

Esteeming the Presence

by Art Katz

The sermon encourages listeners to prioritize having God as their abiding consciousness, rather than seeking His presence for personal gain.

Scripture: Psalm 16:11, Psalm 46:10, Matthew 28:20, John 15:4-5, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Philippians 4:7, Colossians 3:3, Hebrews 11:1, James 4:8

Topics: "Presence of God", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

Art Katz challenges the notion that seeking the 'presence' of God is the pinnacle of spirituality, suggesting instead that true spirituality lies in an abiding consciousness of God that transcends feelings and experiences. He emphasizes that this awareness should not be a means to bolster one's own spiritual identity but rather a state of being that reflects complete dependence on God. Katz warns against the dangers of seeking experiences that may lead to spiritual immaturity and encourages believers to find their secret life in God, where true peace and companionship reside.

Transcript

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I have for a long time been secretly irked in my inner man with the growing preoccupation of many of God's saints to desire the 'presence' of God. It is implied that this is the summum bonum of the faith, the high water mark of true spirituality. In this supposedly 'exalted' realm lies the key to revelation, anointing and all that could be coveted for successful ministry. My own disposition, however, is to receive His presence as surprise, and not something sought for in itself; lest this become the final hiding place of self now safely ensconced in 'ultimate' spirituality itself!

How much then, do I appreciate Oswald Chamber's remark, (My Utmost for His Highest, June 2nd), that "The abiding consciousness of the life is to be God, not [my] thinking about Him." In this state, one looks at "everything in relation to God, because the abiding consciousness of God pushes itself to the front all the time" - whether felt or not! This characterized the apostle Paul and Jesus Himself even when ultimately tested at the Cross. The cry, "My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" is not the statement of the

momentary lapse of the Father, but the supreme moment of the Son's sonship in an obedience that did not falter whether present or absent. It might well prove to be our own. The kind of abiding consciousness of God is the province, I suspect, only of those whose whole life, purpose and reason for being is the Lord's. Those who are yet independent entities with their own designs, however 'spiritual' and 'consecrated' will prefer a 'presence' to augment that spirituality and confirm them in their 'dedication.' Can it be that many of the spurious revivals of our time have given opportunity to the enemy to duplicate, in the soul realm of the naïve and unsuspecting, coveted experiences - the result of which have neither fostered maturity nor been enduring? Better, I think, to have one's secret life hid with God in Christ with that "pious mind that views all things in God and God in all things" (Charles Spurgeon: Treasury of David, vol. 1 p.381). The one who is anxious to obtain the 'presence' risks haunting doubts about himself should he fail, and forfeits the very peace where "the abiding companionship of God" waits to be enjoyed.

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