

The Power of the Lord's Presence



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) February 18, 2019

A Message of Hope in Perilous Times

Scripture provides endless examples of how the Lord's presence empowers his people to live for him. One of the most powerful examples is the life of Moses.

Without God's presence, Moses knew it was useless for him to attempt anything. When he spoke face to face with the Lord, he stated boldly, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here" (*Exodus 33:15, NKJV*). He was saying, "Lord, if you're not with us, we're not going to make it. We won't take a single step unless we're assured of your presence."

Moses knew it was God's presence among them that set them apart from all other nations. Today, the same is true of God's people. The only thing that sets us apart from nonbelievers is God's presence "with us," leading us, guiding us, working his will in and through us.

Moses' attitude was, "We operate on one principle. The only way for us to be guided or governed, to do battle and survive in these times, is to have God's presence with us. When his presence is in our midst, no one can destroy us. But without him we're helpless, reduced to nothing. Let all the nations of the world trust in their mighty armies, iron chariots and skilled soldiers. We will trust in the manifest presence of the Lord."

God gave Moses a promise: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (*33:14*). The Hebrew word for "rest" here means "a comfortable, peaceful confidence." God was saying, "No matter what battles or trials you face, you will always be able to find a quiet rest and confidence in me."

The Old Testament is filled with accounts of the wonderful blessings that came to those who had God's presence with them.

Consider the following examples:

- God's presence was so evident in Abraham's life, even the heathen around him recognized the difference between their lives and his: "Abimelech...spoke to Abraham, saying, 'God is with you in all that you do'" (*Genesis 21:22*). This heathen king said, "There's something different about you, Abraham. God is with you wherever you go."
- An angel told Gideon, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!" (*Judges 6:12*). And the Lord himself told Gideon, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" (*6:14*). Although Gideon considered himself a coward, God called him a "mighty man of valor." The Lord wanted to prove what anyone can do when his presence is with that person.
- God told Isaiah of a special promise he makes to those he loves: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and

through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior" (*Isaiah 43:1-3*). With God's abiding presence, you can go through any fire—and you won't just survive, but will be kept and protected through it all.

These Old Testament accounts aren't just dead-letter stories. They're meant to encourage us to trust God for his presence in our lives. Like Abraham, Gideon and many others, we have a powerful testimony of what God's presence has done for us: guiding our steps, opening doors, moving obstacles, lifting cares and fears.

God attaches a condition to having his presence in our lives.

Consider King Asa. This man led God's people to a miraculous victory over Ethiopia's million-man army. Afterward he testified it was God's presence that had scattered the enemy: "Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude.... So the Lord struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled" (*2 Chronicles 14:11-12*).

As Asa led his triumphant army back to Jerusalem, the prophet Azariah met him at the city gate with this message: "Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: 'Hear me, Asa... The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; but when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them'" (*15:1-4*).

God told Asa the secret of getting and maintaining the presence of God in his life: "Don't ever forget how you got this victory. When you were in trouble you sought me with all your heart, and I sent my presence to you. Remember, it was my presence that brought you victory."

Yet when God's presence is missing, everything is out of kilter, with no law, guidance or righteous teaching. Everyone becomes a law unto himself, doing his own thing. What a picture of so many Christian homes today: everything out of order, with no peace or rest, everyone doing what he or she pleases. The Lord in his mercy grieves over such disorder.

Yet it doesn't have to be that way. God's promises are unchangeable, and his Word pledges, "For the rest of your life, if you will continue to seek me, I will be with you. When you cry out, I will be found by you."

This isn't some complicated theology. Anyone can have the abiding presence of God if he or she will simply call out in faith. We are promised, "The Lord...will be found by you" (*15:2*).

Moses sought God for a continual manifestation of his presence "that I may know You" (*Exodus 33:13*).

Here is how God answered his servant: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (*Exodus 33:14*).

Moses' request here would be enough for most Christians. Who among us doesn't want God's promised peace and rest? What more could anyone desire? Yet having the assurance of God's presence wasn't enough for Moses. He knew there was more, and he cried, "Please, show me Your glory" (*33:18*).

God did show Moses his glory. His glory didn't appear in some luminous cloud or an earthshaking demonstration of power. Instead, God expressed his glory in a simple revelation of his nature: "The Lord passed before him and proclaimed... 'the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin'" (*34:6-7*). Do you see? God's glory was a revelation of his goodness, mercy, love and compassion.

Some may argue, "But what about the disciples' incredible experience on the Mount of Transfiguration? Wasn't that a manifestation of God's glory? There was an overpowering light and the miraculous appearance of Moses and Elijah."

In that incredible moment, God's glory wasn't in Moses or Elijah or the spectacular light. Rather, his radiant glory was in Jesus: "He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light...and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'" (*Matthew 17:2, 5*).

Here is God's glory personified in Christ. Jesus is the revelation of all that God said he was to Moses: gracious and longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, merciful to thousands, forgiving sins. At the Mount of Transfiguration, God revealed a living picture of his own glory: "It is all now embodied in my Son."

Beloved, God wants to open our eyes to "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (*Ephesians 1:18*). This means, simply, that all the glory revealed to Moses is embodied in God's Son. And now Christ has been given to us as our inheritance: "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (*Colossians 2:9*).

Where can we find this revelation of Christ?

We find it only as we come to prayerful trust in God's Word. Paul says as we allow Scripture to give us an ever-increasing revelation of Jesus, we will be changed: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (*2 Corinthians 3:18*).

This revelation of Christ's glory will provide a keeping power for our lives: "Upon all the glory shall be a defence" (*Isaiah 4:5, KJV*). In other words, his glory will keep us heavenly minded in our worst hour.

As you continually reflect on this revelation and commune with him, you'll become more and more like Jesus. And as you experience his loving mercy, you'll trust him more and more to see you through all trials. His Word makes it clear: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (*2 Chronicles 16:9, NKJV*).

Seek him with all your heart, and desire his presence in your daily life. Then you'll know and experience his incredible glory. Jesus is going to walk with you through your troubles. He rejoices over you. You are going to make it, dear overcomer. God loves you and will keep you in his presence. Amen.

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