

## WHY? By Clark Slone

I want to present some questions and some advice. Not that I am an expert on this subject but am just a seeker and 'hoper' that we will find what we need before it is too late for many.

We have talked in the past of the loss of the awesome aspect of God and of our inner being lacking what is necessary to fill us in the presence of a Mighty and All Powerful God.

Many ask the question, "Why is it we don't have His manifest presence in our meetings? Why don't we feel His Mighty Power and see the manifestations of it? Why is He not bringing in the lost to our meetings to be overwhelmed by His presence and crying out in conviction of their sins? Or even worse why do we feel bored with our faith and a dryness that goes even to our spiritual bones? Why must we force ourselves to attend meetings and deep down prefer to be somewhere else?" ...and many times we are. Why does the attraction of the world seem more attractive than that of the Presence of God? Why does God seem far away and what we know of His presence are just memories of another time in the past? Why does our daily pressures and thoughts cloud out the importance of His presence? Why do our words seem empty and of no interest to a dying world? Why would we search for excuses not to be in the presence of others that are seeking God's presence? Why at times do we not even care and apathy to God is a reality even though we won't admit it? Are any of these things YOU?

These are questions many are asking today in the church. And with reason because if God is a loving God who desires our fellowship and if He truly is looking for some way to communicate and manifest His love in the Church and our private lives why don't we see or feel it? If He truly loves and wants to fill us with His satisfying presence why doesn't He do it? Must we force Him in some way by having longer meetings and more of them? I don't think so. Some Churches are already having so many meetings that you need ten days in a week to go to all of them. I don't think more meetings make better meetings. I know, first-hand, that more activity is not the answer. In some churches the leadership is so busy with their own programs that just paying them a visit or doing some thing out of their program is impossible. For some, just finding time for personal fellowship with other believers is a real problem. Is God moving more because of all this activity? Are cities being truly changed and society moving for the better because of all this movement? Are our children getting more sanctified in their conduct and dress? Are our souls and lives being reanimated and revived in the freshness of His being? It doesn't seem that way. Why? Are we missing it in some way? What is the problem? I don't have all the answers but I have some thoughts and feelings and they are not just mine but of others I have read and talked to on this subject.

Moses makes it very clear what will take away the Presence of God. Isaiah 59:2... Sin separates us from intimacy with God. He is not talking to the heathen here in this verse but to us. It is easy to just say the word 'sin' but let us look deeper why there would be sin in us to block His intimacy with us. We are to draw near to God. This begins with a heart that fears and loves God more than anything else. But to define fear lets look at the heart's attitude.

A good example is Nabab and Abihu, they were the sons of Aaron. They had been taught to minister to the Lord and stand in the gap for the people of God. They were authorized to come near His presence. After they did what they were supposed to, God's presence filled the tabernacle. But this was short lived as in Lev.10:1 they mixed the incense the way they wanted to. It was incense of their own choosing. They went before God the way they felt was right and not the way God desired. This was profane fire in the worship of God. Profane means: Showing disrespect for sacred things or being irreverent. They treated a Holy thing as common. They were careless in what was holy. They had become too familiar with God's Presence. Death, in the very presence of God, was their judgment. Aaron and his family were not even allowed to mourn their death or they would be killed also.

What if God did that today? In a sense He does but instead of physical death it is spiritual death and dryness amongst. He simply doesn't manifest Himself and we are left lacking because of the way we enter His presence. God takes it very seriously how we come before Him. When there is strife, contention, spiritual pride, vanity, selfishness, division and apathy... we suffer. That is why so many times it is tiring to even attempt to come together and praise God. If many were sincere they would admit we would rather do something else. Finding an excuse is very easy when spiritual hardness has set in. Must this be the spiritual reality of our life? I do not feel it is God's desire that any live out their spiritual life this way. True Christianity is a dynamic life of being bathed in God's Presence and knowing the touch of His Hand and His loving and affectionate Presence in moments of grief and joy. For us to be able to reach out in prayer and touch His face as He comes to our side is essential. For His Holy Power and Energy to motivate and move us through our days is so much needed. Wouldn't you agree? He desires His voice to be heard by those who love Him and that it be a part of our daily lives. Are these Christian fundamentals a part of our life and if they are not then why not?

