

**GOD'S PRESENCE**  
**Exodus 33**

*Exodus 33: 12 Moses said to the Lord, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' 13 Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." 14 And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"*

**PRAY**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Today, we'll talk about God's Presence**

**Story :** There is always a reaction when the person you love is in the same room with you or enters the room. George H.W. Bush and his wife Barbara met at a Christmas dance in Greenwich, Connecticut, just weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

George H.W. Bush was 17. Barbara Pierce was 16. She was wearing a red-and-green dress, and Bush asked a friend to introduce them.

"I thought he was the most beautiful creature I had ever laid eyes on," Barbara would say years later. "I couldn't even breathe when he was in the room."

**The reaction is also different when someone famous or significant or respectable enters the room. It's either people become quiet or excited.**

**You know of some people to whom we say, "She lights up a room whenever she enters."**

**We know that God is omnipresent. It means He is present anytime and anywhere.**

*Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.*

**What we're going to discuss today is God's manifest presence.**

**What do I mean by God's manifest presence?** These are the times in our life when God "manifests" or "makes it clear or obvious" to us His presence.

**We know that when we gather as a church, God is present because we are the body of Christ.** But there are times, He will "make it clear or obvious" that He is present.

**Note :** Why are we in church? To worship, yes, correct. To listen to God's Word, correct. To have fellowship with others, correct. But none of this is going to be of much effect, when we don't have God's presence with us.

**Illustration:** It's just like a boy who falls in love with a girl. The boy has always been in love with the girl but when he brings her flowers and chocolates and says, "I love you" to the girl, he is "manifesting" or "making it clear or obvious" his love to the girl...and that creates a wonderful effect on the girl, if the girl also likes the boy.

Now, what I pray today as I share God's Word by His grace, that you will be able to understand and know God's manifest presence.

That whatever you are undergoing in life right now, whether good or bad, you will be able to experience the exceedingly, abundant, joy that God has to offer with His presence and be able to say to Him, in spite of what's happening in your life, "Lord, you're all I want and all I need."

- I. KNOW GOD'S PRESENCE
- II. DRAW NEAR GOD'S PRESENCE
- III. AWE IN GOD'S PRESENCE

**I. KNOW GOD'S PRESENCE**

*" 14 And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.*

**Illustration :**

- This is a nice photo of Mt. McKinley. But do you know 70% of the time, visitors in this place does not see the beauty of this because it's always covered by clouds.
- This is Mt. Fuji, they say you have a 50% chance of seeing it when you visit. But when you do, there's nothing quite like it.

**I believe that a lot of Christians also go to church or even in their Christian life, never experience the Presence of God and that's why their lives stay the same. They are always seeking other things than God because they have really never experienced God Himself.**

**Etymology :** Presence "panim" Hebrew for "face" or someone who is facing you or before you. It's because you can never ignore someone who is right in front of you.

**That's the meaning of someone who is right in front of you that you cannot ignore.**

**God wants us to experience His Manifest presence.**

*Psalm 27: 8 You have said, "Seek my face."*

*My heart says to you,*

*"Your face, Lord, do I seek."*

*Psalm 105:4 Seek the Lord and his strength;*

*seek his presence continually!*

**Remember, the people of Israel can never ignore God's presence because of the pillar of cloud and fire.**

The background of this story is that they are still in the wilderness. While in the wilderness God's presence was manifested by a pillar of cloud.

**Note : It was only one pillar.** It's a pillar of cloud and fire.

*Exodus 14 : 24 And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic,*

**Even at night, it was called a pillar of cloud.**

*Exodus 14: 19 Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, 20 coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night] without one coming near the other all night.*

(Show rendering)

**So the cloud is the one that is mixed up with fire.**

Remember, **the Bible says that God is a consuming fire and it's the cloud that's covering this fire, that's why by night, imagine, a pillar of cloud with fire inside.**

**WOW! WHAT AN ASSURING COMFORT KNOWING THAT GOD IS THERE TO PROTECT THEM AND GUIDE THEM..And that is what God does for His people. He protects them and guides them.**

**The pillar of cloud is the manifestation of God's presence. It's when people know that God is right before them.**

*Exodus 33: 10 And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. 11 Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.*

**David knows what it means to have God's presence.**

**This is the reason why he wrote Psalm 23; I encourage everyone to memorize Psalm 23, if you haven't. This is written by someone who knows what it is to be in God's presence.**

*Psalm 23 A Psalm of David*

*1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

*2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,*

*3 he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.*

*4 Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,*

*I will fear no evil,*

*for you are with me; notice the change of subject from third person to first person*

*your rod and your staff,*

*they comfort me.*

*5 You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.*

*You anoint my head with oil;*

*my cup overflows.*

*6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me*

*all the days of my life,*

*and I will dwell in the house of the Lord*

*forever.*

**Application Today : There is no pillar of cloud and fire right now but how does a person know God's manifest presence and how do we know God is speaking to us face to face?**

**Answer : There's a fire in your heart that's burning that you just know God's presence is there.**

### **Proof : The Road To Emmaus**

Jesus has resurrected already and two of the disciples were discussing what happened. Here's what happened.

*Luke 24 : 13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.*

**In short, they do not recognize that God is with them.**

**Jesus was talking with them and pointing out in Scriptures what happened and they went into a place where they had the breaking of the bread.** After the breaking of the bread, they recognized who He was and then He vanished. But look at what the two disciples said in verse 32.

*32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"*

**IMPORTANT :** We will know God's presence when we are with God's people hearing God's Word or singing God's Word and our hearts are burning inside of us that you just know God is making it obvious to you that He is here.

**Illustration :** When Blaise Pascal died in 1662, his servant found a scrap of paper hidden in the lining of his coat. It turned out to be a testimony of something that had happened eight years earlier: "From about half past ten in the evening until about half past twelve FIRE...

Whatever happened to him that Monday night, "FIRE" was all Pascal could say about it.

## **II. DRAW NEAR GOD'S PRESENCE**

*Exodus 33 : 3 "Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."*

**Woah! This is huge.** Yes, they will be in a land where it is easier to prosper economically and yet God's presence will be with them.

**What caused this? Let's find out the reason why people, even Christians are not experiencing God's presence.**

**BACKGROUND :** The story in Exodus 32 and 33 is that Moses was in Mount Sinai talking with God and the mountain was covered in a cloud. The people didn't know what was happening to Moses so they asked Aaron to make them a god that they can worship.

*Exodus 32 : 1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us."*

**What an insult to Yahweh! ISN'T THIS WHAT YAHWEH WAS DOING FOR THEM?**

*Exodus 13 : 21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.*

He was the one who saved them, guided them, protected them, promised them prosperity and the one who went before them and yet for just a little while Moses left them AND OUT OF DANGER, THEY ABANDONED HIM.

**What happened next?**

So they melted their gold and made a golden calf and they were worshipping it, making merry around it and were singing and were happy.

**How easy for us to idolize anything that glitters...gold, a shiny new car and etc.**

God saw what was happening and ordered Moses to go down and put a stop to it. But here's what God said to Moses, yes, go to the land that He promised but.. but I will not go up among you,

**APPLICATION :**

The reason people are not experiencing God's presence in their life or even when they are in church is because of the sin of idolatry.

**QUOTE : What is the sin of idolatry?** It is finding our security, happiness, satisfaction and provision in other things or persons more than the person of Jesus Christ.

**It might be your job. It might be your family. It might be your relationships. It might be self.**

**Blindfold Illustration :** We can't see God's beauty because we are blinded by the things of this world. It's like us wearing a blindfold and that's the reason we you can't see the beauty of the world around us

**Again, let me remind what our Lord promised which I mentioned last week.**

*John 10:10 I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

**Etymology :** abundantly "perissos" exceeding, beyond, much more.

**But the reason we are not experience this overflowing, abundant life is because we are like this boy that was described by C.S. Lewis when he wrote :**

"It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." - C.S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory"

**Illustration: Lido Beach vs Boracay**

We are too easily pleased with the joy given by my family, by the accolades at work or the satisfaction in the job, not that this are bad, in fact, they are good knowing all good things come from God **but I have forgotten that God has so much more...exceedingly...overflowingly more to offer,** mainly, His presence.

**This is what is described in 1 Peter 1:8 "unspeakable joy"**

*1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,*

**Again, this is what David described when he wrote in Psalms**

*Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life;  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

**Etymology** : fullness “sova” abundance coming from the verb “saba” which also means exceedingly. Again, in the presence of the Lord, there is an exceeding, abundance of joy.

**This is the reason why our Lord said,**

*Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*

What our Lord means here is that our love for God must be so overwhelming that if our relationships are the ones hindering that love then it means, we cannot claim to be His disciple.

**Quote** : A true disciple of Christ finds their greatest joy, their greatest pleasure, their greatest satisfaction in Christ Jesus!

**Biblical Illustration** :

When God created Adam and Eve, the purpose is that God’s presence will always be manifested. That’s why you will see in Genesis 1 and 2 that God visits them. The problem came when they wanted more of the forbidden fruit than the pleasure of obeying God.

**Beloved, we will never experience the fullness and pleasure of God’s presence when we find satisfaction in something or someone else.**

**But look at the promise of God if we find our pleasure from Him and Him alone.**

*Mark 10 : 28 Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” 29 Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now **in this time**, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.”*

**In short, God is saying that your satisfaction, your relationships, your provisions will be much fuller and exceeding and abundant in joy if we find our pleasure in Him.**

**Important Question** : How do we draw near God’s presence?

*15 And he (Moses) said to Him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?” 17 And the Lord said to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.”*

**It’s saying to God**, “Lord, you are the most important in my life. Nothing can bring me security and satisfaction more than you. Life is nothing without you.”

**Now let me emphasize this :**

*Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"*

What will make this church or what makes us distinct from any other faith is we know that "God is here." That "God is with us."

**Illustration :** When we were leaving for Canada. We know everything will be better here when it comes to material things. A close friend of mine lived here in Canada said, "Don't worry Jerry, everything is a step-up." But by God's grace, Exodus 33:15 was my prayer to the Lord.

*"If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here."*

**I noticed that's the main priority of people going here to Canada...to have a better life. That's why** their number one priority when they landed here is to find a job so they can provide for their family. God and church and even family becomes second.

**Common priority :** Family, Job and if there's time left, God and his church.

**When we landed here in Canada, I said to God and shared with my kids that here is our priority :**

1. God and His church
2. Family
3. Our studies or our work

**NOW How do we draw near God's presence?** Say to our Lord Jesus Christ, "**Lord, You are my source of greatest joy and pleasure."**

*James 4:8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. (NLT)*

**Make God your #1 priority.**

*Matthew 6:33 Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you as well.*

**And if we do this we will experience...**

## **AWE IN GOD'S PRESENCE**

**Before we feel awe in God's presence, if God manifests His presence to you for the first time, your feeling is "Woe" or "Woah"**

**Woe : You feel dreadful, afraid or shameful because you know you are in the presence of a Holy God.**

**Biblical Illustration :** Both Isaiah and John when they saw the throne room of God, the very manifest presence of God, they both became dreadful because they realized their sinfulness.

