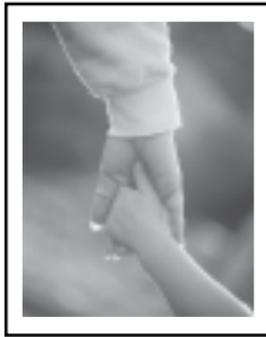


DISCOVERING
GOD'S



PRESENCE

JOY THOMAS

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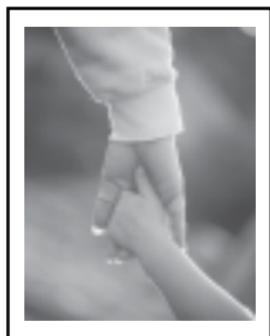
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**A
CONSUMING
HUNGER
FOR THE LORD**



The Willingness to Change

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved”.
(Jeremiah 8:20)

Beloved brethren, there are specific seasons and workings of God in the earth. We need to be available to God in a special way during those times. We must make use of every opportunity that the Lord provides to grow in His grace. We need to maintain a hunger for the Lord at all times, but particularly so in the seasons of God. If we realize this, we shall not hesitate to position and prepare ourselves for what the Holy Spirit is doing and wants to do in our lives, in the present hour in God’s purpose!

Moses cried out, “Lord, I will not let you go unless you show me your glory.” He had an overwhelming hunger for the Lord. When there is a true hunger for His person we shall surely experience the working of His hand in a new and exceptional way. When we encounter Him in our lives, we shall, by no means, be the same person we were before we met Him. There needs to arise a passionate cry from within

each one of us, to meet with the Lord, and having met Him, not to let Him go. It is in the presence of God that we shall experience greater measures of freshness and newness that will bring deeper changes to our beings.

The prophet Jeremiah warned the people of God to be careful of their inward conditions. He told them to keep a watch upon the state of their hearts, lest God's season of the harvest passes by, without bringing any change within. This is what God's people today also need to hear and take heed of. Let it not be that the times of God's seasons and workings upon our lives come to an end without bringing the desired changes in our inward man. All of us, having attended meeting after meeting, and Bible-study after Bible-study, must seriously consider the condition of our lives. If we find that, intrinsically we have not changed, even after several years of exposure to the word of God, then we need to wake up or else be prepared to suffer and undergo a great loss. In the workings of God there are specific seasons during which He provides us new opportunities to set our lives in order. Let it not be that the times of God come to an end without having brought forth some definite changes within each one of us. Beloved, it is necessary to be open before the Lord, so that He may have His way into our lives.

The one thing we all need to know at this time is that the Church at large has miserably failed in her specific calling in Christ Jesus. It has been said by agnostic critics that Christianity is nothing but a crutch for the disabled and weak people of the world. In many ways this is true for the Church has utterly failed to fulfill her unique vocation. The reality of this failure is

seen in several spheres of our lives.

Many people think that church is all about them; they go to church with mentalities that are fully centered upon man and his own issues. But **God has this incredible thought that the 'Church' is all about Him.** Many believers go to church believing that the church was created by God to meet their own needs. They think that the church has been created primarily for their own purposes, that they are the focus, that they themselves are the *raison d'être* and the very substance of the church. And so they go to church with the express purpose of meeting their human needs and fulfilling their pious desires. They look upon the church as a place designed to satisfy their needs: they consider the church to be a system that has been raised mainly to fulfill their personal desires: and they regard the church to be some kind of a divine tool for their own benefit. This is truly tragic!

Beloved, it is essential to know that the Church was raised, not to meet the needs of man, but to meet the needs of God! Incredible though this may sound to the self-centred man, the true fact is that the Church is all about God, Himself. God has an immense longing to have a people who would express His whole character and nature. His need is to have willing vessels that would express His love, His mercy and His righteousness to the whole world. There is something in God which compels Him to reveal Himself to man in a special way so that man may express His character and nature. Therefore, He goes to great lengths to change man. He takes utmost pain to do this. His own need is paramount. Once we accept and understand this, everything else falls into place and we shall begin to see the

Church in a different light from what we may have thought at one time. The Church is all about the Lord and not about man at all!

We must see what is upon God's heart today and be willing to change our mind-set. It is time for us to confess the poverty of our own spirit. The Lord will not put up with any kind of hypocrisy. There is a great conviction upon my heart that God is not going to wait for any one; He will move on and fulfill His purposes in Christ without waiting for any one; He will move forward with those who come to Him with open and willing hearts. And it will be those who desire to move on who will experience fresh changes and move forward along with Him. Beloved, let these be the days to move on in God and experience changes within, wrought by the hand of God upon our lives. It is time for God's people to openly admit the weaknesses of the inward man, and to rise up in faith, to walk in God's life-changing ways.

Dependence Upon The Spirit

"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." (2 Corinthians 11:30)

How readily the Apostle Paul admits his weaknesses and infirmities! Apostle Paul said that he could boast of one thing alone — his dependence upon the Lord. He accepted his weaknesses and depended upon the Lord to strengthen him. It is as if he would say, in words of utter humility, *"Lord, I am permanently, incurably, intensely and desperately God-challenged! I acknowledge that I am weak, I cannot live, I*

cannot function, and I cannot do anything, apart from Your help! I am humanly handicapped; my soul is crippled!" Saints, this is the place where God would like us to come to – a place of absolute dependence upon the Lord. The Lord desires His Church to be absolutely dependent upon Him in these days.

I thank God that some people are being drawn to the God who dwells in the midst of His people. They will experience a greater dependency upon the Lord and not upon any person or any thing. Some saints in our midst and in other places are experiencing this reality in some measure. Their heart-cry is the same as that of the Apostle. They cry out, "Lord, I am hopelessly weak without You. I cannot live without You any more; I cannot function apart from You in my life; I need You above all else. Lord, help me!"

These are not the days to moralize and miss the workings of God. It is no longer possible for one to just speak a word, prepare a message or arrange a meeting, and neglect the deep work of recovery within one's own life by the hand of God. It has become necessary to receive the working of God in one's own life before bringing forth a word for the benefit or edification of others in the church. God is calling us to live and to walk in His presence these days. The Lord is making it very clear that His presence will change us. The only way we shall be changed in these days is by His awesome presence. The presence of His person in the midst of His people will do one sure thing – it will change their lives. God's presence will transform us and our lives. This is something that needs to be registered deep within.

