



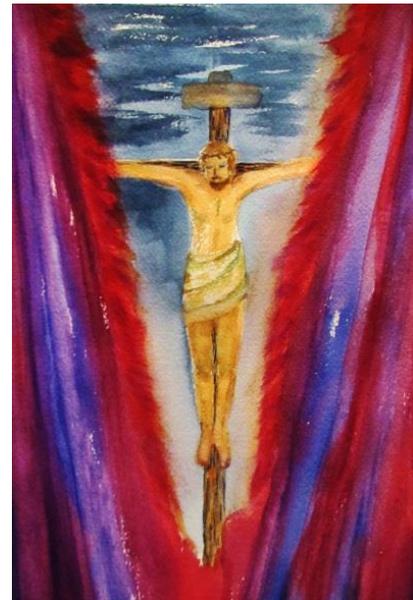
KNOWING THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF GOD

LESSON FOUR

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Micah 6:8 *He has showed you, o mortal, what is good. What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

1. There have been times in my life when, being led by God to do something far beyond my comfort zone, I would reach out my right hand and tell the Lord that I needed Him to go with me, help me, guide me. But the truth of the matter is that the presence of God is closer than hand in hand with those who react to His amazing love by choosing to love Him and live to please Him. John 14:23 NIV *Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves Me will obey My teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.* John 14:21 NIV *"Whoever has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love them and show Myself to them."* John 14:15-17 NIV *"If you love Me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you."*
2. Exodus 25:8-9 and Exodus 26:30-33 explain that in the days of Moses, God gave instructions about making a sanctuary for Him. Included in the plan was a tabernacle with a Holy Place and a Most Holy Place. The curtain which separated these two areas was made of blue, purple and scarlet yarn. Only a High Priest could go, once a year, into the Most Holy Place to pray for the forgiveness of the people. Mark 15:37-38 records the death of Jesus on the cross that with a loud cry, Jesus breathed His last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. Hebrews 10:5-22 explains the significance: Under the old agreement the priests stood before the altar day after day offering sacrifices that could never take away our sins. But Christ gave Himself to God for our sins as one sacrifice for all time, and then sat down in the place of highest honor at God's right hand..... Now, when sins have been forever forgiven and forgotten, there is no need to offer more sacrifices to get rid of them. And so, dear brothers, now we may walk right into the very Holy of Holies where God is, because of the blood of Jesus. This is the fresh, new, life-giving way which Christ has opened up for us by tearing the curtain – His human body – to let us into the holy presence of God. And since this great High Priest of ours rules over God's household, let us go right in, to God Himself, with true hearts sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and because we have been washed with the pure water. (Living New Testament)
3. Think of the word 'Communion' which is one of the ways to describe the Lord's Supper. Jesus requested that we use this to demonstrate our remembrance of Him and our desire to be

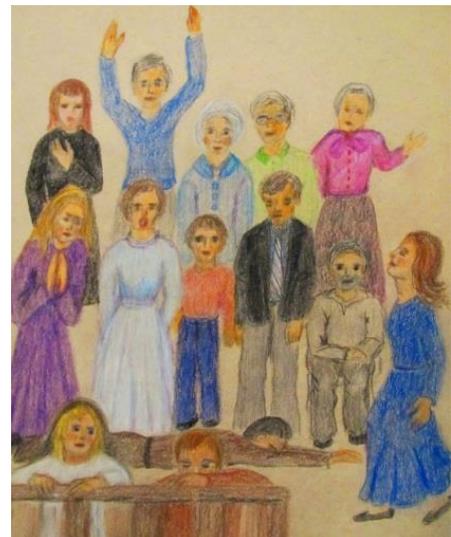


partakers of Him: His body (as we eat the bread) and His blood (as we drink from the cup.) By His Spirit He is present. I Corinthians 10:16-17 NIV *Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.* Recorded in Mark 14:22-24 *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take it; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," He said to them.*



4. The presence of the Lord can be known in worship. Psalm 100 reminds us to shout with joy to the Lord and to worship the Lord gladly; coming before Him with joyful songs and acknowledging the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; we are the people of His pasture. We are to enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations.

I attended a conference which began with a session of worship. Some were singing at their seat. Some were kneeling at the altar. Some were dancing. I asked the Lord, "Is this of You?" His answer was, "I look at their hearts." I have often thought since, how the heart of God must be pleased with the earnest thankfulness, praise and words of love from each one of His people and what a privilege it is to join with fellow believers to express our love. May we worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness. May we express our love with the openness of children coming to Abba Daddy.



5. In the writings of the Book of Acts, we learn many ways that Paul taught about the one true God. He not only explained the greatness of God but that God makes Himself known to us and wants a relationship with us. During a visit to Athens he commented to those gathered that he noticed they were very religious because they had many different objects of worship. He said that he even found an altar to ‘an unknown god.’ Acts 17:23-28 tells of Paul saying what they worship as something ‘unknown’ he would proclaim to them. That God made the world and everything in it and gives all men life and breath and everything else. ‘From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being.’
6. Later when giving his testimony before King Agrippa, Paul told of Jesus appearing to him and sending him to open eyes: to turn people from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus. Paul explained that in obedience, he went first to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, preaching that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. (Acts 26:12-20)

DRAWING CLOSER TO GOD

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come Holy Spirit.

You are welcome here.

I quiet myself to speak Your Name,

To call upon Your Presence,

To know Your closeness.

I thank You for Your love and care.

I thank You for making Yourself known to Me.

What a wondrous God You are – reigning over all and yet

One who comes into my heart and life as love and light.

Live in me that I may know you better.

Remind me what You want me to know and do.

Open my heart to You and Your Word.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come Holy Spirit.

You are welcome in my life.

I seek You and live.

Amen. Amen.

OBSTACLES TO COMMUNION WITH GOD

1. Not forgiving others

Matthew 6:14-15 tells us that if you forgive those who sin against you, God will forgive you. This does not mean that you agree with the one who sins against you, but that you will release the one who has offended you to God to judge and reward or punish. But forgiving does not mean you put yourself or your children in a repeatedly abusive situation.

2. Lack of knowledge about the relationship God offers

Hosea 4:6 states that God's people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

3. Rebelliousness, lack of repentance of sins, pride, not wanting to be told what to do

4. Turning to idols, false gods, sorcery, fortune tellers, false religions

5. Fascination with those who live in darkness and the ways of evil

Psalms 119:37 is a prayer to have the Lord turn one's eyes away from worthless things.

6. Fear of what God might expect or what misunderstanding may come from others

7. Choosing the deceptive philosophy of men rather than the Word of God

Colossians 2:6-10

8. Self pity, poor me, so busy, sick, unworthy

SEEK GOD AND LIVE

1. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him

2. Learn about the character of God and what pleases Him Jeremiah 24:7 tells of God's desire to give His people hearts to know Him

3. Call on the Holy Spirit to open your life to the ways of God and walk in agreement with the Spirit Luke 11:9-13 tells us to seek God and He will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him