DWELLING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD – PART TWO

This is your Friend and Minister, Dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Friends, we are back to conclude what we started last week: 'Dwelling in the Presence of God – the only Way to Live'.

PRAYER:
Father, we want to say thanks again. And we have come now to reason with You in Your Word. We have come expecting that You would speak to our hearts. Thank You – in Jesus' Name. Amen!

Our text is taken from Exodus 33, where God said to Israel that they were stiff-necked people. The word stiff-necked means stubborn. And as a result He was going to substitute His presence with the presence of His angel. And in verse 4 of Exodus 33, and when the people heard this bad new (to them it was a bad news) they mourned; and no one put on his ornaments. They mourned. It pained them. And Moses went into prayer, interceding on behalf of his people.

Exodus 33:14-16

[14] *And He* [God] *said* [to Moses],*"My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

[15] *Then he said to Him* [God]*, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.* [16] *For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?* [It is Your presence that will make the difference] *So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth*."

So we looked at:

- The promise of His presence
- The preparation for His presence.

That's where we stopped. And then we concluded with the practice of His presence.

Under the promise of His presence we said that God promised His presence to Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire. And He went with them. His presence went with them. It was His presence that went with them that made the difference. And He promised also His presence to the Israel of God: believer or Christians. And we saw it in Matthew 28:20 where the Lord, before He went back to heaven, said: "…*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

In preparation or preparing for the presence of God we said,

i. You have to realize that God is ever present with you.
   Do not be like Jacob in Genesis 28:16 who said, *Ah! The Lord is in this place; I did not know it.* Do you know, friend, that the Lord is present where you are, with you – and He is there all the time?

ii. And that you desire His presence above all else.
   As the deer pants for the water brooks so pants my heart for you, O God. My heart longs for you *Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You – Psalm 73:25.*

iii. That you would thirst after His holiness. Living a holy life, let me repeat, is an eloquent testimony that you are well aware of the presence of God. Because those who live in the consciousness of the presence of God cannot endure to be doing things they know God frowns at when God is looking at them. Because that's what the presence – the consciousness of God's presence does for you. You are conscious of the fact that God's eyes are upon you all the time.
   When we live unholy lives we are saying that God is ever absent. God warned Israel to exclude all uncleanness from their camp because of His holy presence. You find that in Numbers 5:1-3.

He even included personal hygiene in His demand for holy conduct at the camp. We find that in Deuteronomy 23, especially from verses 12 to 14. Thus we see then that hatred for sin is a primary preparation for the presence of God. It was because of Israel's sin of idolatry and stubbornness that God threatened to withdraw His presence from them in Exodus 33.

Exodus 33:3

[3] [God says] G*o up to a land flowing with milk and honey* [I am not going to change that: He promised it to Abraham and his descendants – that still stands]*; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way.*

Why? Because the holiness of God cannot mix with unholiness; for you are a stiff-necked people: stubborn. Friend, are you stubborn? Are you stiff-necked? The presence of God cannot mix with sin. You cannot desire to dwell in the presence of God and dwell in sin at the same time.

Habakkuk 1:13a

You [that's God] *are of purer eyes than to behold evil,*
And cannot look on wickedness.

The presence of God.

It is a promise that God makes to those who are His. Have you come into the family of God yet, friend? Are you His? He made the promise to Israel; He made the promise to the church. And if you have received Jesus as your personal Savior then you are a member of the church of Jesus Christ. That is what makes you a member of the church, not having your name written in the register of a denomination.

And then you have to take note of the preparation for His presence.

Let's conclude with the Practice of the presence

THE PRACTICE OF HIS PRESENCE OF GOD

When we speak of dwelling in God's presence we mean, dwelling or living in the consciousness of His presence. We mean dwelling in the state of mind that is conscious of the fact that God is here now. And dwelling in the consciousness of His presence is practicing the presence of God. It is simple, yet hard to begin. But once you begin, and you start practicing living in the consciousness of the presence of God…you know the devil does not feel at home in the presence of God. You know where the presence of God is, the devil tries to maintain his distance.

We will look at some of the blessing of the benefits of dwelling in the presence of God. Practicing the presence of God! You must have read the book, if you have not…there is a little book: the Practice of the presence of God, by Brother Lawrence, a Roman Catholic Monk that lived in the 17th century. This man dwelt in the consciousness of the presence of God in such a way that he had as it were heaven on earth. Brother Lawrence said that the manner of going to God consists, "In what hearty renunciation of everything that does not lead to God".

You see, For you to dwell or practice the presence of God you will eliminate things that you know cannot lead you to God. But practicing the presence of God is simple, as I said, but hard in the sense, and the hardness of it is the fact that the devil knows what it means and he would resist you. But you can come to the point where as it were you have reached the…what we call *escape velocity* in physics, where the force of gravity is no longer influencing you. The force of gravity in this case being the devil pressing you down, preventing you from entering into the presence of God.

It involves conversing with Him in your heart as long as you are awake.

Conversing with God: bringing to His attention praise, thanksgiving; bringing to His attention the difficulties in your life, the great difficulties, as well as the ones you consider small. You are conversing with Him all

the time. And this is not a new teaching. This is what 1 Thessalonians 5:17 implies, I suppose, when it says Pray without ceasing. Pray without ceasing! Christians don't take this verse seriously. We talk so much about prayer in some circles and we have lost the meaning of prayer and the essence of prayer. We have lost what prayer means. It is not calling people together for prayer, but spending time as an individual, conversing with God all the time.
We conclude then, that dwelling in God's presence is His will for all His Children, since He says pray without ceasing. No one can love like God loves and not want his children not to be in his presence all the time.

In conclusion then: the blessings, the benefits of dwelling in the presence of God.

1. Dwelling in the presence of God makes God more real than even human beings.
   In Psalms 16:8 prophecy about the Saviour says: *I have set the LORD always before me;*
   Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.
   God becomes very real to you.

2. In His presence there is fullness of Joy and endless pleasures. We find that also in Psalms, 16:11. The world that many Christians in our day look for joy and pleasure in the wrong things and in the wrong places, but they cannot find satisfaction. The more they seek the less they find, and the more they seek.
3. In the presence of God there is peace.
4. In His presence fear and doubt are banished. Fear and doubt.

PRAYER:

Friend, the first to having and dwelling in the presence of God is to invite Jesus Christ into your life, and then you have the presence of the Holy Spirit in you as the starting point – God the Spirit. Why don't you do that now if you have not done it.

Father, as many as are calling upon you now, who want to yield their lives to You You would receive them according to Your promise. Give them assurance of salvation. Holy Spirit awaken them in the inner man; and those of us who have given our lives to You, who live as though You were ever absent, may You help us to dwell in the consciousness of Your presence, from now on. Help us Lord, we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen!