

# The Presence of God - Part 2

by David Ravenhill

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of preparing a place for the presence of God, which involves consecration, preparation, and a willingness to lay aside old robes and put on new ones of purity and righteousness.*

**Duration:** 22:39

**Scripture:** Exodus 15:11, 2 Samuel 6:3, 2 Samuel 7:3, 1 Chronicles 16:1, Psalm 86:11, Matthew 6:33, Mark 6:20

**Topics:** "Divine Discipline", "Fear Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the anger and setbacks that the people of God are experiencing. He believes that God is using these challenges to discipline and correct the church. The speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking God and doing things according to the divine order. He encourages the church to rely on God's help and to allow Him to work with them. The sermon also highlights the awe and fear of God, and how David's perspective shifted when he encountered the fear of God.

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## Transcript

You see, that was the place that later became the house of God. This is the place that Solomon built that magnificent temple to God. It was also the place, according to this verse, where Abraham offered up Isaac.

Again, the place of testing, the place of sacrifice, the place of separation. You see, I believe again that the church is at the threshing floor right now. God is asking us to separate ourselves.

That's what this conference is all about. It's about holiness. It's about purity.

It's about righteousness, integrity. It's about doing things according to God's way of doing things. And there is a separation, I believe, that is coming in the house of God.

I think also we can learn from this lesson of David that God is going to deal very severely with the realm of pride. Again, we've had the understanding, you know, adultery and homosexuality and all the sins of the flesh, they're so terrible. And we've seen that, of course, manifest in Christian leaders in the last couple of years in this nation.

But the next thing that God is going to deal with, I believe, and deal very severely with is the area of pride because pride is self-sufficiency. Pride is saying, God, I don't need you. Pride is relying, again, upon our own methodology, relying upon our own strength and our own sufficiency.

And God says, I'm not going to allow that to happen. No flesh is going to glory in My presence. And if we're to have the presence of God, there'll be no flesh there.

And I think Paul Cain has said very aptly that this next generation that God is going to raise up is going to be a faceless generation. Individuals, again, that have one supreme longing, and that's that Jesus Christ might be exalted in their lives. They're not drawing attention to themselves.

They're not building empires with their own name on it. But the men that have one supreme longing, and that's that the Lord Jesus Christ, again, may be exalted. And so David, again, has a very severe judgment of God resting upon him because of his methods.

And Uzzah, again, simply because he put forth his hand immediately is destroyed. It's interesting that the name Uzzah means strength. It means strength.

There's a lot of Uzzahs, aren't there? We're trying to do things in our own strength. Uzzah thought, listen, I'll give God my strength, my ability. I'll help Him out.

I'll do it my way. And God says, listen, I don't need your help. It's amazing that on that particular, in this particular occasion that the Philistines had the mind of God a lot better than David.

Remember, they said, listen, if this is really of God, if this God is the God that is the real God, then all we've got to do is make a new cart, put the Ark of God on it, put some cows in front of it, and it doesn't need any leadership whatsoever. If this is God, it will go by itself in the right direction. Boy, the church needs to learn that lesson.

And yet David comes along and says, listen, if this is God, we'll help Him out. We'll drive the cart. Interesting that the Hebrew word where it says as a drove the cart, it means to pent, or to exert energy.

To pent because of the exertion of energy. I think that's the way in which it is in the Hebrew. In other words, he was penting, he was straining, he was using all his strength, all his resources, all his energy, trying to accomplish the purpose of God.

And how many of us have gone through that? We got through the end of the day and we've been exhausted. Instead of saying, God, what's Your program? I was impressed on Sunday morning that John Wimber was with us there in Kansas City and he called a number of people forward that had back problems. I guess maybe 15 individuals that came forward.

And as the presence of God began to settle on them, one of our men was ready to sort of help God out a little bit. And I'm sure again that his motives were right. I don't question that.

But he was going to, you know, just go and pray for somebody. I guess they were shaking a little bit under the power of God. And John was standing there.

He says, hey, leave it alone. Just leave them alone. God is wanting to get the glory out of this.

In other words, he says, listen, the cart is able to look after itself, so to speak, at least in the terminology of the Philistines. We need to learn, don't we, to take our hands off and to say, God, have Your way. God, You take control of this situation.

