

# Southern Salt Morning 4

by David Ravenhill

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*David Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's habitation and the conditions necessary for His presence to dwell among us.*

**Duration:** 1:05:14

**Scripture:** Exodus 25:8

**Topics:** "Christian Life", "Habitation of God", "Spiritual Environment"

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## Description

David Ravenhill speaks on the habitation of God, emphasizing the importance of creating an environment where God can dwell. He discusses how God desires to reside among His people and the conditions necessary for this, including holiness, worship, and thanksgiving. Ravenhill illustrates that just as a home reflects its inhabitants, our lives should reflect God's presence and character. He urges the congregation to prepare their hearts as a dwelling place for God, aligning their lives with His standards and inviting His presence to abide within them.

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## Transcript

Thank you. Let me just mention very quickly, I brought about 40 books with me. I'm not sure how many have sold, but I'm leaving right after the service this morning.

If you want one of those, you need to get it while you can. Excuse me. I was wondering if I shouldn't change my message this morning to spiritual warfare and deal with all the territorial spirits that I've sensed in this place this morning.

But I won't meddle in that particular area right now. So I'll relieve you of that, of having to repent of the time of this person or place or whatever it is. Amen.

You know, one thing I never told you, and that was how I came to be here. And maybe just for a moment, I need to let you know something about the background. When Eric and the team were trying to figure out who to have as a speaker, they got their heads together and came up with this brilliant, absolutely brilliant expositor.

Gave him a call and asked him if he could come and he turned them down. And so they went back into the huddle again and started to pray and seek the Lord. And then somebody made the suggestion that they'd heard this incredible speaker, preacher, just eloquent, just a great guy, you know, just held your attention.

And so they gave him a call and again, they were turned down. So then finally, they were somewhat desperate, went back into the huddle again. And, you know, somebody suggested that there was this incredibly good looking guy and that they should give him a call and see if he could come.

And so I said I would. I just didn't have the heart to turn them down for the third time. Yeah.

Anyway, I heard that introduction many, many years ago. I think it's one of the best, but I want to share with you this morning on the habitation of God. The habitation of God.

I'm going to be using a number of words interchangeably. The word culture, the word environment, the word habitation, the word atmosphere, all of those having sort of similar overtones. We can create an atmosphere by dimming the lights, playing a certain type of music, you know, filling the air with a certain fragrance, taking the hand of the person beside you, whatever may or may not work.

And there's a certain atmosphere that we create. The word environment, the same thing. We talk about certain conditions being necessary in order for something to survive.

These days, the environmentalists are alive and well and having lived in the Northwest, you know, they tend to be a little bit of a pest. But anyway, you know, they tell us that there's got to be a certain amount of moisture and a certain amount of this and that and the other thing in order for these trees to survive. And if the trees survive, then the spotted owl will survive and so on and so forth.

And so what they're talking about is certain components all coming together. And I want to talk about the, if you like, the atmosphere that God dwells in, or the culture that God dwells in, or the environment, if you like, the spiritual environment that God dwells in. One of the things that I've had the privilege of doing is traveling.

I was born in England, lived there till I was 12 years of age, and then moved to Ireland. My mother's Irish, and so we put in a little bit of time in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and lived there till I was almost 15, then moved to Minnesota and lived seven years in Minnesota. I've served my time and I'm out on good behavior.

That's not the place to live at this time of the year. And since then, we've sort of gallivanted around the world a little bit. I married my wife there in Minnesota.

We worked in Teen Challenge in New York, and then went down to New Zealand, lived off an island off the coast of New Zealand for 18 months, came back to California for four years, then went to New Guinea for three years, and then from New Guinea to New Zealand for 15 years, and then came back and spent a year in Dallas, and then four years in Kansas City, almost five years in Seattle, and then we've been a year in Pensacola. So anyway, you know, I've traveled a little bit and lived in various countries, but also traveled around a lot of countries, and one of the things you find when you travel is that different people do things in different ways. We refer to that as culture, and not everybody, of course, operates the same way you do.

I was amazed when I came to America as a 14-year-old, almost 15, and I was on a Bible school campus where my father decided to make our home for a number of years, and I'd only been there a number of days, and I was playing with some of the staff kids and, you know, just riding around on bicycles and different things, and they were horrified to find out that Leonard Ravenhill's son was swearing, and I was equally horrified to find out that these kids were also swearing, until we realized that we had a clash of

cultures, that swear words in England are not swear words in America, and swear words in America are not swear words in England, and I'm not about to tell you which now because I'm confused, and so I don't want to go down on this tape, you know, going out all over the nation swearing, but, you know, even though we speak the same language, we come from different cultures, and I have, again, enjoyed, as I've traveled around, picking up some of these various cultures and getting to understand the way in which different people live. My wife and I, as I said, were in New Guinea, and one of the missionaries was telling us that they were up in a very remote area. As you know, New Guinea is a nation of three million people, and it has 700 languages, not dialects, distinct languages out of three million people, and Wycliffe have their largest base in the world there.

It's almost a little city of its own called up in the highlands, but one of these missionaries was working in a very primitive area of New Guinea, and after they'd been working there for a while, one of the nationals, we used to refer to them as natives, they like to be called nationals, one of the nationals came up to the missionary, a little hesitant, but he wanted to inquire about something. Curiosity had sort of got the best of him. Finally, he was bold enough to ask the missionary about this thing that we call a handkerchief.

He saw the missionary take out this beautiful white piece of cloth, proceed to blow his nose, and then very carefully wrap it up and place it back in his pocket. Of course, the question was, what is it about that commodity that you guys know, and we don't, because for thousands of years, we've just been sort of wasting that on the ground. Obviously, there's tremendous value here, because every time you get that stuff, you collect it in this immaculate cloth.

I mean, it's always white, it's always very perfect, and you blow your nose, and then you close it up very carefully, and you very carefully make sure it goes back in your pocket, you don't want to lose it. Now, again, that's a difference in culture. We get used to, of course, using a handkerchief from the moment we're born, almost somebody's wiping our nose, but to them, they'd never seen a handkerchief before.

My daughter is in China, home now, but leaves in about three days to go back to China, and I understand that in one particular remote area of China, that there is a custom, and that is that everybody has rather long fingernails, and the reason for the long fingernails has nothing to do at all with style. It has one simple reason behind it, being able to pick your nose more effectively, and in that particular culture, it's quite appropriate to sit around with your friends and sort of work away at whatever the problem is, and the longer the fingernail, of course, the further you can get into doing that root canal job, and so consequently, they have long fingernails. If you go to places like Malaysia, they have a custom there that you never ever, we've got any Malaysian students here, but you never ever, you know, go, wonderful, you never ever go into somebody's home without, first of all, taking off your shoes, and I made the mistake of being up in a place called Penang, and a very beautiful spot, staying with a Chinese doctor, wealthy man, drove a Mercedes-Benz, drove up to his house and pushed a button, and the gates automatically opened, and we went in, this magnificent home, and I just proceeded to march right on in.

I thought, you know, here I am. I'm the guest of honor. I'll just walk in like I do anywhere else, and I was very politely tapped on the shoulder and pointed down in front of me, and here are all these shoes.

You think I'm Elder Marcus, live there, but, you know, I was asked to remove my shoes before going in, and you would never ever go into a home without, first of all, removing your shoes, so culture, again, is important, and one of the things about a missionary is not only does he have to have a good knowledge of the Word of God, but he also has to understand the culture to which he is going, because the Bible says a

brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city. In other words, once there is an offense there, it takes a tremendous amount of effort to win that person back again because you've offended them. I was down in the city of Dunedin, which is down in the South Island of New Zealand.

Our oldest daughter, Lisa, was down there in college at the time, and I went down to see her and do some ministry one weekend, and I was sitting, waiting for breakfast in the home where I was at, picked up the newspaper, and on the front page of the Otago Daily Times, which is the local newspaper, there was an article concerning an Inca exhibit that was touring New Zealand, going around the various museums, and it was over to Australia, and I think up into Malaysia, and the article featured the, well, the article really was dealing with the fact that this museum exhibit had all sorts of things from the Inca civilization, pottery, jewelry, pieces of clothing, weaving, various implements, and so on, but the pride and joy of this Inca exhibit were the mummified remains of an Inca person, and the article said that New Zealand was the only place that this mummy was not being put on display, even though it was the pride and joy of this exhibit, and the reason being, it said, because it would offend the Maori people. The Maori people are the equivalent of our Native Americans in New Zealand. They were the ones that were there before the European came, and they are very sensitive when it comes to death, they're very sort of superstitious when it comes to anything to do with death, and the New Zealand government understood, again, the culture of the Maori people, and lest they offend the Maori people, they chose not to put those mummies or that mummy on display.

Now again, they were sensitive to another culture. Now I say all that to say this, that God, I believe, has a culture. He has a way of doing things, and we can offend God by not understanding his ways.

That's why the great men and women of God in the Bible, you know, were always crying out, Lord, teach me your ways. I want to understand your culture. I want to understand your way of doing things.

I turned on the television a number of years ago now, and there was a documentary on the White House chef, and initially, I was going to turn it off. I thought, you know, I'm not that interested in watching this, but after a while, it caught my attention, and it told about the expertise of this man that headed up the whole kitchen of the White House, that he had to be an expert in carving ice and, you know, butter and all the other elaborate things that they do. He had to be an expert in all the culinary arts and being able to decorate cakes and everything else, but it also said he had to know who he was cooking for, and that was equally as important as what he was cooking.

For instance, you know, if Netanyahu came to breakfast, and the White House chef is sort of scratching his head and saying, what are we going to feed this guy, you know, and he thinks to himself, you know, it's been a while since we've had ham and eggs, and he prepares the most incredible dish of ham and eggs. It may be the perfect dish, in one sense, as far as his ability to cook it, but it would be highly offensive, again, to set it down in front of a Jew, because, again, it is not a kosher dish, and so you've got to know who you're cooking for. Likewise, we need to know who we're dealing with when it comes to dealing with God.

We need to understand, again, his environment, his culture. Now, the word habitation, in the dictionary, this is the definition from the dictionary. It says, a dwelling or a house, the natural abode of a plant or an animal, the usual place that someone or something is found.

Let me say that again. This is the word habitation from the dictionary, the usual place that someone or something is found. God has a habitat, a place where he is always found, a place where he resides.

A zoo is not a good habitat. When our kids were smaller, we took them to the San Diego Zoo. The San Diego Zoo is supposed to be one of the best zoos in the world, at least it used to be, and I remember walking around, looking at all the various animals in the various enclosures there.

There were, you know, lions and tigers and giraffes and hippopotamus and all the other things, and thinking to myself, well, you know, there's a certain amount of this environment that they're used to. They're used to the heat of Southern California. There are animals mainly from Africa, and then I came across this enclosure, and here in this enclosure was a polar bear.