When God appeared to the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai they could not stand in His presence. Why? They lacked the fear of the Lord. God did not want them to be scared of Him but to fear Him. In other words stand in awe and respect at His Glory. In 1 John 4:18 He wanted them to have a sincere love for Him. Note: Moses said, "When God's Presence comes that His fear may be before you, so that you sin not". 2 Cor.7:1: Paul didn't say work your salvation out in the love of God but in fear.

Brother John Bevere who also contributed to this article visited one of the most famous TV evangelists in America in prison. He had been convicted of fraud. He was also exposed as an adulterer. He had been used mightily in ministry and was known all over the world. Brother John asked him when did he stop loving Jesus and did these terrible things. He answered without hesitation. I didn't. John was puzzled and asked what about the fraud and adultery. He stated, "John, I loved the Lord all the way through it but I didn't fear Him. Many love Jesus but they don't fear Him as Supreme Lord. This is a problem greater than many realize".

The man who is scared of God is much different than the man who fears Him. The man who fears Him has nothing to hide. He puts God's desires above all else. He realizes there is nothing more fulfilling than to obey God. Ps.25:14 This makes our faith real and dynamic and will bring a newness to our fellowship with Him when we are meeting together.

Ps.89:7 You will never find God manifesting Himself in a place where He is not revered. He will not come near or dwell in an environment where He is not held in the most utmost honor, esteem and respect. It doesn't matter how good the singing or worship is. It doesn't matter how good is the teaching or preaching. The praying can be real spiritual but if God is not feared He will not come near or reveal Himself. Those who are sensitive to the spirit this can be felt profoundly. (James 4: 8-9 ) What is James saying when he says 'sinners'. He is not speaking only to the lost but to the Church. In this case, in Greek the word means "those missing the mark". He continues by saying...' to purify your hearts you double-minded'. He is getting to the root of the problem of why the believer is missing the mark and God's wonderful Presence is not moving our soul and inner being towards Heaven and Himself.

No one can draw near by holding Him in light esteem or regarding His Presence as common. He must be held in reverence by all present. There must be the understanding that things must be right in His sight and we have repented and purged yourself from the tendencies that so easily come into our midst.

Formalism is the fruit of the lack of spontaneity to His Presence. Why? Because we don't really feel His Presence and life changing power we substitute it with repetitive acts that seem spiritual but lack life.

Could this be our problem? When we meet together in His Name are there things that shouldn't be, attitudes and feelings that aren't dealt with in our hearts, and roots of bitterness over lack forgiveness. Could there be feelings of superiority and spiritual pride because of a large fellowship or dynamic speaker? Are we making excuses for division and the lack of desire to love other brethren in other Fellowships? Or maybe we don't even feel the others are really saved as they don't do as we do or have our same forms of worship.

And maybe the greatest problem is simply we come together and because we have done it so many times, it has become common. His presence in our midst has become so normal and the songs so frequent that we only think of what is said but we feel little or nothing. We go out of our meetings the way we came in. We didn't get mad, sad or glad. In other words His Presence had no effect and we left unchanged by His Presence. The worse thing is we didn't even expect anything. To walk in His Presence is to know, feel and experience His knowledge and power. We should be amazed, daily, at what He has done and is doing around us. It is to be motivated by the inner moving of the Holy Spirit and to live in this realm of constant spiritual renewal because God is right there by our side. How could one ever feel bored or apathetic in His Holy Presence? But the sad fact is many simply do not feel it and after a long period even forget the beauty of it. This is why many fall away and do not even know they have fallen as they just follow the program and live out their days in a spiritual vacuum.

Could God truly call us His friend as He did Abraham? "But that was Abraham, not me", we say. Didn't Jesus say, "Friend your sins are forgiven", after the man was lowered through the roof? When did he become His friend? When his sins were forgiven! Jesus calls Lazarus a friend. Does Jesus want to be our friend? One with whom we can share our most intimate problems and have faith that they will be cherished as true secrets? One who truly understands us as we have an intimate relationship with Him? A real friend! This can be a reality and just as we enjoy being with our earthly friends we can develop a real friendship with our Savior and enjoy His Presence every waking hour of the day. God has desired this since Adam fell and still does. He is waiting for us to respond to Him. He wants it more than we do.

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