But as I again decided, I'll give God my strength and my energy and I'll help him out a little bit. Interesting, again, if you're following in my notes, I'm not doing a very good job of keeping you on track, but in H there, that Uzzah was one of Abinadab's sons. And it's obvious that he was born while the ark of God was in his father's house.

After all, they'd been there for 60 years. He'd been raised accustomed to, if you like, seeing the ark of God, maybe having to bump up against it as he made his way through the house. You know, going round it, maybe occasionally showing his friends.

And the Bible says in 2 Samuel 6, no, sorry, 2 Samuel 6 and verse 3, or verse 7, that God struck him for his irreverence. God struck him for his irreverence. I'm not sure how accurate that rendering is from the Hebrew.

But I think we have had a tremendous irreverence for the house of God. I think there are two extremes. One is that we can become so sort of stiff and starchy.

The other is that we can become so loose. And somehow there is a balance. I believe we need to understand the moods of the Spirit of God.

There are times of celebration. There are times when the Spirit of God wants to come in stillness and quietness. He wants to begin to brood as He did in the beginning.

He wants to bring conviction of sin. And many times there's a tendency to sort of in times like that to try and bring it into celebration. We need to understand that balance.

There are times of reverence. There are times when we need to simply be on our faces before Him and wait in His presence. There are other times, if you like, where we can kick up our heels and enjoy the presence of God.

After all, in His presence is fullness of joy. But again, there is a divine sort of tension there between those two extremes that we need to ask the Spirit of God to give us wisdom in and understanding in. David's frustration, number six.

It says David was angry with God. Again, if you're in 1 Chronicles chapter 13. First of all, you've got God who's angry in verse 10.

The anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah. And then you've got David's anger in verse 12. And David was afraid of God that day.

Sorry, no, verse 11. And David became angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah. You see, David did not fully understand what was going on.

Again, his motivation was right. His desires were genuine. They were pure.

He wanted to bring back the presence of God. Sixty years in which he had been missing from the house of God, from the center of Israel's worship. And all of a sudden, in the midst of this time of bringing it back,

suddenly an individual is destroyed.

And David is angry with God. I looked up the Hebrew word there. It means to glow.

It means to blaze. I mean, David was not just a little frustrated. David was red hot with anger.

Something whelmed up within him. There was a blaze that came over him. That's how frustrated David was.

What on earth is God doing? And I believe that the church is at that stage again where because of the shakings that are going on, there's an anger, if you like, in the people of God. What's happening? Where are we going? What is God doing? Why is this happening? It seems to be such a setback, doesn't it? Again, to have men that are broadcast over television night after night after night after night. You know, just as the church is beginning to sort of emerge into a good realm, so to speak.

And we think, listen, we're losing ground. There's an anger that rises in the people of God. But you know, something good came out of it.

You see, I believe that God is saying this to David, and I believe He's saying this to the church, that those that He loves, He chastens. I believe He's saying to the church, listen, I cannot let you go on the way you've been going on. You have enjoyed My presence.

I've permitted My presence for a period of time to rest upon the sort of the cart mentality. But I'm not going to let you get by any longer. This is the threshing floor.

This is where there's coming a stop, if you like, in My divine plans. And notice what David learned from it. In verse 12, it says David was afraid of God that day.

The literal translation according to Young's translation, it says David feareth God on that day. David feareth God on that day. What did it produce? It produced the fear of God.

I believe that if there's one thing that certainly I have learned from the others, those, if you like, that have been destroyed, it's a new fear of God. The way in which we handle our finances, the way in which we build our programs, and so on and so forth, I believe it's been beneficial or should have been if we are learning our lesson that God is not going to permit those things any longer, that the fear of God, which is to hate evil, to hate that lack of integrity, those wrong motivations and so on, all of a sudden David had the realization, listen, I have not feared you the way I should. It's the same verse that David uses there in Psalm 86 where he says, Unite my heart to fear thy name.

It's the same verse that is used there in Exodus 15 and verse 11. Who is likened to the glorious in holiness, fearful in praises. You know, I've heard many seminars on praise and worship, and I am not a sort of a praise and worship leader as my parents and anybody at Kansas City can vouch for me.

