

Abiding in God's Presence

The focal point of the early Pentecostal revival, which began in 1906, was the Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. Continuous meetings were held there every day for a period of three years beginning in mid-April, 1906. This mission on Azusa Street published the well-known newspaper, The Apostolic Faith, which was one of the primary means by which news of the revival was spread, beginning with the first issue, published in September of 1906. The Apostolic Faith contains many accounts of shaking, falling, speechlessness, drunkenness in the Spirit, and Holy laughter that took place during the early Pentecostal revival at Azusa Street and elsewhere during the first few years of the revival.

Recently, we have been experiencing "noticeable manifestations of God's presence." During this unique spiritual activity, God draws aside one or two layers of the protective curtain between Him and us. This in turn exposes our frailty to the awesome energies of His divine being. *"And the priests could not perform their duties because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled His temple" (1 Kings 8:11).* *"The temple of the Lord was filled with a cloud, and the priests could not perform their duties because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God" (2 Chronicles 5:13).* God's divine presence often causes powerful stimulus to operate in the physical, mental and emotional realm collectively. And if it wasn't for the blood of Jesus none of us could survive in His presence. In **Leviticus 16:2** the Lord said to Moses, *"Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place, behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will surely die, because I will appear in the cloud [the glory] over the atonement cover."*

God's presence also brings about holiness, purity and sanctification (**Exodus 29:43**). Therefore, as God's presence increases we can expect a breakthrough in the area of holiness. His divine glory will accelerate many of the holy attributes that have been given to believers by the Spirit that dwells in them. Scripture confirms this. **2 Corinthians 3:18** says, *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the Glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as **by the Spirit of the Lord.**"*

Too many of believers are "veiled" when it comes to God's divine presence. But the veil has been taken away in Christ! They are only veiled because they choose not to see. As we become preoccupied with the glory of the risen, ascended, exalted Jesus Christ, we will be transformed into the very same image. Here, in a word, is the secret of Christian holiness – occupation with Christ. Not by occupation with self that brings about deception. Not by occupation with others that brings disappointment but by occupation with the glory of the Lord. Only this way can we become more and more like Him – from glory to glory!

Notice, it's the ever-increasing glory (presence of God) that makes us more like Him. There is no doubt that God's divine presence is on the increase here at Cornerstone. So as He reveals Himself in greater and greater measure, the 'brightness and splendour' of God in and through us (you and me) must also increase. Are you ready and willing to live more and more in the presence of God? What an awesome place to dwell; in the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty.

In the light of all that God is doing in our midst, where does your earnest expectation presently lie?

In other words, what are you truly hoping for right now?' You might be hoping for financial prosperity, physical healing, or freedom from fear and anxiety and all this expectancy is very beneficial. However, there is something far more powerful to fix your hope upon. Yes, there is something so mighty that it exceeds anything that you may ask, think or imagine. It is a life so full of God's presence that darkness of every kind is instantly dispelled. It's abiding in the divine glow that radiates from the abundant life that God intends for you!

In Acts 5 we find the wonderful account of Peter walking down the street and his very shadow healing people. I don't believe it was Peter's shadow healing people. After all, there is no record of anything to do with darkness ever healing anyone. However, the glory of God was pouring out of him in such measure that it probably cast shadows and people were getting

healed. The sphere of fiery light that encompassed Peter must have been the manifested presence of God Himself – personifying Jehovah Rapha!

In the New Testament, the Greek word 'thoxa' appears, and it is used primarily of the nature and acts of God in self-manifestation. That is, what He essentially is and does, as exhibited in whatever way He chooses to reveal Himself. For instance, when His grace and mighty power were evidenced, this constituted His 'thoxa'. It also denotes a supernatural demonstration of the perfection of His character, and especially His righteousness. Therefore, 'thoxa' refers to the very essence of God – the divine power that makes Him God Almighty! What God essentially is and does – in whatever and whichever may He chooses to reveal Himself – is His glory. Also, anything that God does, which is worthy of praise, is 'thoxa'.

Turn with me now to **Colossians 1** and let's read verses 26 to 29 together...

Can you grasp what this passage of scripture it actually saying? It is declaring that the anointing of Jesus Himself, which is in essence the very same operative power that raised Him from the dead, is present and residing in each of us. In verse 29, Paul reveals that in his ministry he was totally dependant on that mighty power which was effectively operating in him. And what's more, it was this energising power that caused positive change in others and helped make them perfect or complete in Christ Jesus.

The fullness of Christ (the hope of glory – *the hope of God's abiding presence*) is in us! Therefore, the abiding presence of God should be gushing out of these earthen vessels in abundance. What's more, the grandeur, excellent and superior power of God that's present and abiding IN US is inexhaustible. It is always readily and available to meet every need – in every situation!

But there is one requirement... As His presence abides in you, your presence must abide in Him!