

John 14:15-18
1 John 3:1, 2

December 15, 2013

Presence
“Presence Experienced”

Introduction: As we learned at the beginning of this series, an expectation of God’s people to experience His presence was one of the great promises that would accompany the Incarnation.

Angelic Announcement

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” Matthew 1:23 NKJV

- Have been discussing the relationship of humanity to the presence of God
- **In the Old Testament: “Presence Feared”** (Adam and Eve, Jacob, People of Sinai, Israel) but still a hope

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? Psalms 42:1-2 NKJV

- **With the coming of Christ, His “Presence was Revealed”** (Unveiled God’s glory, Sonship, lovingkindness, purpose, power and promise)
- After the ascension of Jesus His presence was revealed in the presence of the Holy Spirit
- It is through the Holy Spirit-His presence is experienced

This is the heart of our text today

1. When Jesus prepared to leave, he promised the coming of the Spirit-I will not leave as orphans
2. Though the Holy Spirit, believers would experience the presence of God, once feared but now revealed in the Incarnation
3. It is through the Spirit we now experience God’s presence today
4. But, as John later said-it is not fully revealed

WHAT DOES OUR PRESENT EXPERIENCE OF GOD’S PRESENCE LOOK LIKE?

Three thoughts...

I. We experience His presence through a dark glass.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 1 Corinthians 13:12 KJV

Great Pauline Analogy

- ✓ Whole section Paul is pointing out sharp contrast between the Corinthian's present existence and their future.
- ✓ At the present-we through a looking-glass (en-ainigmati)-only appears here in the New Testament
 - Literally means in a riddle or figurative way
 - Echo of Numbers 12:6-8

Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. 8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?" Numbers 12:6-8 NKJV

- Prophets received pictures of truth not as clear as Moses and direct words he received
- NOTE: Has more to do with the indirectness with which the prophets received message more than the clarity as we often think

(Corinth: Famous finest bronze mirrors in antiquity)

IMPORTANT: Not quality of seeing that comes in a mirror

A mirror-it's the indirectness that comes from the mirror rather than real image

NOTE: Analogy breaks down because we see OUR image in a mirror, not God's but point is NOW we see God in a mirror indirectly

- A. We experience His presences now, not directly, but indirectly-"but then face to face."
- B. We experience His presence now, not without mediation (of the Spirit) but one day without any aid.
- C. We experience His presence now with only partial fullness but then with full capacity (all the senses).

WE EXPERIENCE HIS PRESENCE THROUGH A DARK GLASS!

II. We experience His presence in a dirty vessel.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 2 Corinthians 4:7 NKJV

NOTE: The treasure-what is it?

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV

- Revelation of God's glory (all that He is) revealed through Jesus Christ
- What an amazing reality-His presence in us!
- Christ in us-hope of glory!

BUT-IN A JAR OF CLAY- a dirty vessel

- God's divine presence dwelling in a human and dirty vessel

Jar of Clay

- Most common vessels of antiquity were jars of clay (earthenware)
- Used for storing and transporting water and grain, for cooking and drinking
- Found in every excavation site around the world
- While so prominent-vessels were so fragile and easily broken
- Also-body-jar of clay (Lord formed us out of dust-will return to dust)-mortal/human body

All of this underscores the limitations of our experience of God's presence today

- A. The extraordinary majesty of God's presence cannot be fathomed by the vessels of ordinary humanity.
- B. The immortal and unending glory of God's presence cannot be fully known by the frail mentality of human sinfulness.
- C. The fully sufficient power of God's presence cannot be adequately displayed by the insufficient weariness of human depravity.

WE EXPERIENCE HIS PRESENCE IN A DIRTY VESSEL!

III. We experience His presence with a desperate heart.

Listen to the Apostle Paul

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 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 9 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; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 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. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:7-14 NKJV

NOTE: Though he knew God's presence He longed for SO much more—"that I may know Him."

A. Desperate heart:

A. Refuses to let past religious experience or accomplishment dull its passion

Though I also might have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 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. Philippians 3:4-8 NKJV

B. Refuses to let past failures define their future

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13-14 NKJV

C. Refuses to regard any pursuit other than knowing Christ as worthwhile in comparison

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 Philippians 3:8 NKJV

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D. Refuses to let anything distract them from the pursuit of His presence

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 3:12 NKJV

Conclusion: His presence

- ✓ Once feared
- ✓ Revealed in Christ
- ✓ Presently experienced (but not yet fully-still we pursue)
- ✓ But, we anticipate-ONE DAY!

Draw Me Close