Saints, we cannot direct God to change us in the way we want to be changed. The Lord will change us in His own sovereign way. What He will do, what He will touch, what He will change, and what He will implement, must be left to Him. He will bring about changes within our beings in His own sovereign way. It is wholly and utterly up to Him. How He changes us will depend upon His own thoughts, mind and will towards us. All we really know is that God has ordained a change for His people in His presence. These are the days when we shall be changed if we openly confess the poverty of our spirit, and come to Him, believing and depending upon Him to change us.

Unfortunately, **God's people have become too familiar with the pleasures of His provisions; they have become too familiar with blessings from His hands that they have discarded the tears of repentance.** Sad to say, they have forsaken the passionate desperation and dependency upon God that were so well known to the saints of old. The tears of repentance and cries of passionate desperation that the saints of old were so accustomed to are scarcely seen; yes, they are missing today. Only true, tearful, godly, sorrow and ardent, fervent, desperation for the Lord, can really tap the powers of His resurrection life that is resident in the act of repentance. That alone can express our consuming hunger for a fresh encounter with the God of eternity. In the absence of that kind of repentance and desperation, we will not be able to fully experience or even taste God's power of resurrection. It is time for God's people to be violently desperate for the Lord. These are the days we need to really confess the poverty of our spirits. We need to not only express the poverty of our

spirit, but also to carry and maintain a posture of brokenness and contriteness in our lives. We must not only be desperately grateful to God, but also have a desperate longing and craving for Him. Beloved, do not think that this is not possible. It is possible to retain both these attitudes simultaneously. Many people are content to settle down with an outward church system, but a true child of God cannot settle for such things and activities. The remnant of God will have to be desperate for the presence of the Lord in the earth today. Let them cry out pleadingly, "Lord it is You we want. It is Your Person alone that we want. It is Your presence and Your person that we hunger for. We want nothing else but Your Person and your Presence."

Pulling God Out Of His Hiding Place

"And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;"
(Genesis 28:11-13)

If one were to ask Jacob, the patriarch, how he managed to induce God to open a window in heaven and reach out to him by lowering a ladder, Jacob would surely say that the reason God reached out to him was because God saw that he had become desperate for God. If one were to ask, "Jacob, what did you do to compel God to come out of His hiding place?"

Jacob's reply would have been, *"I was broken within and I became intensely desperate for God in my life. I did not even realize how close I was to Him."*

Those who are desperately hungry for God have no idea how close they are to Him. If we are among those who hunger and yearn for the person and the presence of the Lord, we need to know that He is standing close by. The more we hunger for the Lord, the surer we can be that He is close at hand. Those who stand on the ground of desperate hunger for the Lord need to realize that He is closer to them than they had ever thought. The assured guarantee they have, day after day, is that the Lord is near them. The Lord stays close to those who are desperately hungry for Him because He wants them to discover Him afresh. Such desperate and passionate people are very close to the reality of an encounter with God – an encounter that will surely transform and totally change their lives.

What compelled God to reveal Himself to Moses? What pulled God out of His hiding place when Moses called upon His name? It was the acute hunger in Moses' heart that attracted the Lord. When Moses cried out to God to show him His glory, the Lord did not hesitate to do so because He saw in Moses a deep craving for His person. That deep yearning in the heart of Moses is what enthralled God. Beloved, this is what God is looking for in His people. God will not, and indeed cannot, ignore the cry of a hungry heart toward Him.

Hearing Moses' cry, the Lord told Moses that He would definitely and surely show him His glory. Let us note that God

did not wait for Moses to tell the Lord of the great things he had done in His name; nor did Moses bother to tell the Lord of the many faithful things and works he had done to serve the Lord. Moses did not boast about his obedience; nor did he try to show that he deserved to see God's glory. All he offered to the Lord was a cry of hunger and desperation from his heart. And that desperate cry was all that the Lord wanted to hear!

The Lord was sad when Israel rebelled against God in the wilderness. However, His sorrow concerning their disobedience, murmuring and complaining did not deter the One who hides behind the wings of the seraphim. Their attitude did not prevent God from revealing Himself to Moses. One may ask, "What drew God out of the clouds behind which He hid Himself?" Let us learn that the Lord unveiled Himself to Moses because of Moses' desperate desire and hunger to see the face of God. The Lord ignored the disobedience and rebelliousness of His people for a time so that He could respond to the ache in Moses' heart for more of God.

Did God hide Himself from the Israelites or were the Israelites hiding themselves from God? We know that the Israelites were the ones who were hiding behind the traditions, the systems, and the practices of their religion. They were afraid to come face to face before God. As they did not desire to go the way that God wanted them to go, God ignored the Israelites; He only heeded the heart-cry of Moses. God came out of His hiding place, behind the clouds, only to attend to the cry of Moses.

On one side, we see God's people, who were murmuring

and complaining against God; and on the other side, we see one man, whose only desire was to see the face of God. What compelled the Lord to reveal Himself to Moses? He was drawn to the cry from Moses' heart for more of the person of God. Moses' longing for more of the Lord was the one thing that set him apart. God hid Himself from the Israelites but revealed himself to one man because of the man's aching heart for the presence of the Lord. At a time when Israel was steeped in apostasy, Moses demonstrated a true, living, hunger for the person of the Lord.

Saints, today we are living in an environment comparable to that of the Israelites in the wilderness. The Church is steeped in apostasy, declension and worldliness. However, God has a remnant like that of Moses of old. The remnant of God stands alone, as Moses did, hungering for more of God. Like the Israelites, the Church today is absorbed and engrossed in disobedience and rebellion; She fails to really attract the Lord. Though some churches have the best of music, the finest choirs, the most decorative altars, beautiful buildings, and row after row of fine-looking (but empty!) pews, God is not attracted to her. God is not attracted by outward things, however glorious they may seem to man. God is never attracted to our buildings, music, interior decorations and other such things. No, never! All these things are only for the benefit of man and for attracting other men; the goal is nothing but man's comfort and enjoyment. Think of the colossal amount of time, money and labour that is put into man's efforts to please God, none of which attracts God in the least! Saints, think of this colossal waste! None of these things catch the attention of the Lord. Now think of the time taken by man to do things that would attract God! Sad to

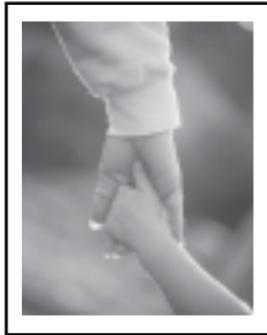
say, we cannot think of anything. Much of today's gatherings are only for the purpose of meeting man's satisfaction! What a tragedy! Who will accept this reality and who will be open to God's sorrow and agony?