Beautiful white animal, you know, six or eight feet tall, and it reared up maybe more than that, and I thought to myself, this is terrible. Not only is this thing confined to a small area, but this animal was designed to function at temperatures about, you know, 60 degrees or 100 degrees different from what it was at. It would be more at home on a block of ice than it was sitting there basking in the Southern California sun, and so that zoo is not a good habitat for a polar bear or any other animal in one sense, and many times I think we present to God a very poor habitation.

The Bible says in Ephesians that we are growing into the habitation of God. We are the house of God. We are the dwelling place of God.

The word habitation in the scripture, and when you get home you can look this up in your strong's, but it means tabernacle, a residence, a dwelling, a place to rest, a place to settle, a place to marry, a place to keep house. All of those words are the word habitation. Again, tabernacle is the word habitation, a place to marry, a place to settle, a place to keep house.

You've got the idea there of something that is permanent, God wanting to settle down, God wanting to rest, God wanting to marry, God wanting to keep house, and God is wanting to come and dwell within us. He's wanting to make this his house. After all, the Bible says that our body is the house of God.

It's the tabernacle of God. It's the temple of God. It's a place he wants to rest and marry and keep house, so to speak.

Now if you have your Bible, turn with me to Exodus chapter 25 and two verses that I want to look at. Exodus 25 and verse 8 and 9, and let me give you the background to this. First of all, this is God speaking to Moses.

It is not Moses at the end of a 40-day fast begging God to come and dwell among them. It's not, you know, Moses saying, God please, you know, I fasted 40 days, I've lost 60 pounds, and you know, my hair is beginning to fall out and everything else, and I'm begging of you, please God, please. You know, we're a family, all right? We're a family, and you're supposed to be our father, and it's about time you came and visited us, you know, and so on and so forth.

No, this is God taking the initiative. This is God speaking to Moses, and he says this in verse 8, let them construct a sanctuary for me that I may dwell among them. In other words, God says, build it and I will come.

Make a house for me, make a dwelling place for me, make a sanctuary for me that I may dwell among them. So God expresses, first of all, God's desire, and how many of you know that God says, I am the Lord and I change not. So God's desire is still the same.

He wants to dwell with us. He says, build it and I will come. He longs to dwell in the midst of his people.

That is the longing of God for your life, for my life, for our lives individually, for our lives corporately. God is wanting to dwell with us. Then verse 9, after God expresses his desire, he then expresses his demands.

He says, according to all that I'm going to show you, as to the pattern of the tabernacle, the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it. So God expresses, first of all, his desire, and then he expresses his demands. He says, listen, I won't dwell anywhere.

I'm fussy, I'm finicky, I'm particular about where I dwell, and don't get to any bright ideas about the fact that I will simply come and reside anywhere. I have got a very strict standard as to the conditions that need to be met before I can come, and I will tell you what those conditions are. And so, of course, he takes Moses up into the top of the mountain, and he gives Moses a tour of heaven, basically, and he says, listen, this is what I'm used to.

This is the sort of the environment that I'm used to. This is the habitation that I dwell in, and I want you to replicate or duplicate that on earth, and I'll give you the pattern. Obviously, it'd be a sort of a miniature version, but nevertheless, it will have all the ingredients that I'm used to.

It will have the same atmosphere that I'm used to. I want my will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. And so, Moses, make sure you make it according to the pattern.

So God, we find, again, is very fussy. You know, I can imagine that maybe there was a little bit of a pause there between God saying, Moses, I want to come and dwell among you, and Moses saying to himself, this is incredible. You know, I can't believe it.

We just had a very wealthy family die. They had no heirs. They've got this magnificent tent on the outskirts of town there.

I mean, it is plush. It is better than any other tent, and you know, there's nobody to inherit it. We've been wondering what to do with it.

God, you are just in time. You can have this place. I mean, it's yours.

It's free. I mean, it is great. No, God says, listen, I don't want it.

I will give you the details as to the house that I want. I'll give you the length. I'll give you the breadth.

I'll give you the height. I'll give you the material. I'll give you the color scheme.

I'll give you the furniture. I'll tell you the height of the furniture, what to overlay with gold, what to overlay with bronze, and so on and so forth. I'll give you all the details, and Moses, make sure you don't make one single error.

Now, we learn something about God from that, don't we? Again, that God is the same. He's the unchanging God. With Him, there's no variableness.

There's no shadow of turning, the Bible says. Now, you can read through the Word of God, and many times men will ask a question, David especially, Lord, who will, who can ascend into the hill of the Lord? In other words, Lord, how can I dwell where you dwell? And the answer comes back, well, you've got to have

integrity. You can't swear, you know, you can't strip a person of his honor, and so on and so forth.

There are certain requirements. Another time, he says, you know, who can ascend into the hill of the Lord? And the answer comes back, well, you've got to have clean hands and a pure heart. In other words, there are conditions of being with God, and dwelling with God.

The Bible says two cannot walk together unless they're in agreement. They've got to be in unity. It's got to be unison.

They've got to sort of resonate together, and if we're going to get along with God, we have to become like Him. We don't, He doesn't change His culture. We've got to change our culture.

You know, when I came from England to America, I had to change. Now, I wasn't driving yet, but the moment I got my license, I could not drive the way I would have, well, the way I used to drive, because we did live on a farm, and I drove a tractor on the roads. But, you know, I drove on the other side of the road.

And, but when I came to America, for some reason, they insisted that I drive on the opposite side of the road. Now, that's for your sake, and for my sake, I guess, but you know, they weren't going to change. God is not going to change.

