

ACCESSING AND MAINTAINING HIS PRESENCE

Before I get into today's sermon I would like to just list more benefits of the presence of God.

1. Divine knowledge
2. Divine enablement
3. Divine protection
4. Divine alignment with destiny
5. Divine testing
6. Joy unspeakable

Psalms 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

7. Peace and rest

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

8. Power to operate in the supernatural

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

9. Freedom

2Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

10. Favour

The best definition of the word favor is "demonstrated delight." The favor of God can be described as "tangible evidence that a person has the approval of the Lord."

Psalm 84:11 "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly."

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Without the presence of God, our lives are empty and full of confusion. With all these benefits that comes with the presence of God, the next question that should be in our minds is; how do I access His presence.

This morning I want talk to you on a message entitled “**ACCESSING AND MAINTAINING HIS PRESENCE**”

- When it comes to the presence of God in our lives, God attaches conditions for us to access His abiding presence
- Lets look at a story that will help us understand the technology behind getting and maintaining the presence of God
- This is the story of a king by the name of Jehoshaphat – who was the king of Judah at that time. It so happened that the nations Moab and Ammon went to war against him. Because of the size of the enemy, king Asa knew that he needed God in order to obtain victory.

2 Chronicles 20:1 It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi).3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

- Alarmed by the intelligence and conscious of his total inability to repel this host of invaders, Jehoshaphat felt his only refuge was at the horns of the altar
- Jehoshaphat was gripped by great fear
- Instead of marshaling his troops for battle, the king did something unique – he humbled himself and sought the face of God through fasting

1. Humility attracts the presence of God

- This is what humility is – it is acknowledging your limitations, at the same time acknowledging the unlimited nature of God
- Put differently, it is a recognition of self in relation to God, and a complete submission to Him

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- This recognition of self, moves you from just seeing Jesus as your savior but as your Lord as well.

Isaiah 1:3 The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider."

Malachi 1:6 "A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'

Isaiah 29:13 Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

- Humility brings you to a place where you recognize your dependence upon God and your need of Him
- We are brought up in an environment that demands you to be self-sufficient - When you feel confident you can "handle" life on your own, God will resist you.

James 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

Proverbs 3:34 Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.

- Two things stand out in these scriptures
 - The humble at heart find grace with God - Grace can be defined as God's enabling power –
 - The proud at heart are resisted – to range in battle against, to oppose one's self
- A proud person
 - Has an unreasonable conceit of their own excellence or importance
 - Pays no regard to correction
 - Rarely admits fault
 - Rarely asks for help – a strong sense of self sufficiency

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- Usually a one man show – finds working with other people an annoyance
- Loves the limelight
- Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 19:14)*
 - Little children are humble and dependent.
 - They know they need help – tying their shoes, getting a drink, feeding themselves, getting dressed, etc.
 - They ask, every time they need something. Admitting your weakness allows someone with strength to help you.

2Corinthians 12:9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Admitting that we don't "have it all together" is a vulnerable place for us. We've been told to "grow up" and be responsible for our lives.
- The opposite is actually true; the complexities of life are meant to drive us to this place of vulnerability and trust in His grace.
- In certain places, humility is equated to brokenness of heart – God is close to the broken hearted

Psalms 34:18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

Psalms 51:16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart- These, O God, You will not despise.

- That phrase contrite spirit is the same as *"the beaten-out spirit."* This speaks of a heart that has been hammered by the word of God, making it malleable.
- A humble heart is easily directed by God – it is a heart that is open to God's guidance.
- Though heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, yet the soul of the humble can contain Him

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Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones

- Humility leads you to quickly repent when caught up in sin – this was the difference between David and Saul

2 Samuel 12:13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

1 Samuel 15:18 "Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' 19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?" 20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

- The presence of unrepentant sin repels the presence of God in our lives

Isa 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

- The greatest example of humility is what we find in Jesus

Philippians 2:5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. 6 Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. 7 Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

- Being born in the likeness of man, meant that Jesus needed to utterly depend on God though being God
- Jesus was fully submitted to His Father

John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. 20 "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

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John 5:30 "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

- He did what He saw His father doing
- He did not promote His own agenda
- He operated in complete unity with the Father