The Lord is not drawn to churches, institutions and fellowships or places where the glory of His presence is not sought; where things are done for the benefit of man and not for the acclamation of God. Beloved, only one thing draws God towards a people. That one thing is the hunger and desperation of His people for the person and the presence of the Lord. If the Lord were to heed the things of man and go by the systems, arrangements and thoughts of man, then after Solomon's Temple had been destroyed by the Chaldeans, He would have built it again, for historically, the Temple of Solomon was one of the greatest of architectural wonders of the world. If God had been interested in structures and outward phenomenon, He would have found someone to rebuild it after it had been destroyed and torn down. But God just left it standing as a derelict monument of the past. God allowed it to be destroyed after it had served His purpose. Jesus pronounced God's verdict upon that structure when He said, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mark 13:2). After saying these words, He walked out of that temple. God did not restore the great and glorious Temple of Solomon, contrary to the ideas of the Israelites.

God confounds the wise and disturbs the religious performers! What disturbs the religious men today is that while God refused to restore the Temple, yet He still wanted to restore the Tabernacle of David! The wise, the astute, the clever and the pious are surely perplexed and mystified by this variance!

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of

JOY OF DISCOVERING THE LORD



Entrance Of Passion For The Lord

When true passion, hunger and desperation re-enters your life something will begin to happen inwardly. It will be a new experience; it will be something that is fresh and different from anything that you may have experienced before. Beloved saints, when passion, hunger and desperation re-enter the Church, the Lord will be manifested in the Church in a way the Church has not yet known or encountered. The reality of this truth may offend man's ego, it may bruise man's concept of religion, it may damage theological groundings and foundational precepts, but it will bring about a tremendous change in man's relationship with the Lord.

The re-entrance of the Lord's person and His presence in the Church is not something we can talk about lightheartedly. It is an exceedingly serious matter that demands our whole attention and full consecration. Beloved, the Lord's person and His presence is the need of the hour for the remnant of God; this is the dire need of the true Israel of God. To be ardent, fervent, infatuated, and obsessive for the Lord's

Presence and for Him alone, will furnish us with a novel posture; it will result in something happening deep within us. To have a heart that longs for the Lord's person and presence, to the exclusion of everything else, will bring about inward changes. Without wasting time sharing about false hunger and illustrations of false things, let me emphasize that this is our great need today.

Desperation, hunger and passion will enable us to experience a new measure of His life. It will bring about drastic changes in the inward life. As God's children, we may have sincerely desired that our flesh be put to death; we may have prayed to God many times to change us; we may have genuinely sought the Lord for greater measures of His life, but the reality is that none of us have experienced much change inwardly. Why has the Lord not responded to our pleas and our cries? We may have pleaded for many spiritual things; we may have claimed our privileges as the redeemed of the Lord; we may have approached the Lord on the grounds of our obedience and faithfulness to His Word, but nothing seems to have moved the Lord to respond to our cries. Beloved, God will change His people only when they come to Him with a deep hunger and an appetite for more of God in their lives. Then they shall see His sovereign hand performing a lasting work in their lives. He will respond to the cries of those who are broken and who are yearning for His presence; He will act in response to cries of hunger for more of Him; He will not set aside the cries of those who have a desperate and frantic hunger for His person and His presence. God will not merely satisfy them with a Scriptural Word, but He will make that Word a reality deep within. Have you cried out to God with an insatiable hunger in your heart for

16 Discovering God's Presence

Him and for Him alone, as if nothing but His presence and His person would be adequate to meet your desire?

“Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?” Ps 10:1

“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” Ps 13:1

“Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.” Ps 27:9

Have you ever wondered why God hides from you? There are times in the lives of most saints, even the most dedicated ones mentioned in historical accounts, when they felt that the Lord had been hiding from them. But Moses was different! He attracted the attention of God in a way that caused God to emerge out of His hiding place. “And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.” (Exod 33:17-19)

Beloved, let us understand that the Lord sees all things and knows all things, but He does not choose to reveal all things to us. In a sense, therefore, He remains hidden from us concerning some things in our lives.

About three years ago, the Lord interrupted my life and

began to reveal certain things to me in a very specific way. In His great mercy, He came out of His hiding place and unveiled a few things to me. I cannot forget those days because God began to place within me a word concerning adopting a certain posture towards Him. He interrupted me and my ministry and revealed what I needed to know and do. It was a precious time. One of the things that the Lord revealed to me concerned the difference that existed between the things that I did for Him and the things that were upon His heart! God began to show me that my favourite church services, my favourite songs, my favourite prayers, and my favourite worship meetings were not the same as His! Little by little the Lord began to show me that whenever I felt satisfied that the worship meetings had been good and precious, the Lord was far from satisfied. I realized that He did not feel the way I felt! The Lord interrupted my thoughts and intents. He revealed His heart to me. He showed me the changes that needed to be brought about in the ministry, especially concerning the worship. The Lord began to do something new in my life and ministry from that day. The Lord said to me, "My son, you leave the worship meetings pleased and satisfied, but I would have you know that I, your God, remain dissatisfied with your worship, I still remain hungry." From that day onwards, whenever and wherever I attended a meeting, the words that the Lord had whispered to me rang loudly in my ears. Thereafter, changes began to take place in small measures, as the congregation began to be more sensitive to the needs of the Lord regarding worship. There was a growing conviction within us as a church that the Lord wanted to change things, especially our worship and our gathering together unto Him! The Lord brought about a growing expression of worship in my being! I can but praise and thank

the Lord for this divine encounter in my life.

After the Lord made known His desires as regards our ministry unto Him, our worship in the church underwent a drastic change. Praise be to God that He met us in the Spirit several times, in measures, during our worship services in the local church. After the Lord's intervention in the ministry, I began to attend meetings expecting that God would give us the grace to meet Him in a fresh way everytime. I began to seek His satisfaction. My only desire was that He would take delight in being present in the midst of His people.

Sometimes, in the local church, we were not able to meet the Lord in worship and things did not turn out the way we expected them to. Corporately we failed to please His heart; we were not able to truly worship Him and delight His heart. Nevertheless, I thank the Lord for every encounter that He enabled us to have in His presence. I remember in particular, the worship we had on Sunday, 27th of April 2003. It was a high point of worship in my own life. It was a most precious experience, by all account, when we encountered His presence in such a real and lively manner. Such-like divine encounters have been etched upon my heart forever; they have been imprinted upon my memory with indelible ink. I will never forget those days! Beloved, others may not consider such encounters to be of great significance, but personally, I do believe that these encounters with God have been milestones in our lives. God's workings at such specific times and seasons in my life have been most precious.

