8 (Amp)

“The Lord is good, a Strength and Stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows (recognizes, has knowledge of, and understands) those who take refuge and trust in Him. But with an overrunning flood He will make a full end of [*Nineveh's very*] site and pursue His enemies into darkness.”

David recognised the need to take refuge in God, and as soon as the situation arose he withdrew to the stronghold where he could hear from God. We need to know the strategy God has for us in order to see that breakthrough.

- Moses heard it at the Red Sea – (*Exodus 14.16-17*) lift your rod up, stretch out your hand over the sea and go forward
- Joshua heard it at Jericho – (*Joshua 6.3-5*) march around the city in silence once a day for six days, on the seventh day march seven times, at the end of the seventh time sound the trumpets and shout a great shout

Why do we need the stronghold? Because we can fall into the trap of assuming God wants us to do something. We need to hear and know the strategy for this moment.

2 Samuel 5.22-25

Philistines had deployed themselves again – again David inquired of the Lord, he didn't take it for granted what God wanted him to do.

Because something worked last time, doesn't necessarily mean it will work this time or that it is right to do it again.

Jesus often went into His stronghold - Luke 5.16

“So He Himself *often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed*” (NKJV)

Jesus only said and did those things He heard from the Father.

He didn't necessarily follow the same procedure when dealing with people – He took time to hear from God, He spent time in His Father's presence and received the strategy

Let us look at a few examples:

When dealing with the blind, we see Jesus doing what the Father told Him to do, not what 'worked' last time.

Matthew 9.27-31 (vs29) - touched their eyes

Mark 8.22-26 (vs23) - spit on his eyes, then touched him

John 9.1-12 (vs6-7) - made a clay with spit, go and wash

Mark 10.46-52 (vs52) - Jesus spoke to him

3. Forged In The Fire of God's Presence

Exodus 3.2-10

Moses' experience at the burning bush was a call to ministry. He was first attracted to the fire which did not consume the bush. Of course there were years before that where he was being prepared in the desert, proving his worth by tending the flock of sheep belonging to his father in law.

Some time later, after they had come out of Egypt...

Exodus 33.11

Joshua stays on in the Tabernacle. He does not leave the presence of God.

What was he doing there? - Being prepared for ministry (to lead God's people into the promised land)

The next time we read of Joshua is in Numbers 13.16 where he is one of those chosen to spy out the land of Canaan.

What qualified him for this ministry? - We read in Numbers 14.24 that Caleb (and Joshua) had 'another spirit' - this had been forged in the fire of God's presence.

The Bible says that "[our God is a consuming fire](#)" (Hebrews 12.29)

1 Samuel 13.14

David was "[a man after God's own heart](#)" this too came from an insatiable desire for the presence of God. We see evidence of this in the psalms and songs that he wrote.

Acts 4.13

It was noted by the authorities in Jerusalem that the disciples were uneducated and untrained men. They also realised that they had been with Jesus – they had spent time in His (physical) presence.

Something happens to those who spend time with God, which is evident to everyone. This was seen in the disciples and we also see this in the case of Moses

Exodus 34.29-35

Moses had such an anointing on him that came from being in the presence of God that his face glowed like a light bulb so that he had to cover it with a veil.

Acts 2.3 The Holy Spirit came upon the believers in the form of a tongue, which looked like fire. God Himself came upon these disciples and His presence filled them. They had been told to wait for this infilling before commencing any ministry (Luke 24.49; Acts 1.8) – ministry is forged in the fire!

In the fire:

- Gold or silver can only be purified and made valuable if it is refined in the fire – If we are to be or do anything for God it will come only as a result of being forged in the fire of His presence.
- Iron can only be fashioned and shaped into the creation that the blacksmith has in mind if it goes through the fire

Fire cleanses, purges and purifies – all that is not of God is burned off so that which is pure remains.

1 Corinthians 3.13

“each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.”

1 Peter 1.7

“that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ”

4. I AM In The Midst

Ezekiel 48.35

“All the way around *shall be* eighteen thousand *cubits*; and the name of the city from *that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE*”

The name of the city will be: Jehovah-Shammah

This was a prophetic utterance concerning the new city of Jerusalem and the Temple that was at the time of Ezekiel. This is a new name for the city, it had been called other things such as City of Zion, City of David, Jerusalem, city of peace, but under it's new name there would be no doubt that God was in her. Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there.

Of course this was also a prophetic utterance of the New Jerusalem that John saw in his revelation. We read in **Revelation 21.1-3**

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (2) Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.”

The psalmists wrote these words -

“*There is* a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy *place* of the tabernacle of the Most High. (5) God *is* in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.”

Psalm 46.4-5

These allusions to the city of God can also be taken to mean the church. In the Scripture, the term Zion, can be taken to mean the church. God is in the midst of His church.

Let us look at a New Testament verse which is often misunderstood.

It is usually quoted to justify, give reason or even as an excuse for a few people gathering together. I myself have even used this verse in this way, until one day, as I was meditating on it, God gave me a great revelation on it.

Matthew 18.20

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them”

Jesus promises to be in the midst of us as we gather in His name.

