

God's Manifest Presence

Sunday Morning, September 10, 2017

On Sundays we come to worship God. Worship is simply enjoying the presence of God. We can enjoy his presence through prayer, learning, singing praises and hearing His Word through a message. This doesn't just have to happen on Sunday. We can enjoy God's Manifest Presence every day of the week. It should be our priority each day.

Some of the most frightening words in the Bible are found in **(Exodus 33: 1 – 3)**.

1 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'

2 And I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."

These scriptures are frightening because God gave the children of Israel His protection, provision, and His promise, but not His presence.

You see, Moses had gone up on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from the Lord in Exodus 32. While he was gone, his brother Aaron led the people in a revolt against God. The people gave Aaron their bracelets and earrings, and he made a golden calf that the people worshipped. Due to their sin, the Lord decided to remove His presence from them. He would give the people His protection and provision. He would fulfill His promise to give them the land of Canaan, but He would not go with them into the land.

The same thing happens today...many Christians do not have the conscious presence of God in their lives. We should not settle for God's protection, His provision without His presence. When we have the presence of God, we need nothing more; and we should settle for nothing less.

There are four things that will rob us of God's manifested presence in our lives and that are the archenemies of worship and enjoying God's presence.

1. Direct Disobedience

Turn to **(Exodus 32: 7 - 8)**

7 And the Lord said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'"

Many people confess faith in the Lord Jesus, but do not have His presence in their lives; and they do not have the assurance of their salvation. Turn to

(I John 4:13)

By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

"abide" in the Greek is μένω ménō, men'-o; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy):—abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for),

(Romans 8:16)

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

When we abide in or walk with Him, we're very aware of His Spirit in our lives.

When we willingly and knowingly disobey God, we grieve the Holy Spirit.

(Ephesians 4:30)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

"grieve" in the Greek is λυπέω lypéō, loo-peh'-o; to distress; reflexively or passively, to be sad:—cause grief, grieve, be in heaviness, (be) sorrow(-ful), be (make) sorry.

When we grieve the Holy Spirit, we then quench the Holy Spirit.

(I Thessalonians 5:19)

Do not quench the Spirit.

James Merritt, a Pastor and former President for our National Southern Baptist Convention explained grieving and quenching like this:

“We grieve the Holy Spirit by what we do to Him. We quench the Holy Spirit by what we refuse to let Him do through us.”

When we grieve and quench the Holy Spirit, God’s presence is no longer manifest in our lives.

The second thing that robs us of God’s manifest presence in our lives is:

2. Divided Devotion

Turn to **(Exodus 32:4)**

And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, “This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”

An idol or something that divides our devotion to God is anything we love more, fear more, serve more, and trust more than God.

These are some questions to ask yourself to help you determine if you have idols:

1. Is there anyone or anything that takes precedence over God in your life?
2. Is there anyone or anything that is a greater controlling factor of your behavior than God?
3. Is there a relationship that means more to you?
4. Is there a treasure that means more to you?
5. Is there anything that gets more of your attention than God?

The third thing that robs us of God's manifest presence in our lives is:

3. Displaced Dependence

Turn back to **(Exodus 32: 7 - 8)**

7 And the Lord said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'"

When God gives us a victory and we give the glory to someone or something else, we then depend upon that other person or thing rather than God; and we lose the presence of God in our lives.

Remember **(Hebrews 13:5)**

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

God will never leave or forsake us. His presence in our souls is always there. However, the awareness of His presence in our lives will be diminished and spiritually stark.

The fourth thing that robs us of God's manifest presence in our lives is:

4. Determined Defiance

Look at **(Exodus 32:9)**

And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!

"Stiff necked" is the opposite of being meek and pliable.

These are some questions to ask yourself to help you evaluate whether you are meek and pliable with the Lord:

1. Is there someone God has laid on your heart to witness to, but you haven't witnessed to that person?
2. Has God given us an impulse to serve in a specific capacity, but we have refused?
3. Has God laid something on our heart that He wants us to give?
4. Has God laid someone on our heart with whom we need to apologize to and to reconcile?
5. Has God been telling us that there's a wrong relationship in our life that we need to break off?
6. Has God called us into missions or full-time Christian service?

Now turn to **(Exodus 33:15)**

Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.

Notice Moses did not want to go without the Lord's presence.

Like Moses we must **not settle** for anything **less** than God's manifest presence in our lives.

To counter the four things that rob us of God's manifest presence in our lives, we have four things that we can do to have a full awareness of God's presence:

1. Be **obedient** to God.
2. Be **devoted** to God.
3. Be **dependent** on God alone.
4. Be **responsive** to God's leading in your life.

When pursuing God in these four ways we will have the wonderful blessing of God manifesting or revealing Himself to us!