In small measures, I can say that what I experienced before

the Lord was a bit like what Isaiah experienced (Isaiah 6:1-3). After Isaiah saw the Lord, there was a great change in his life and in his ministry. In measures, in a similar way, these divine encounters with the Lord have touched me and have also greatly changed me. Without exaggeration, it was as though I had caught Him! God forbid that I dramatize my encounter with the Lord! All I know is that now I feel closer to God than ever before in my life. And I know that there are some others in the local church who have also experienced the presence of the Lord during our worship services in a unique and life-changing way. Praise be to His name!

One of the things that I learned in the presence of the Lord is that **God would only be satisfied and pleased with our worship if we begin to leave our meetings really hungry for more of Him.** In other words, the real presence of God will always leave us hungrier for more of Him. This is something we need to experience in our lives. We need fresh deposits of His encounters and visits in our lives.

God Wants Us To Discover Him

Have you ever felt that God is hiding from you? Beloved, I would have you know that this is not a strange matter of one's imagination – it is real. Let me make this clear by taking an example from every day life.

'Hide and Seek' is a common game that all of us have played as children. Even as grown-ups and as parents we have played this game, time and time again, with young children. We have often hidden behind curtains or cupboards, playfully.

We have seen the little toddlers search for us with eager anticipation. Have we not seen the little ones **look for us in the most unlikely places – even in places where it would have been impossible to hide**, like behind a wall cupboard or under the carpet? And have we not, sometimes, softly crept behind them, on the tip of our toes, only to run and hide again when they turn around unexpectedly? Sometimes we crouched behind a door and listened to their approaching foot steps with eager anticipation! And have we not experienced a great joy, amidst much laughter, when we are found and encounter one another? Yes, we have all experienced the joy of encountering one another at the end of the game!

I would like to draw upon this familiar example of 'hide and seek' to illustrate our relationship with the living God, our Father. In this simple game, we have all experienced the great joy of the seeker encountering the one sought out. We have played the game to experience that great joy of encountering one another at the end of the game. Even so, our heavenly Father waits for the joy of encountering us, His children, in the living game of our life.

While playing 'hide and seek' what we often do is to leave a tell-tale sign, or give some small hint, so that the child can find us quickly and easily. A quiet whisper from behind the door, a slight shuffle of feet behind the curtain, or softly calling out his or her name from the next room, — these are common ways to draw the child's attention to one's hiding place. Sometimes, one would hide behind a curtain, but deliberately reveal one's feet from under the curtain, so that the child would discover one's hiding place! Haven't we all delighted in the cry of

discovery of the little one?

Beloved, many times our heavenly Father has given us small signs and sounds to let us know that He is nearby. He has left tell-tale signs of His presence so that we may discover Him standing close by. Our Father is waiting; He longs to experience the joy of encountering His child. I want to tell you that our God does not want to hide Himself. The real point of the game is not hiding but finding! Similarly, the whole purpose is not to hide from one another but to find one another. It is not really a matter of hiding from one another, but of finding and discovering one another. We do not hide ourselves to remain hidden; we hide so that we may find each other and thereafter share the love and joy of meeting one another. **The only purpose to hide is to be found!**

It is precious to know of the wonderful ways that God would like to make Himself known to His people. I am learning to know His ways through these examples. I am beginning to understand and see how our awesome God hides Himself from His children so that He may be found by them. I am learning more about the pursuit of His manifest presence in these days. I am also learning about the fuel of a desperate heart and the fuel we all need while in pursuit of His presence!

The Lord has been opening my eyes to see one thing these days – that in some supernatural way, the pursuer becomes the pursued! For example, the Lord whom we worship will begin to delight in our worship, when He sees us as a company of hungry worshippers. When the Lord sees a collective emptiness in our midst, then the Scripture will be fulfilled that says, ‘The

Father seeketh such..." . When He sees a people with a collective hunger, the Father, who seeketh for such worshippers, will delight in finding us. We, the pursuers will become the pursued. God does not delight in hiding Himself. He wants to reveal His face to His people.

God Hides Himself Because He Loves Us

"And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down." (1 Samuel 3:3-5)

Samuel was very young when he began to seek the Lord, wait upon Him and minister to Him. Though he lived in the vicinity of the Ark of God, he failed to find the Lord. But one day the Lord whispered his name "Samuel" in his ears. Samuel replied God in the affirmative and then ran to Eli. Evidently, Samuel had been close to where God was hiding, but He ran in the wrong direction. Beloved, understand this! Though Samuel heard the Lord and answered Him, he ran in the wrong direction! Doesn't this happen to us very often? We seek the Lord, we also hear Him, but sometimes we get up and run in the wrong direction. In our immaturity, we often take the things of the Lord to man. **We take heed to the voice of man, thinking that it is the voice of our God!** That is what happened to Samuel. He ran to Eli thinking that it was Eli's voice that he had heard! But the Lord did not give up on Samuel. He called him again and yet again.

“And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3 :6-10)

We can learn many things from this passage of the Scriptures. We see that God makes repeated attempts to make us aware of His presence. He takes time to teach us to be sensitive to hear His voice. Beloved it is the true ministries of God that will enable us to hear the small voice of the Lord. They will be instrumental in bringing God’s voice to our hearing ears. Saints, only repeated attempts by God, and truth from true ministries, can help us to locate the source of that ‘still small voice’! They will tell us whether we are hearing the voice of God or the voice of man.

Eli told young Samuel that it was not he who had spoken to him, but that it was the Lord’s voice that Samuel had heard. Eli had encountered God many times in his life. That is why he could confidently say that it was the Lord, who had spoken to Samuel. Eli was able to discern that God wanted to speak to Samuel and he perceived that God wanted to reveal Himself to

Samuel. We hear the whisperings of God many times in our ears, but usually we do not know how to respond to His voice. True ministries will say to us, "It is His voice and not ours. Respond to Him." If some ask, "Is that you, brother?" The reply will be, "No, that was not me!" So Eli told Samuel the simple but profound process by which Samuel could capture God during that moment of his divine encounter!

At times, when we have the grace to hear His voice, let us make ourselves available to the Lord and not run in a different direction. It is imperative that we make ourselves available to the Lord when He nudges us. Beloved, be careful not to run in the opposite direction, or to consult commentaries, or to go to this book and that book. Do not run, here and there, or to this and that, but wait before God and hear what He has to say to you. Many times we hear God whispering into our ears but, alas, we run in the wrong direction and fail to hear the Lord's word or message to us. This is how we may have missed what God had for us in the past. Time and again, I have found that God's clear ministrations to His people were lost by sincere, God-conscious people, because they ran in the wrong direction. It is of the essence that when we hear a whisper in our ears, we make ourselves available to the Lord, for He has much to say and reveal to us. Be available to the Lord and say, "Thy servant heareth, Lord. I am available to you for your purpose, my Lord. I keep my life open to you, Lord." The whispers of God tell us that He is there and that He wants to say something. O saints, these are times when we shall experience divine encounters. It is therefore essential to be available to the Lord. When you hear the word of God in your ears, even in the form of a message by His ministers, take heed to His whisperings.