Somebody said I am a prison singer behind a few bars and missing the key. And so I don't know too much about music. But in all the seminars I've sat through, I've never once heard a message on fearful in praises, fearful in praises.

I've heard people expound all the Greek words to spin around, to throw out the hand, you know, to dance violently and so on and so forth and, you know, try and get that whole sort of orchestration going, that sort of music of tremendous liberty and freedom and so on. I've never yet once heard anybody talk about

fearful in praises. You see, I believe there is a dimension coming in our praise and our worship where the fear of God is going to come down.

We're going to end up on our faces, not end up dancing around. And again, I'm not opposed to that because I believe the Bible teaches that very clearly. But you see, I believe there are two dimensions.

I believe there's times when the awe of God comes into the sanctuary. I believe there are times when we almost tremble because of the majesty of God. And that's what it talks about here.

Suddenly, David is struck by the fear of God. And he sees God in a whole new light. You see, it says before that, that David was playing before the Lord.

It literally means to play. I mean, he was having a great time. And God permitted it, but then he says, listen, David, because of my love for you, I cannot permit you to go on any longer.

And I believe God is saying to the church, listen, because of My love for you, I've allowed you for a period of time to know My presence. But now I'm beginning to adjust things. Now because of My Father's heart, I'm beginning to chasten the church of Jesus Christ.

You see, I believe we're in a corporate chastening right now. And we need to learn what God is saying. We need to ask the right questions.

And David's question was, in verse 12, how can I bring the ark of God home to me? You see, it raised a question. Lord, how do I do it? He should have asked that at the beginning. He never did.

He simply went to his leaders and he says, isn't it a great idea? How do you feel about it? How do you feel about it? You feel okay? You feel okay? Okay, let's do it. But all of a sudden, David says, listen, God, how do I do it? How do I bring back Your presence? I love the way in which he says this because he says, how can I bring the presence of God home to me? You see, David is not speaking simply about bringing the presence of God back into the corporate life of Israel. He's saying, how can I know Your presence, Lord? Remember, David many times asks those sort of questions.

Lord, who can abide in Your tent? Who can stand up and dwell where You dwell? Who can dwell in Your holy hill? And then he answers the question. He either has clean hands and a pure heart and so on and so forth. And so he's asking the question, how, Lord, how do I bring back the presence of God? It says that David had three months to think about it.

Verse 14, the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months and the Lord blessed the family of Obed-Edom with all that he had. Three months in which David has time to reflect. Three months in which he questions God and seeks to know the mind of God.

And in chapter 15, in verse 1, it says David built for himself houses in the city of David and he prepared a place for the ark of God and he pitched a tent for it. You'll notice that I think it's three or four times in this particular chapter that it says David prepared a place for it. Verse 3, the place which he had prepared for it.

Verse 12, to the place that I have prepared for it. Chapter 16, verse 1, which David pitched for it or again, which he prepared for it. You see, the one mistake that David made, he failed to prepare a place for the presence of God.

Imagine, if you will, with me, what would have happened if David had been successful. Let's assume that Uzzah never put forth his hand. Let's assume that the oxen never unsteadied the ark.

Let's assume that David made it all the way back to Zion. And let's assume when he got there, all of a sudden he thought, my goodness, what am I going to do with this thing? There was nothing prepared. You see, I think a lot of us are so anxious for the presence of God that if the presence of God came, there's nothing to contain it.

You see, one of the things that God is saying today, He's looking for a wineskin that will hold, if you like, the presence of God. And I believe what God is doing today in the church of Jesus Christ, He's putting together a wineskin. We have to prepare a place for it.

God is not going to put new wine into an old wineskin. He's looking for a new wineskin, a new order. We don't have time, but I can say this about a wineskin, that a wineskin is only possible after something dies.

You see, these days, of course, we've got plastic bottles that contain everything from shampoo to perfume to perfume, you name it. In those days, things, you know, were either put in earthenware jars, but the wine was put in a wineskin. Not a wine bottle, but a wineskin.

And a wineskin came from an animal that had to be killed. Something had to die. I believe God is putting, if you like, putting to death some of the things that you and I cherish in order to produce a wineskin that can contain the wine of His Spirit.