He's got a culture. That culture is set, and He says, I want you to change and become like Me. Now, you can tell a lot about a person by visiting their house.

I, like I said, travel quite a bit, and sometimes I'm billeted in hotels. Sometimes I'm, you know, in people's homes, and sometimes, for instance, recently I was in Missouri, and not a very big church, and the pastor lived in a single wide trailer home, and I was put in the girl's bedroom. She was about, I guess, about 13, 14.

She collected elephants. I mean, that room was full of elephants. I'd never seen so many things with elephants on, sweatshirts, t-shirts, hanging on the wall, tapestries, you know, stuffed elephants over here, and, you know, beanie baby elephants over there, and pictures, and I mean, that place was absolutely full.

There was hardly room for me to literally put my suitcase, but you can tell a lot about a person by just going into their home. You can tell if they're rich or poor. You know, you go into some homes, and it's opulent.

There's wealth everywhere, you know, dripping with chandeliers, and, you know, beautiful grand piano, and, you know, gilt pictures, and magnificent fine art on the wall, and so on, and you, you know, all you've got to do is step in. It doesn't take an idiot, you know, you say, these people are rich. Either that, or they've got an incredible mortgage, which is possibly more like it, but, and you go into some other homes, and they can be not very rich, but very neat.

Everything's perfectly in place. They don't have the best furniture, and so on, but the place is immaculate. You go in another home, and again, there can be a lot of wealth, but it's a sloppy sort of a place.

You know, invariably, I look in the bookshelves when I go in to determine what sort of diet these people have, and, you know, I look sometimes in the bookshelf, and it tells me a lot about the person. I may not have even met the people. Sometimes, you know, they'll leave a key, and the pastor will drive me there, and say, these people be home.

They're going to be your guests for the weekend, and, but they said, make yourself at home until they arrive, and so I've never met these people, but long before I meet them, I know something about them just by being where they dwell, and so I look at the bookcase, and, you know, here's all books on sports, and fishing, and hunting, and so on. A couple of jet skis in the driveway, and a fishing boat there, and fishing rods piled everywhere, and I think, you know, somebody in this family, chances are it's the guy, is into fishing. You know, there's bass mounted in the den, and so on.

Other times, you know, I'll go in, and here's, you know, national geographics, and books from all over the world, and knickknacks that you recognize from different places around the world, and you think, these people are really into travel. You know, there's photographs of themselves standing before the Eiffel Tower, and, you know, Leaning Tower Pizza, or whatever it is, and, you know, you look, and you think, these guys have traveled extensively. You know, sometimes I look, and there's a whole bunch of cookbooks, and I think, boy, this is going to be a great weekend, but all you've got to do is step into somebody's house, and it tells you about that person, doesn't it? It tells you about their likes, and their dislikes.

They may have contemporary furniture, you know, sort of 50s stuff, all chrome, you know, whatever, or it may be just loaded with antiques, and you can tell, again, their sort of style. You look at the photographs, and the pictures, and they've got beautiful oil paintings, and you think, these people are classy sort of people. Then you go in, and you see this modern art.

You know, the only reason that modern artists sign their works is so that you know which way to hang it, and if they took their signature off, you know, it would make sense either way. It shows you where I'm at when it comes to art, but anyway, all you've got to do is step into the house, and the house reveals what sort of a person lives there, and what I want you to do now, I want you to go into the house of God with me, and I want us to turn to the book of Revelation. Don't get afraid of Revelation.

We're only going up to chapter 4, and in Revelation chapter 4, John is invited to come into God's house. The front door opens. That's what the Bible says.

It doesn't use the word front door, but it says that there was a door that stood open in heaven in verse 1, and a voice like the sound of a trumpet that says, come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things, and so here, the door of heaven opens. God's got a front door on his house, and from inside, there's a voice, and the voice says, John, come on in, and John all of a sudden, you know, is sort of caught up into the heavens in the spirit realm, and he comes in to the dwelling place of God, and he says this in verse 2, immediately I was in the spirit, and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and one was sitting on the throne, and notice what John sees about the house of God. The very first observation that John makes when he steps into God's dwelling place, before he notices anything else at all, he becomes conscious of the fact that there is a throne, and the throne is already occupied.

In other words, the usual place that God has found, the word habitation, the place that someone or something is usually found, the place that God has always found, Old Testament, New Testament, he is always found sitting on the throne. Isaiah went into the house of God one day, had a revelation, I saw the Lord high, lifted up, and he was sitting on a throne. A train of his robe filled the temple, and so on, the seraphim cried out one to another, holy, holy, holy, and so on, but we always see God sitting on the throne.

Swear not by heaven, why? It is the throne of God. His throne is established in the heavens. Now what does that mean? That means that if God is going to feel at home in your life and my life, if he's going to reside in this house, and the Bible says God no longer dwells in temples made with hands, he's not interested in buildings anymore, he's interested in residing in his creation, in you and in me.

We are the house of God, the temple of God. Now can you imagine how offensive it would be to invite the king to come in to this house and call it his house, and at the same time deny him the throne? You see, very, very simply, God demands the throne. The throne obviously is the seat of government, the seat of power, the seat of authority, it's the place he reigns from and rules from.

He is in control, he is in charge, he is sovereign, he is the king. And if you and I are going to be the habitation of God, we have to settle this one thing once and for all, who is going to rule my life? Now we dealt with that the other night, or the other morning, basically, but this deals with it again. Have I honestly made him lord and master? Is he king? Does he rule? Is it his way or is it my way? Is it his government or is it my government? Is it his will or is it my will? Who really rules in this house? Can I honestly say that this is the house of God? Can I honestly say that God feels at home here? Now God feels at home when the conditions are what he is used to.