Let the Holy Spirit minister to you. Be available to the Lord and for whatever He has to say to you.

God does not want to hide Himself. He wants to capture and enjoy every moment with His children. David brings this thought to us several times in the Psalms. Some of the verses in the Bible that speak of God hiding Himself are reproduced below. Note carefully that David addressed God many times as the One who hid Himself from David.

“Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?” Ps 10:1

“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” Ps 13:1

“Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.” Ps 27:9

“Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?” Ps 44:24

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.” Ps 51:1

“And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.” Ps 69:17

“LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?” Ps 88:14

“How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath

burn like fire?" Ps 89:46

"Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily." Ps 102:2

"Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." Ps 104:29

"Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit." Ps 143:7

Why should God hide Himself from us?

God hides Himself from His people because He loves them and because He does not want His absolute holiness to destroy them. The reason why He hides Himself from us is because He loves us! We thank God that He has made a way for us to come to Him through the blood of Jesus Christ. A true child of God can meet God, who dwells behind the veil, if he or she repents and believes in Christ. We have this great privilege to pursue the Lord, and the Lord is ever willing to reveal Himself to us. He does not want to hide Himself from any one of us any longer. God wants us to experience the joy of discovering Him. He longs to share that moment of discovery! He waits for us to come to a place where we would discover the Lord. He waits to meet His people. Saints, the 'pursuit' and the 'capture' of God is a process! Capturing God is a process that we all need to experience. The joy of meeting God, the joy of discovering our God, and the preciousness of those moments of encountering Him, are experiences that the Lord wants us to have. He waits for us expectantly. The moments of discovery,

the moments of delight, and the times of pursuing God, are precious to Him and to us.

The Lord is pursuing a people in this hour; He is pursuing those who pursue Him with hungry hearts and thirsty souls. In the natural, as a child seeks to find his father and as the father seeks to find the child in a game of hide and seek, so also would the Lord like us to pursue Him, while, at the same time, He pursues us. In the game of hide and seek, the father does not desire to always remain hidden; nor does he aim to stay away from his child and never be found! When he sees the child approaching, he turns towards the child with love and unlimited affection. Beloved, in like manner, God will not just leave us and run away to His hiding place. This is something we need to know. Just as the toddler seeks the father who hides behind the curtain, while the father eagerly waits for his child to find him, so also does our heavenly Father wait for us to discover Him. Moreover, a child's father will not stay in his hiding place if the child is unable to find him; he will come out and show himself at the right time. Our heavenly Father is no different in His relationship with us.

Beloved, God is waiting for those who are seeking Him in these days. Remember, as you seek Him, He shall come closer to you because He loves you as His own child. He does not run away from those that seek Him diligently but He draws nigh to them. God does not leave us and move away; He lingers around us till we find Him and get in touch with Him. God's greatest joy is to extend and expand the moments of encounter! When we gather to worship Him, He is not far away. He lingers nearby, waiting to reveal Himself. He wants

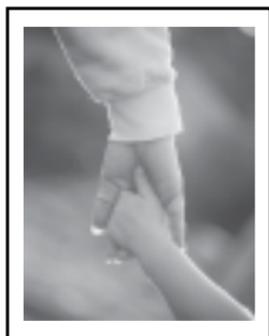
to manifest Himself. He does not make it difficult for us to find Him. Because of his love for us, He lingers very close by to us, so that we may experience His presence in greater measures.

Our heavenly Father longs to see us hunger and thirst for His presence; He desires us to pursue Him with yearning and passion. He waits for us to extend and expand the moments of our encounters with Him. Furthermore, when we are discouraged and weary, He enables us to hear His voice say that He is nearby and that He is coming nearer to us. He stays close at hand to encourage us and lead us onwards in our pursuit.

Beloved, Sunday morning endearments are not enough. We need to go beyond a mere outward approach to God. We need to be a people who come with a greater longing to meet the Lord, who seek after Him with a passion, and who are desperate for His precious presence. Our desperation and hunger for Him will lay hold of Him; it will cause Him to come out of His hiding place. Gathering together on Sunday mornings, and rushing through the formalities, will not suffice any more. Saints, let your panting and hunger capture and enrapture the heart of God! And you will discover that the One whom you are pursuing, will suddenly become the One who is pursuing you! What a delight! **When you seek the Lord, it is the Lord who seeks you!**

If you are a true worshipper, God will track you down wherever you may be. He will find you. He will find you as a people; He will find you as an individual. He will seek you out even if you are in chains at the bottom of a Philippian dungeon! He does not want to hide Himself. He is nearer than you believe! If you are searching for Him with a heart that is right and broken, the Lord will reveal Himself. He is drawn to such people. He is drawn to hungry worshippers. He is drawn to the incense of such worshippers. Divine encounters await

THE RESTLESS REMNANT



Lingering in His Presence



One of the important things that I have begun to understand is that the Lord does not ever desire to permanently hide Himself from His people. Occasionally, He hides Himself from us, but the only reason He does this is that we may discover Him afresh. God does not hide Himself in a way that makes Him unavailable or unapproachable. God wants, and indeed longs, for His people to find Him and know Him more. It is not the desire of God to remain hidden from His people. He does not hide from His people in order that they may never find Him. Many of us need to change our ideas and thoughts about God's presence.

Beloved, it is good for us to know that when God hides Himself from us, it is for one purpose only – that He and we may experience the joy of finding one another. The matter of His hiding from us is closely connected to His and our joy of rediscovery. Only that which is hidden can be discovered; hiding thus ushers in a new discovery; it opens the way for rediscovery. Only when God hides from us can we discover Him again! It creates an environment wherein we can

experience the joy of meeting Him again. When the Lord hides from us, we can nourish the great hope of encountering Him soon so that our joy may be full. The Lord eagerly looks forward to the time when His children will discover Him. This delights Him. Every time we discover the Lord afresh, we can experience that inexpressible joy of His presence, once again. And at the same time, there is tremendous joy and satisfaction in the heart of the Father.