Let's look at Isaiah's reaction :

*Isaiah 6: 1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:*

*"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*

*4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.*

*5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”*

**But once they repented and acknowledged it, it was REPLACED BY AWE!**

**Illustration :** I remember the time that the first time the Holy Spirit opened up my eyes to the gospel. I’ve heard it several times but this time, the Holy Spirit made me truly understand who Jesus is. And I knew I was in the presence of the Holy God. **The first thing that I felt was woe and shamefulness for my sin and selfishness.**

**But once I believed that Jesus Christ has already paid for my sin on the cross, the joy was so overwhelming that it lasted for days and I was telling people about the good news!**

**When Moses pleaded in behalf of the people and this is what God said,**  
*14 “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

**Etymology :** rest “nuwach” settled

This means **those who are in the presence of God will find soul-satisfaction.**

**That’s the reason why the Bible says :**

*Acts 3:19 Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; (NASB)*

**Is your soul tired? Return to God. Only God’s presence can give you rest and refreshment.**

**It’s because that is what God’s presence brings :**

*Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life;  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore*

**QUOTE :**

We can find joy in family, relationships, work, material things but not fullness of joy.

We can find temporary pleasures in the things mentioned about but not everlasting pleasure.

**ONLY IN CHRIST CAN WE FIND FULLNESS OF JOY AND PLEASURES FOREVERMORE.**

**OUR LORD JESUS WANTS YOU TO HAVE LIFE, LIFE IN ABUNDANCE! OVERFLOWING!** And this can only be found in His presence!

**Again, you will know you are in God’s presence when you experience this :**

*1 Peter 1:8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,*

King James Version calls it “unspeakable joy” ... **NO WORDS COULD EXPRESS THE KIND OF JOY THAT IS IN YOUR HEART!**

### **CONCLUDING ILLUSTRATION : (show photo)**

The Royal Flag if it's up in the Buckingham Palace signifies that the Queen OR King is there. Do you know that this flag never flies half-mast even if the Queen dies? It's because there will always be royalty in England. When the royal flag is raised up whether in Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle and etc, you know that the Queen is there.

**For a Christian, you will know that God is present when you have “unspeakable joy” in your heart.**

**Quote :** Joy is the flag that is flown from the castle of your heart when the King is in residence.

*Philippians 4: 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. **The Lord is at hand.***

*6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 **and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***

**INEXPRESSIBLE JOY AND PEACE BEYOND UNDERSTANDING...THAT IS WHAT GOD'S PRESENCE BRINGS.**

No money can bring this! No relationship can provide for this! No success can match this!

**You might ask me Pastor, how?**

**Illustration :** The Practice of the Presence of God is a spiritual classic written 300 years ago. It was written based on the experience of Nicholas Herman also known as Brother Lawrence

Nicolas had a number of jobs in his life, starting out in the military and then in the transportation industry. After that, he found work in the food service industry, serving as a short-order cook and bottle-washer.

Eventually Nicholas became deeply discouraged by his life. He spent a lot of time, like us, thinking about himself. “Am I saved” was a particular question that burrowed deep into his soul. He struggled deeply with worry, until one day when everything changed. **On that day, he was looking at a tree, not the most thrilling exercise, but something occurred to him: what makes a tree flourish is not its self-reliance, but it's rootedness in something other than and deeper than itself. From then on, Nicolas, was acknowledging God's presence with whatever he is doing – while cooking, while cleaning, while washing the dishes**

**As a final prayer, by God's grace, I asked the music team to sing this song. (Call music team)**

**While they are preparing let me share with you the lyrics. This is from Lifehouse and the title is Everything**

Find me here and speak to me  
I want to feel you, I need to hear you  
You are the light that's leading me  
To the place where I find peace again

You are the strength that keeps me walking  
You are the hope that keeps me trusting  
You are the life to my soul  
You are my purpose, you're everything

**And how can I stand here with you  
And not be moved by you?  
Would you tell me how could it be  
Any better than this?**

You calm the storms and you give me rest  
You hold me in your hands, you won't let me fall  
You still my heart and you take my breath away  
Would you take me in, take me deeper now?

**And how can I stand here with you  
And not be moved by you?  
Would you tell me how could it be  
Any better than this?**

'Cause you're all I want, you're all I need  
You're everything, everything

**And how can I stand here with you  
And not be moved by you?  
Would you tell me how could it be  
Any better than this?**

Remember at the start right, where I said God wants us to experience His presence. This is how.  
*.Jeremiah 29:13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

(Worship team sings)

**S.G.D.**