God doesn't feel at home when the conditions are not what he's used to, and he has always been seated on a throne. And you see, you and I will never ever make any spiritual progress until he has the throne. A. W. Tozer says the essence of the Christian life is this, learn to love what God loves and hate what God hates.

And we are learning to love what God loves. God loves being in control. After all, he is not only a king, he is the king of kings.

He is the creator. He is sovereign. He is the only potentate.

And he demands the throne. He demands the throne of your life. He demands the throne of my life.

He wants to rule over our affections, over our finance, over our time, over every other facet of our life. He is wanting his government to control each and every area. There was a song a number of years ago, I haven't heard it for many years, but the part of the verse was, Jesus be the Lord of all the kingdoms of my heart.

All the various kingdoms that make up my life. Again, the kingdom of my affections, my finances, my time, whatever it is. Jesus, I want you to reign and be the Lord of all of those areas of my life.

So that's the first thing. The next thing that John becomes aware of as we go down, in verse 8 he says, there were four living creatures, each one of them having six wings full of eyes around and within, and day and night they do not cease but to say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God the Almighty. John now becomes aware that there is an atmosphere of absolute holiness.

That God dwells in a holy place. Thrice holy is God's way of emphasizing holiness. Again, when we go back, if you study the tabernacle in the Old Testament or the temple, God dwelt in what? The holy of holies.

Why? Because Moses copied what it was like in heaven. God says, this is where I dwell Moses. I dwell in a holy place, the holy of holies.

Now you'll notice something about this holiness. It says that these living creatures were crying out and they do not cease but to say, holy, holy, holy. Let me back up.

It says they are full of eyes around and within and day and night they do not cease but to say, holy, holy, holy. Now notice the type of holiness was not Sunday morning holiness. It was not that on Sunday morning on the Sabbath from 10 o'clock to 12 o'clock they sang, holy, holy, holy.

And then Sunday evening from six to nine they started again, holy, holy, holy. And then Wednesday night from seven to nine again they cried out, holy, holy, holy. No, it was day and night they did not cease.

A consistent holiness. That that's what God is looking for. If we are going to be the dwelling place of God, if we're going to understand the nature of God, the character of God, and we're going to have this intimacy with God.

And brother Tim did a wonderful job yesterday. I guess we'll continue on to today to talk about intimacy with God. And this basically dovetails in, I trust with that that message, that if we are going to be intimate with God we have to understand the ways of God.

And God is a holy God. And he demands holiness in his people. Now we can't attain to that by ourselves obviously, but God gives us the grace and the means whereby we can be partakers of his divine nature.

We can receive his holiness into our life. We can be justified. We can be cleansed.

We can be washed. Thank God for that. And so there is no reason why we cannot have again a holy life.

God has provided it for us. Be holy as I am holy. God does not make demands on us that are impossible to keep.

Now imagine how you would feel if you went into a place that was so filthy and you were sort of a perfectionist. I remember a situation in our own life. My wife is from Michigan, but her father was German.

And my wife is a perfectionist. And we, when we were living in New Zealand, we heard about a place that we could go on vacation. It was a farm holiday.

What happens in New Zealand, it's basically an agricultural country that's three million people, between 50 and 70 million sheep. And so there's sheep everywhere, farms everywhere. And what will happen is that one farmer will have a successful year and he will buy up an adjacent property in order to expand his business, his farm.

And when he buys up the adjacent property, along with the property, of course, comes the old former farmhouse. And if the farmhouse is in good condition, rather than tear it down, he'll either renovate it or leave it as it is. And you can call a bureau and they will tell you where there are these farm holidays where you can go and take your family and just enjoy life on a farmhouse and, you know, run around over the hills and look at the sheep and the cattle and so on and so forth.

Well, we were told about a particular place down this magnificent valley in New Zealand, mountains on either side, and a beautiful stream. And I wanted to get away, do a little bit of fishing and relax. And we were told this was an incredible place.

And so we booked a place and packed the kids in the car and drove there after waiting for many, many weeks, anticipating, you know, just getting away, having a break. We were involved in quite a large church at that particular time. And we pulled into this farmhouse and picked up the key.

The lady says, if you just keep going about another half a mile down the road, first house you come to on the left is the house. Sure enough, mountains on either side, snow-capped mountains, beautiful river. And we pulled in, jumped out of the car and grabbed a few bags and went into the house.

And the house was absolutely filthy. I mean, you cannot imagine a filthier house. Carpet was thread beer.

There were springs coming up through the couch and the chairs. We went into the kitchen. There must have been 150 or 200 bottles, empty alcoholic bottles, beer bottles, vodka, whiskey, the whole works, you know, just lining the walls of this place.

Went into the bedroom and the mattress. I won't even begin to describe to you the condition of the mattress. My wife took one look at it and she said, darling, we are not sleeping there.

That was final. That was the law of the Medes and the Persians. And anyway, we finally made the best of it.

We compromised a little bit, put about three or four blankets down on the bed, on the mattress, put our sheets over it, managed to, you know, get to sleep, thinking to ourselves, well, at least in the morning we're surrounded by all this beautiful scenery, we'll be able to get out and enjoy the place. Woke up in the morning and it was torrential rain. It rained for four solid days, just torrential rain.

And we were not able to go out once. And every time I sat down, I thought I was going to get the plague, you know, it was like, you know, it's just creepy sort of a place. You can imagine what my wife was going through, you know, she was going around the bend, you know, that sort of Mercedes BMW mentality of everything being perfect, you know.