Saints, we can look forward to times of worshipping Him, because these could turn out to be times of discovering His presence. Whenever we meet corporately we could enter into times when we can discover Him afresh. When we gather together as a church, we are not to go through some motions, rituals or procedures of worship. Nothing we do outwardly, externally or on the outside, could possibly guarantee His presence. In the past, we may have worshipped the Lord in ways that did not truly crown Him Lord and King, but now the Lord is teaching us to worship Him in truth and spirit. I thank God for His interventions in the midst His people. He is showing us the desires of His heart because of His love for us. In days gone by, we thought we knew how to worship the Lord; we taught others how to praise and worship the Lord; but we did not know the joy of discovering the Lord during our worship. Nevertheless, we did, on some rare and precious occasions, enter into His presence during worship; those moments are forever etched upon our spirits and can never be forgotten or underestimated. We thank God for His mercy that has heralded and wrought changes in our worship. We praise God that our worship is no longer a matter of set patterns and formulas. Whenever we seek the Lord with a true heart of worship, He

enables us to experience the joy of finding Him afresh. O the joy of seeking Him and finding Him is so great and wonderful! If we take this to heart, our worship, our gatherings, on Sunday or any other day, our coming together whatever be the occasion, will be revolutionized and drastically changed. We will leave the church hungrier, keener and more desirous for more of Him than ever before. The joy of being found and of finding Him is without match. It is just stupendous and incredible! The joy of being discovered is very precious. These experiences of discovering Him in worship cannot be put into words with any ease. Explanations and descriptive accounts cannot suffice. The experiences of such worship will bring us to new paths of freedom in the Spirit. May God help every one of us!

Beloved, God loves to see His children linger before His face, in His presence. When God's people linger in the presence of God, waiting to see His face, the Lord is greatly delighted. Lingering and seeking His face delights His heart. But such times are very rare and uncommon today in most of the assembly of believers! Truly such times are few and far between. Nevertheless, God's people should always look forward with anticipation to times of closeness with God.

Haste and hurry are the weapons of the insensitive. Those who desire to share closeness and intimacy with the Maker, will invariably choose to approach His presence adroitly and cautiously. Haste always mars the advance of the right kind of atmosphere to meet the Lord. Lingering and waiting in His presence, on the other hand, promotes a feeling of oneness that is essential to enter into His august and awesome presence.

Tragically, in this hurried and hassled age, there is very little that promotes such intimacy! **God's people look more like a herd of cattle in a stampede than a flock of God beside green pastures and still waters!** Our forefathers knew, it seems, to commune with the Almighty, but do we? We must learn anew to think deeply, to linger on, to meditate unhurriedly and to worship meaningfully! A man of God named Richard Foster said, "Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people or gifted people but for a deep people!"

Saints, do you want to be profoundly aware of His presence, to be in touch with Him at the deepest possible level, to be thinking His thoughts, gleaning His wisdom and living as close to His heart as is humanly possible, positioning your life in the nucleus of His will?

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Psalm 42:11

Remarking on Psalm 42, Charles Spurgeon said, "David was heart-sick. Ease he did not seek, honor he did not covet, but the enjoyment of communion with God was an urgent need of his soul, a frustrating necessity, like water to a stag. His soul, his very life, his deepest life was insatiable for a sense of the Divine presence. Oh! to have the most intense craving after the highest good!"

We praise the Lord that He is changing the form of our worship in the local church at New Delhi. We have been

learning not to hurry from song to song during our worship. In the past we thought that the range and assortment of songs we sing would please the Lord, but God is bringing about a change. We are beginning to see the need for drastically changing our approach and attitude to worship. May we all give into what the Spirit would have us do in these days. May the Lord ever enable us to be open to the Spirit regarding the matter of worship!

O may God help His people to linger in His presence as never before. His remnant needs to prepare their hearts and minds to linger before the Lord. First, they need to empty their minds of every thought that would distract them from seeking His face. Then they need to come against any thought that would desire to seek a quick, instantaneous and immediate response. They need to patiently overcome the thoughts that always try to speed up the worship service. Saints, in our feelings and opinions we often attempt to concentrate on non-essentials. We yearn to sing songs that have a quick tempo, that excite the heart and that would appeal to the senses rather than to the spirit. We often try to cater to the needs of the people, their different tastes, their ages and affinities, or their language. We think of the young, the old and the not so old. We think of singing some hymns of old, interlaced with some modern choruses to cater to our desires and needs. O we do many things to try and worship the Lord in the strength of the natural man and the religious man. But seldom are we prepared to wait for the Spirit to lead us into a true worship of the King of Kings. The times of lingering before His face are rare in the experience of God's people. In our worship, most of the time, we are in a tearing hurry to come to the high point or the climax. Our feelings, our eagerness and our impatience are blatantly

exhibited. It is so sad that God's people have become more time-sensitive, than Spirit-sensitive in the matter of worship unto the Lord; more man-conscious, than God-conscious. They have not really learnt the meaning and method of waiting in His presence. For most, waiting is frustrating and time consuming. Though they desire to truly worship Him, they are not prepared to wait. To wait before God does not mean that one should vacillate or hesitate. There is a right time when God reveals Himself. Few realize that God is careful to hide Himself and wait for His people to discover Him. The Lord waits that we come to that proper moment of worship. He desires His people to linger, to seek Him and finally to have the joy of discovering Him. Great changes are on the way in our lives.

There is a need for the remnant of God's people to be more sensitive to the work of God in their lives. It is necessary to be highly sensitive to the moves of God in the gatherings so that there is a greater increase of His manifest presence, individually and corporately. Many men in leadership need to see the truth and be give in to change.

Desperate for More of Him

Are you a part of the restless remnant in the earth today — a restless remnant that is incurably desperate for an encounter with the Lord? God is eagerly watching the lives of those believers who are restless for more of the Lord. God is zealous for those who continuously search for the Lord and seek to encounter His presence. Their restlessness for the Lord attracts His attention. Beloved, the restless remnant of this world, are not restless because their desires, ambitions and expectations

for some blessings have not been fulfilled; they are restless because they are desperately keen to meet the Lord and behold His face. Their strongest desire is to have a living encounter with the Living God. We may come across many believers who are restless, but their restlessness is a result of their own ambitious spirit and their determined efforts to acquire worldly gains. Where are the men and women who desire nothing more than to gain more of the Lord in their lives? In the Christian planetarium, the large majority are driven by a strong competitive spirit. Even spiritual leaders yearn for success, achievement and attainment. People occupying responsible positions in the Christian hierarchy perpetually seek openings to expand their operations and draw more people so that their self-initiated church projects are not starved of contributions and funds. But God is looking to a restless remnant that is not concerned with the earthy ways of today's ecclesiastical system and evangelical order. God's eyes are set upon those who are continually seeking an encounter with Him. He is mindful of the few restless remnants who care nothing about their own provisions or the needs of the people, but whose focus is only upon the Lord and His purposes.