And so David had to prepare a place. David also had to prepare, again, as we draw this to a close, there had to be a prepared people. It says in verse 12, And you are the heads of the father's household, of the Levites, chapter 15.

Consecrate yourselves, both you and your relatives, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel to the place that I have prepared for it. Notice that they had to be a consecrated people. Part of that consecration process was that the priests had to first of all go in.

They had to wash themselves. They had to lay aside their old garments. They had to put on those garments of glory and beauty.

Part of that consecration again was that the blood was applied to their ear, to their thumb, to their foot, and so on. And David said, Listen, these men are not consecrated. Even though they're the right men, they're not consecrated men.

I believe what this conference is all about is to try and bring about an awareness of the fact that God is looking for consecrated men and women. Men and women, again, that are willing to lay aside their old robes, put on the robes of glory and beauty, the robes of purity and righteousness and holiness. Remember that they had a turban, if you like, that said holiness to the Lord over their minds.

And then we find that David himself was not properly prepared. In verse 27, And David was clothed with a robe, a fine linen, with all the Levites who were carrying the ark, the singers and Chenaniah, the leader of the singers with the singers. And David also wore an ephod of linen.

You see, we have no record of David being properly clothed in this other portion of Scripture in chapter 13. And so David takes time. There's one portion of Scripture there where it says we did not seek Him

according to the due order.

I think maybe that's in the account in 1 Samuel. I don't have time to turn to it right now. But David says, listen, we failed to seek God according to the proper order, the proper way of doing things.

And as a result of not seeking Him, therefore everything went wrong. But David now, because of this time, these three months, he begins to seek God. He begins to wait upon God.

He begins to inquire of God. And God says you need men that are consecrated. You yourself need to be clothed in the proper garments.

You need to carry it instead of transporting it on a board and so on. You need to prepare a place for it. And David prepares a place for it.

And then it says, just as we close, in verse 26, and it came about because God was helping the Levites who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant to the Lord, that they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. I love that phrase there in verse 26. It came about because God was helping.

You see, I believe when we do things according to the right order, God helps us. It says in Mark chapter 16, verse 20, the Lord was working with them. Isn't it time that we allowed God to work with us? Isn't it time that we began to seek Him and wait upon Him? Isn't it time that we did things according to the divine order and say, God, we need You.

I'm tired of doing things in my own strength. I'm tired of exerting all this energy that causes me to pant like others. Lord, I long that You would have Your divine approval on what I do.

Father, I long to be clothed again in Your holiness and Your purity and Your righteousness. Lord, I long for Your presence. I want to be a people and part of a people that prepare a place for the presence of God.

Let's close in prayer. Father, we pray right now by Your Holy Spirit, You would take, Lord, the principles of Your Word. Father, seal them in our hearts.

Father, we ask that even this morning, Lord, the birds of the air would not come and take away that which has been sown by Your Spirit. Lord, we ask that in the weeks and the months and even the years to come that, Father, we would not rely upon man's methods. Father, give us one cry and that's, Lord, how do we do it? Lord, do we want to consult books? Do we want to consult men? But, Father, we'd be on our faces before You saying, Lord, teach us Your ways.

Give us divine revelation. Give us divine understanding. Father, we long that You would come and work with us.

Father, we're tired of toiling all night and catching nothing. Lord, we long at Your bidding to let down the nets, to bring in that last great harvest of souls. Father, bring us that place where we can carry Your anointing.

Again, Lord, we ask for that new wineskin. Teach us, Lord, how to build it, how to make it, how to construct it according to Your divine pattern. And then, Lord, fill it with Your wine.

Lord, we think of that wedding at Cana of Galilee where the wine gave out. And, Father, we're at that place where the wine has gone, where, Lord, we're empty, but, Lord, we're thirsty. We thank You, Lord, You

saved the good wine until the end.

And, Lord, we believe that, Lord, even as we are at the end of this particular dispensation, Lord, even as the wine in the natural and the spiritual seems to be running out, we thank You, Lord, there's still the best wine. And, Lord, we wait for that. We long for that.

We ask You, Lord, come fill the wineskins of Your making, we pray, of Your design, that, Lord, You and You alone would be glorified. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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