So eventually we decided that this is no place for a vacation. The weather's no good. We're, you know, cooped up in this place.

We might as well go back home. So we packed the kids in the car, the belongings, made an excuse to the lady down the road that because of the weather, basically, which was true, partly true, we didn't want to offend her. We drove back home and I remember walking into the house and the house never looked so good.

I mean, I could eat off the literally, you know, the towels, everything about it was immaculate, the bed, everything was clean, it was spotless. I was able to sit down and I felt at home. I could marry, I could settle, I could keep house, I could dwell there.

It was home and it felt like home. You know, I think God sometimes feels like the first condition. He comes in, he's invited in and all of a sudden it's like, yuck, I don't know if I can stand it around here, you know, because there's all sorts of uncleanness, there's all sorts of things that are undealt with.

Now thank God that initially, you know, the Holy Spirit's job is to sort of highlight those things and say, Tom, Dick, Harry, whatever, you need to clean up that area, this needs to be, you know, fixed and so on and so forth. And there's a period, obviously, where the Bible talks about the washing of regeneration and

the renewing of the Holy Ghost. You can be washed instantly, but the renewing takes time, doesn't it? And the Holy Spirit's job is to renew us, but we need to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

And if we don't, then we begin to grieve him. And so as long as we're cooperating, it doesn't matter how vile and bad your house may be because of drugs and sex and all the other things you've been involved in, thank God that we are his, but then we have to clean up the house. We're under the protection of the blood, just like in the Passover, you know, the blood was put there on the door lintels of the house, the Passover, you know, the death angel passed over that particular house.

But the next thing they had to do, under the protection of the blood, they had to remove all the uncleanness, all the leaven from the house. They had seven days in which they had to make a thorough cleansing of the house. To me, that's a picture of our cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

We're under the protection of the blood, we're saved, but then God says, listen, I want you to take out of all the leaven and I want you to open every cupboard and every cabinet and every area of your life and I want you to make sure there's nothing in there that offends me. And so there has to be that cleansing, but God is looking for a holy place. He dwells in a holy place.

The next thing that we find out, verse nine, and the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him that sits on the throne. So God is glorified. One of the things about heaven, God is glorified.

The Bible says whatever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God. We need to glorify God in everything that we do. We need to constantly be seeking to glorify him.

In other words, to please him. You see, a lot of us bask behind the fact of God's unconditional love and that's wonderful, but there is a higher realm. How many of you know that God can love you and yet not be pleased with you? The book of Malachi says, I've loved you with an everlasting love.

A few verses later he says, but I'm not pleased with you. And there's a higher realm. God is wanting us to be pleasing to him.

Paul says, I have as my ambition, whether at home or abroad, to be pleasing to the Lord. Jesus said, or God said of Jesus, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. Jesus also said, I do only do the things that please the Father.

And we need to seek to glorify God, bring pleasure to him in everything that we do. Paul writing to Timothy, admonishes Timothy. He says, listen, you're a soldier and you need to learn to please the one that enlisted you as a soldier.

And so God is wanting us to bring pleasure to him and thank God for his unconditional love, but that doesn't really say that much about us. See, I've got, when my kids were younger, my wife taught them to make their bed every morning, clean up their room and so on, being a perfectionist. But, and you know, I would walk by their bedroom and I knew that they had knowledge, that part of that knowledge was they should make their bed.

And of course, if the bed was made, I was pleased. If the bed was not made, I was not pleased, but I still loved them. You know, they still got fed when they came home from school.

You know, they were not thrown out or anything like that or discarded or beaten up or anything. There was unconditional love there regardless of what they did, but there was that higher realm where they pleased me because they knew what I was looking for. God again is looking for us to bring him pleasure.

And so it says that we are to glorify him, we are to honor him and we are to give him thanks. Now thanksgiving is a major thing. You know, many of us don't think of it, but the Bible speaks a lot about thanksgiving.

We enter into his courts with thanksgiving. And why? Because God said that's what it's like in heaven. When Moses made the tabernacle and so on, it was a replica, it was a copy of the things of heaven.

And the reason you came in with thanksgiving was because in heaven there is constant thanksgiving. That's what John notices when he's standing there. The door opens and he goes in, sees the throne, sees this atmosphere of holiness.

Everybody's glorifying God, but he sees this constant thanksgiving going up. In everything give thanks. And we need to learn how to cultivate thanksgiving.

It is so important that we are full of thanksgiving. New every morning in your mercies. Great is your faithfulness Lord.

Lord I'm so grateful, I'm so thankful for all that you've done. You've lifted me also out of a horrible pit and out of the miry clay. You've set my feet on a solid rock.

And we begin to thank him. The Bible says in the book of Romans, when they knew God they honored him not as God, neither were they one. Thankful.

And as a result that became the turning point. God ultimately gave them over to a reprobate mind to do all sorts of uncleanness. But it all began by not giving thanks.

The book of Deuteronomy, it says that because you did not serve the Lord your God with thankfulness for the abundance of all things, therefore you will serve your enemies. In other words, some people are in bondage and captivity because they've never learned how to thank God. Now see, when we begin to thank God, it creates an atmosphere that God can dwell in.

Paul and Silas are in prison. And before they go to bed that night, one of them suggests to the other, why don't we sing a few songs? And the other guy says, yeah that sounds good. Wish I had my guitar.

He says, well let's make these chains work. And so you know they get those chains sort of going a little bit. And that was the first stump thing.