The restless remnant can be easily distinguished from the multitude of believers that throng the church. In this hour, we can see the restless remnant expressing the life of Christ in some clearly distinguishable ways. The symptoms are unmistakable!

■ The restless remnant display a compulsive addiction for God. Man-made programmes make them nauseous. They are sick of the manipulations of man.

■ They abhor all religious calisthenics; they shun activities that do not exhibit a true hunger for the Lord.

■ They are weary and tired of passionless worship. They are wary of every kind of emotional hype that is designed to excite and stir the soul and the flesh of man.

■ They are allergic to human agendas and programmes.

■ Their hearts are hopelessly desperate for the manifest presence of God.

Beloved, God is keeping a remnant in the world that shall be a testimony of His presence. Undoubtedly, today this remnant consists of only a few people. However, their compulsive infatuation and addiction for God, their desperate longing for Divine workings in their lives, and their craving for more of the Lord, sets them apart in the eyes of the Lord. There are many sincere believers who desire to be a part of God's precious remnant, but they are not part of it for various reasons. O how careful we must be with our lives in these days!

Saints, we share a great privilege to be a small part of God's remnant. To be a component of God's precious remnant in these days, is not a matter of ones choice, but of His mercy. This is something that goes beyond the understanding and perceptions of man. Saints of God, it is vitally important to be linked to the desires of God's heart and will in these last days. It is heartbreaking to see many promising believers miss the best of God. In the beginning they link up with the purposes of God in their lives, but subsequently, they fall by the wayside.

They seem to reach a place of satisfaction with the spiritual food they have been receiving and because of this they are not able to fully grow in the Lord. They lack spiritual growth in their lives because they are content with their spiritual progress, though the condition of their lives is far from the standards that the Lord expects. In reality, inwardly, they do not really desire to be a part of the remnant of God or a part of the bride of Christ in the earth. This happens because they have failed to subject their lives to the cross and the yoke of Christ. At one time they had been arrested and apprehended by the things of God, and even now they continue to have the Word of God in their lives, but the living experience and presence of God is not their whole longing. Lacking the manifest presence of God in their daily lives and the body life in church, they become like drift wood floating down a vast expanse of water. Every child of God needs to fervently pray that they may continue to be a part of the remnant of God on the earth in this hour.

All around us we see such terrible things happening in the world. Even in the realm of Christianity, churches have been gripped by the spirit of the world. We see churches stooping down to the levels of the unredeemed in several matters. Even in pious activities of the church there is strong evidence of imitations and of worldly profanity! Under the garb and cover of the workings of the Holy Spirit, ministers are profaning and abusing the sacred tenants of the Lord in new ways which have never happened in the past. Of this, the less said the better. In the midst of all that is happening in the Church, God is jealous for a remnant that is ardent and even obsessive, that is desperately seeking His presence at all times, and that is moving on the pursuit of His purpose.

I am personally thankful to my God for His mercies and interventions in my life. Many times I have wept and sought Him and said, “Lord I do not understand your great love towards us.” In the mercies of God we are in a place where we can hear Him, know what is upon His heart, and experience His manifest presence in our lives. In small measures, I know what God has called us to do in this hour. I thank God for His mercy that enables us to pursue Him, for He is the sum of all things. Again, it His mercy that drives us to seek Him all the more! I praise God that He is at work in our lives. Let us be continuously open to His workings and to the changes that He would like to bring in our lives.

It sometimes seems disconcerting to see that numerically, the ‘restless remnant’ of God in the earth today consists of just a few believers or churches. It is not that we make it few or that only a few desire to be a part of God’s remnant! God’s remnant is few in number because He demands a certain quality of life from those who yearn to be a part of this select group. Believers need to possess a quality of life that is manifested and crystallized in their restlessness and desperation for His presence. In other words, those who are restless and desperate of spirit for His presence, qualify to be a part of His remnant. They have the life-characteristics that differentiate them from all other Christians. One can say that there is an ‘otherness’ in them that makes them so attractive to the Lord. They are humble; they are hungry; and they are broken-hearted. They refuse to bow their knees and hearts to false gods, false christs, false gospels or false shepherds. They refuse to indulge in religious pursuits that are centered in man. Their only desire and desperate passion is to seek the face of the Lord and avoid

trivial religious pursuits. They mourn to dwell in His presence; they yearn to come closer to the Lord in reality; they eagerly wait to be drawn into His presence.

Beloved, such a remnant of God is not catalogued in the pages of Church directories in your cities! They are not listed in the annals of great Christian groups. Neither are they researched by knowledgeable historians. They are not cross-referenced by Christian groups because they do not have an identity apart from the raw hunger for God. Who would think of finding out more about people whose only characteristic is that they are hungry for more of God's living presence?

Do you honestly and earnestly long to be a part of such a remnant of God? Do you yearn for the courts of such a place in God?

If you do, if your heart's only desire is towards the living God, then you will never stray away from the purposes of God, for the Lord will preserve your life.

The mark of the restless remnant is a desperate passion and a raw hunger for the Living God. The evidence of change in your life is the sign that you are pursuing the Living God. Beloved, change will be your constant companion if you are moving in that realm. If you pursue His presence with all seriousness and vigour, you will be acquainted with inward changes that propel you nearer to His presence.

Stretching the Times of Intimacy

When we encounter the Lord and experience His presence, we need to make every attempt to stretch and expand those times with Him, so that they result in meaningful interactions and intimacy with the Divinity. How do we stretch our moments of interaction with the Lord? Many times we fail to fully utilize such times of intimacy with the Lord, for our greater good and benefit. God in His mercy touches us and initiates something within us, but the question is whether we are able to capture the heart of God and remain in that place of the working of the Spirit upon our lives. What matters is how we spend those moments with the Lord!

It may seem that I am unnecessarily labouring this point, but I consider it sufficiently important to repeat myself. When the Lord meets you during times of worship or at the close of a meeting, when you take the word you have heard and apply it to your lives, how do you prolong and stretch out that time of interaction with the Lord? How do you stretch out the time of intimacy with the sovereign God? How do you capture the heart of God? So much depends on what we do at those specific times with the Lord!

In several meetings I have sensed the Lord ministering a very serious and heart-searching word, but the leaders dismissed the meeting without giving enough time to the saints for interacting and responding to God's voice or counsels. It is so sad that many lack a sensitiveness to know that God is waiting to hear the response of His people. In the Gospel of Luke we read that when an angel came to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and brought her a message, the angel waited for Mary to respond (Luke 1:28-38). The Lord eagerly waits to hear our responses

to His word to us.