Now, I've been in services where there have been literally just two of us, three or a few more. On almost every occasion you would hear this verse referred to: 'it's ok brother, God is in the midst'. It was said to give encouragement to each other. Yes this is true, and a great comfort to know that when we come together in His name, He is in the midst of His people. But it has a much deeper revelation than just being used parrot fashion whenever numbers are low.

'For' connects it to the previous thought/verse – dealing with prayer
Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven
Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven
If two of you agree concerning anything – it will be done
- Because I am in the midst.

I AM was a covenant name of God. First revealed to Moses.

“.. I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28.20

The Lord in Our Midst is...

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Deuteronomy 23.14 | Deliverer |
| Psalms 46.5 | Helper |
| Psalms 74.12 | Saviour |
| Isaiah 12.6 | Holy One – our Sanctifier |
| Ezekiel 5.8 | Righteous Judge |
| Joel 2.26-27 | Provider |
| Zephaniah 3.17 | Mighty One - Miraculous Power / Omnipotent One |
| John 20.19 | Prince of Peace |

Because of God's presence with man we have a Deliverer, we have a Helper, a Saviour, a Sanctifier, a Provider, a Righteous Judge, we have an All Powerful, Miracle working God, and the Prince of Peace.

He is with us, so when we call on Him, we can be assured of His intervention.

5. Cultivating A God-Confidence

1 Corinthians 10

Some time ago I was reading through 'The Message' (paraphrased NT by Eugene H Peterson) and came across this chapter:

Paul was warning the church of the dangers of going astray. The Israelites all experienced the same things – they came out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, they ate the Manna and drank from the Rock, which was Christ – they enjoyed the presence of God, but they went away from Him being tempted and yielding to it.

“But just experiencing God’s wonder and grace didn’t seem to mean much – most of them were defeated by temptation during the hard times in the desert, and God was not pleased” (The Message, 1 Corinthians 10.5)

Later in the same chapter, Paul said:

“These are all warning markers—danger!—in our history books, written down so that we don’t repeat their mistakes. Our positions in the story are parallel—they at the beginning, we at the end—and we are just as capable of messing it up as they were. Don’t be so naive and self-confident. You’re not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it’s useless. Cultivate God-confidence.” (The Message, 1 Corinthians 10.11-12)

This verse ends with the words, '*cultivate God-confidence*'.

Paul is saying that we can mess it up too – and to avoid messing it up we should cultivate a God-confidence that comes from the Presence of God.

What does this word ***cultivate*** mean?

Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

- to prepare and use for the raising of crops; also : to loosen or break up the soil about (growing plants)
- to foster the growth of
- to improve by labour, care, or study
- to culture, further or encourage

How can we cultivate God-confidence? How can we improve?

One of Paul's greatest desires is mentioned in the Scriptures. He told the church in Philippi:

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.” (Philippians 3.8-12)

Knowing God creates that confidence. That knowledge only comes from spending time in His presence. It cannot be cultivated through books or learning – it comes through fellowship

1. Knowing God through His Word

Those *'that know their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits'* so says Daniel. (Daniel 11.32)

- Knowing God creates confidence in Him.
 - That God confidence will make us very bold, even to the point where others may think that we're arrogant.
 - Those who are God confident are strong and do great things for Him.
- We get to know Him, through His Word.
 - The Word reveals Jesus to us. When we believe His Word we become very bold.
 - God's Word is His covenant;
 - God's Word cannot fail;
 - God's Word is living, effective and very powerful.
 - How hard is it to believe something that cannot fail - that makes us very confident.
- We can cultivate God-confidence **through the labour, care and study** of the Word – getting to know Him

2. Knowing God by Seeking Him

“Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you” (Hosea 10.12)

- Now we're not talking about confidence in ourselves or our own ability or might, but confidence in God and the Word. We can only cultivate that confidence by getting to know God through His Word and fellowship with Him.
Loosening and breaking up the fallow ground - cultivate!
- When you spend a lot of time with someone you get to know them.
 - When you first met your husband or wife you knew very little about them, when you got married you thought you knew them but as you began to live together and grow together you got to know them, so much so that you probably know how each other thinks.

- To hear some Christians talk about God – you can tell that they don't spend too much time with Him. They say things like 'God gave me this disease to keep me humble' – God doesn't give sickness, Jesus died to take it away.

As we have already seen, cultivating God-confidence was one of Paul's great desires:

“I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection...” Philippians 3.8-10

3. Knowing God through the Fellowship of the Saints

Another way we can cultivate God-confidence is to gather with the brethren as often as we can.

“Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10.24-25

As we come together it is to

- consider one another – fully observe and learn from one another
- stir up love and good works - stimulating and encouraging each other
- exhort and encourage one another – admonishing (warn, instruct and encourage)

it is these activities that **foster and encourage** God-confidence among the brethren.

We are to do this as much as possible, especially as we are in these end time days

- staying away from the house of God robs you of a blessing
- it also robs your brothers/sisters of the blessing that you are

Cultivating this God-confidence is so important in these days

“All these things happened to them as examples for others, and they were written down as a warning for us. For we live at a time when the end is about to come. If you think you are standing firm you had better be careful that you do not fall” (1 Corinthians 10-11-12, TEV)

– we are at the end of time:

- there are so many distractions to draw us away from the truth
- cultivating God-confidence will keep us strong so that we don't fall into the same types of sin that they did.

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