And they begin to magnify the Lord. And what happens? All of a sudden God says, that feels like home. You know, that's the atmosphere that I love.

And God invades that place. And for the first time you've got automatic doors. You know, they weren't invited and invented by Americans.

God had them 2,000 years ago. You just step up and the door opens and you walk out and it opens again. And you're outside and you're, you know, on the sidewalk and think, wow that is incredible.

You see, God came because of Thanksgiving. He inhabits the praises of his people. It's the habitation of God.

He inhabits the praises of his people. And so we've got to learn, if you like, to get all these things together in our lives. This is what makes up the culture that God dwells in, the atmosphere, the environment that God dwells in.

And we could go on. Let me just close with this last one in verse 10. And the 24 elders will fall down before him that sits on the throne and will worship him.

Again there is an atmosphere of worship. I don't think we know a lot about worship. It's one of those things that we just automatically link up with praise and we say praise and worship.

They're sort of both synonymous. And I really don't think so. I think worship is something that is so, so incredibly, what's the word? I don't even know.

But something that God longs for more than anything else. The Father seeks those that will worship him. And worship sort of transcends everything else.

The greatest acts of worship in the Word of God were never associated with music. Now don't get offended, all the worship team. There is a law that some of the old expositors use.

It's called the law of first mention. And it means when something is found for the first time in the Word of God, it gives us an indication of how that is used throughout the rest of the Word of God. And the first time that worship is ever mentioned in the Bible, it's mentioned in conjunction with Abraham.

And God says to Abraham, Abraham, I want you to take your son. God been watching Abraham. Here he is, an old man.

He's got this son that he's doting on by the name of Isaac. Isaac, by this time, most people feel, is 13, 17 years of age thereabouts, teenager. And God says, you know, I've noticed the incredible love that you've got for your son.

And I sort of have a bit of a feeling that you may love him more than you love me. And so I'm going to test you, Abraham. Are you prepared to give up your son? Prepared to build an altar and make a sacrifice of your son? And he says, I want you to take him and place him on the altar.

And the Bible says that Abraham rose early in the morning. What a morning to sleep in. First time that worship is ever mentioned.

You see, worship really is the unreserved giving of everything that you have to God, regardless of the cost. And God says, because you have not withheld your son, your only son. You see, worship is giving the very best that you have and not withholding it.

That's why Paul says, present your body, a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable, what, worship. You have not withheld, but God, I had plans for my life. I was going to do this and I was going to do that and so on and so forth.

But Lord, I've been withholding from you. And I'm going to give you today my life. I'll go to the mission field.

I'll get involved in Kaiapha. I'll do this. I'll do that, whatever it is.

There was no music. We have Job, who was the Bill Gates of his day. And all of a sudden, the stock market crashed and he lost, what was it, seven sons and three daughters thereabouts.

That's quite a loss, isn't it? How many of you would like to attend the funeral of seven of your sons and three daughters? The entire family wiped out. And then his wife says to him, of course, he comes down with boils everywhere and he's sitting in the ash heap, somehow trying to get some relief. Maybe it was like talcum powder throwing it over him to take away the itch.

I don't know. And his wife says, if I were you, I'd curse God and die. What does Moses do? He falls on his face and he worships.

No music. He says, God, you're right in all of your ways. And I acknowledge your sovereignty.

I acknowledge again that whatever you do is done in justice and equity. And who am I to question the clay cannot say to the pot of wine. And I bow down before you in total and absolute submission to your lordship.

And I worship you. I don't understand why all this has happened. But Lord, I acknowledge again your sovereignty and I bow before you.

We have David committed sin with Bathsheba and out of that union there comes a child. The child lives but for a few days and suddenly the child is struck with a fever. And David goes and he begins to pray.

Spends seven days praying, fasting, waiting on God to restore the life of that child. There's a knock on the door and David's told that the child is dead. What does David do? Throw a temper tantrum? Say, God, it's not fair.

I was the one that sinned and you said you want to visit the iniquity of the children and the third and fourth generation. Look what you've done. And you know, throw up some sort of a theological argument in the face of God.

No, David gets up, he goes, he washes himself, clothes himself properly, goes back into his room, gets on his face before God and he worships. You see, the word worship in the book of Revelation is tied in so often with one word, the word Amen. It says they worshipped and they said Amen.

And according to Kittel, who is the expert on, you know, sort of Greek words, he says the word Amen means to be in agreement, in harmony, to resonate with, to concur with. And worship is when we concur with God. Our heart resonates with the heart of God.

God, Amen. So be it. You are right.

I don't understand why my child died. I don't understand why this happened. I don't understand why that happened.

But Lord, I worship you. I have no right to question you. You're infinite.

You're sovereign. You're God. I'm finite.

And so worship, again, is the unreserved giving of everything we have to God. God's looking for worshipers. The Father seeks those that will worship him.

Around the throne of God, again, there is constant worship going on. God, you are always right. Whatever you ask, whatever you demand, whatever happens, God, you are sovereign in all your ways.

You're just and you're righteous in all your ways. And I worship you, Lord. Well, I think our time is almost gone.

You see, that's the atmosphere that God dwells in. That's what God is used to 24 hours a day. Right now, as we sit here, that's what's going on in heaven.

And it has been for all the millenniums of the past and all the millenniums in the future. Nothing ever changes in that sense. He's always on the throne.

It's always a place of holiness. It's always a place filled with praise and thanksgiving. It's always a place of worship.

It's always a place where he alone is honored, where he alone is glorified, where again the crowns are taken and they're cast down, that place of humility, where we bow before him again in humility and recognize him for who he is. And you can study this chapter if you like, and I'm sure that God will give you more. Let me just close with a little story here in the book of Genesis, in Genesis chapter 8. And in Genesis chapter 8, there is a story that we're all familiar with, a story of Noah.

And the 40 days have ended and Noah is wondering whether it is safe to open the door of the ark and go outside. And in verse 7, it says, he sent out a raven and it flew here and there until the waters had dried up from the earth. And he sent out a dove to see if the water was abated for the face of the land.

Now notice, first of all, he releases a raven and the raven flew here and there, meaning the raven settled here. It settled there because a raven is an unclean bird. And a raven feels at home wherever it is.

It doesn't matter what the environment is, whether it's good or bad, the raven is happy. It doesn't matter if it's a carcass that is bloated and full of maggots or whatever, the raven will settle there and peck away, just be as happy there as he will anywhere else. And so it flew here and there and Noah is not able to determine whether the waters have abated or settled.

And so he releases a dove and it says in verse 9, but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot. And so she returned to the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and he took her and he brought her into the ark to himself.

He waited seven days, again he sent the dove from the ark and the dove came to him towards evening and behold in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf and Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth. Notice that when he released the dove, the Bible says the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot and so she returned. And the dove obviously typifies the Holy Spirit in the Word of God and the Holy Spirit will not settle where there is uncleanness.

Why? Because he is the Holy Spirit. And so he had to return, whereas the raven is at home anywhere. And I think there we have a beautiful picture of God's desire again to find a resting place in your life and my life because it's been prepared for him.

Moses prepare me a tabernacle, prepare me a sanctuary. The word sanctuary incidentally means a clean place, a sanctified place. And God is looking for a clean place today.

He's looking for a place where he can settle, not just momentarily. Thank God for the sort of power encounters that we have. I'm down at Brownsville and you know there night after night when I'm at home I'm praying for people and there's you know people all over the floor and you know down and out for the count sort of thing and thank God for that.

But you know so often they're there the next week and the next week and the same ones and the Bible school students we have over a thousand in the Bible school and you know they line up night after night in front of you wanting to get touched and somebody else wanting to get touched and you know every single night they're running around they chase you around wanting a zap and so on. And as wonderful as that is God wants to abide with us. We will come and we will make our abode a permanent thing.

And these are the conditions if God's going to make his abode, if he's going to settle. He's wanting the throne, he's wanting a holy place, he's wanting thanksgiving, he's wanting to be honored and glorified, he's wanting worship. Let's just take a moment as we close and we still have just a few minutes.

Let's ask the Holy Spirit right now just to make us that dwelling place. There was a song a number of years ago, Lord prepare me a habitation. God wants us to become his dwelling place, his habitation.

And as he said to Moses, see to it Moses that you make it according to the pattern. He would say the same thing to you and I, David, Mary, Tom, Susan. Make it according to the pattern, the pattern that you find in my word.

Doesn't matter what others are doing, doesn't matter the compromise that others are allowing in their lives, my standard never changes. Maybe some of you need to ask for washing and cleansing. Some of you need to begin to change the way you're living.

This is not a word that I want to come across in any negative way. I want it to be that which will become such a joy to you to know that you can walk with him. You can have that intimate relationship with him.

You can know him as a friend that stays closer than a brother. He wants to abide with you, the king of kings and the lord of lords, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the one that sits above the vaults of the earth, reduces rulers to nothing, sets up kings and kingdoms. He wants to be your friend.

No longer do I call you servants, he said, but I want to call you friend. Again, two can't walk together unless they're in agreement. Let's align ourselves today with the will of God.

Thank God that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses whatever needs to be cleansed. There's only one solvent to take out the stain of sin. It's the blood of Jesus Christ and it's available right now.

The grace of God is here, the mercy of God. Doesn't matter how bad it is, how deep the stain, maybe something you've never shared with anybody. I could tell you stories that would horrify you, things that people have done, abuses, sexual abuse, bestiality, all the other things that I've heard confessed.

But you know the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses from every single sin. It's the only reason that Jesus Christ came. He didn't come for the righteous.

He came for the unrighteous. He came for the sinner. And he's come this morning again to set you free.

He's come to release you from whatever it is that is holding your life, because he wants to establish his dwelling place within you this morning. Just invite him to come. There's a worship team, if they would come and maybe just lead us.

Let's just take two minutes and really just worship the Lord. And as we raise our hands in worship, let's just invite him to come. Say, Lord, I want you to come, not just to touch me, but to abide in me.

I want to take you home with me. After this weekend, after my friends leave and we separate, I want to know, Lord, that you abide, that your abiding presence is with me. So let's just stand quietly to our feet and reach out to him in prayer and invite him to come.

If you need cleansing, if you need somebody to pray with you or help you, we have ones here that will be glad to pray with you. If you need to come forward, just come forward. But otherwise, let's just touch him.

Reach out and touch the Lord and allow him to minister to you. Amen. Glory, glory, glory to the Lamb.

Glory, glory, glory to the Lamb. For he is glorious and worthy to be praised, the Lamb upon the throne. And all to Him we lift our voice in praise, the Lamb upon the throne.

Glory, glory, glory to the Lamb. Glory, glory, glory to the Lamb. For he is glorious and worthy to be praised, the Lamb upon the throne.

For he is glorious and worthy to be praised, the Lamb upon the throne. For he is glorious. For he is glorious and worthy to be praised, the Lamb upon the throne.

And all to Him we lift our voice in praise, the Lamb upon the throne.

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