It must be clear to us that times of interaction with the Lord are exclusively designed by the Spirit for us to meet the Lord. Such times are entirely meant for the Spirit to bring us to a place to meet the Lord. The time is something special between you and the Lord. It is a realm of the Spirit and no one else should step in at this time. It is your time with God; it is your moments with the Divine One; it is a time of aloneness with your God. In those moments of your life, no one, not even your wife or nearest and dearest one, should be able to intervene and rob you of those moments with God. It is a time to be unconscious of man; it is a time to be only conscious of the Divine in your heart.

It is inspiring to see how Mary of Bethany, stretched out the time of her intimacy with the Jesus, her Lord when she came to meet Him with her alabaster box. The example of this woman enriches our lives again and again. She was indifferent to every other person in that room. She had only one thing upon her heart. Her focus was upon the Lord. She was oblivious of every other person and substance. That was the manner in which she captured the heart of God. How about you? How do you capture His heart? After Mary captured the heart of the Lord, she experienced the divine transactions of God.

In moments when we contact the living God, let us be conscious of the times of our interaction. Let us be sensitive and alive to the times of intimacy with Him. That is the way we can perceive what is upon His heart. Let there be a hunger

for Him and desperation for His person. Let God hear the note of urgency in the cry of our heart. If we are receptive and responsive, the Lord will discern the urgency in our cry. When we express ourselves from the heart, He will draw near to us. Saints, the Lord is not hiding His face from us. He longs to be discovered by His people. He is careful to hide Himself, so that we can find Him. His greatest desire is for us to seek Him and find Him in our lives.

Being Changed by His Presence

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. (Isaiah 6:1-3)

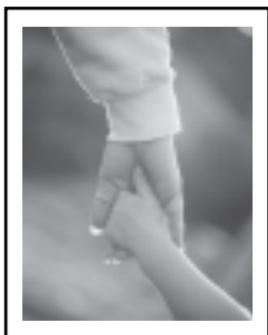
When Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, entered the House of the Lord on that day (historically, it was the year that king Uzziah died), he beheld something he had not seen ever before! Though he had walked into the temple many times in the past, and though he had spent much time in the temple every day, yet he never saw what he saw on that day. What did he see that was so special? I sense and feel that Isaiah beheld the Lord in the temple of God in a new way. On previous occasions when Isaiah came into the temple, the Lord remained hidden behind the veil of the Most Holy Place. I visualize that the prophet of God stumbled upon God before He had hidden Himself properly behind the veil. On that day, Isaiah glimpsed the Lord! He saw the Lord seated upon a throne, high and

lifted up, and His train filled the temple! Normally, the Lord remained hidden behind the veil, but on that one day, Isaiah was able to behold the Lord in all His glory. O what a remarkable day it was in Isaiah's life! He saw the living beings with wings in the presence of God; he saw them worshipping the Lord of Hosts, he heard them singing unto the Lord and he saw the great glory of the Lord in all His fullness. What a vision; what a revelation; what a specter! How many times the prophet had walked into the Temple before that unforgettable day when he "caught" God! Isaiah was not even the oldest or the most seasoned prophet alive in Judah at that time, but he was the only one who saw the Lord "high and lifted up"! His ministry spanned a period of forty years and continued through the reign of five different kings, though none equaled King Uzziah in stature.

Following the death of king Uzziah, Isaiah served several other kings of Israel, such as Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The last and the fifth king under whom Isaiah ministered was Manasseh. And it was Manasseh, the king of Judah, who commanded the prophet Isaiah to be sawn asunder because he resisted the idolatrous system that the king proclaimed during his reign.

Hebrew 11:37 says, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;" Though this verse does not specifically mention that Isaiah was the one who was sawn apart, Unger's Bible Dictionary says that according to a credible tradition, Isaiah suffered martyrdom by being sawn apart. Hebrews 11:37 is supposed to be reference to the martyrdom of Isaiah. Nelson's Bible Dictionary also says that according to a popular Jewish tradition, Isaiah met his death by being sawn in half during the

ENTERING HIS PRESENCE



Having The Right Spiritual Environment

Many believers can say that they are alive today because of the grace of God, but not all of them can say that they are in a place of hearing the voice of God today. This is a sobering thought. Though they are alive by the grace of God, not all can hear what God has to say. It is one thing to be alive in God by the grace of God, and it is another thing to be in a place where God can work upon our lives. Many miss the dealings and workings of God because of their human reasoning. They fail to understand and accept the seasons of God for their lives and thus miss His ordained timings and programmes. It is truly sad that being God's people, they miss much of what God has for them because of their mental attitudes, human reasons, logic and mind set. God is no respecter of persons. He is willing to perform His work in any individual who seeks Him and is open to change. Therefore, let each one examine their lives. He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him. May God help us!

Saints, we cannot produce and reproduce the workings

of God. It is impossible. That is one thing I have experienced in my life and seen in others. Merely because of human reason and logic, many have lost God-ordained times and purposes in their lives. I feel sad for some brothers and sisters who miss God-given opportunities to progress in the things of God. As God's own people they are expected to be experiencing God's unique work in their lives, but they miss the opportunities presented to them when they fail to gather with other saints. Then there are those who are physically present, but fail to yield to the Lord when God-given opportunities come their way. We should never under-estimate God's presence in the midst of His people. I have committed this mistake in my life on some occasions and I know that I stood to lose ground. The loss was mine in every way.

As we saw in the previous chapter, something happened to Isaiah on the day that king Uzziah died, for his life was really changed for ever. Long before he encountered the Lord in the temple, he had been prophesying the burdens of the Lord to the nation of Israel. But after he caught sight of God sitting on the throne in the temple, Isaiah no longer saw things in the way he had done before. Those few moments in the presence of the King of Kings, when Isaiah saw the King high and lifted up, was enough to utterly redirect, reform and transform his life and ministry.

As we continue to carefully look at Isaiah's temple experience, we realize that in all likelihood Isaiah had just returned from the King Uzziah's funeral service. When he entered the temple, he was still mourning for Uzziah, who was one of Judah's good kings, a man whose unlimited potential

was tragically cut short due to his pride and religious presumption. There is a historic account which tells us that Isaiah was the first cousin of Uzziah. Whatever the circumstances may have been at that time, we know for certain that Isaiah desperately sought the Lord. Furthermore, his life was an open book before the Lord. Therefore, he was able to pull God out of His hiding place behind the veil. In one sense, Isaiah was a prepared vessel; the prevailing conditions brought him to a place that was just right in God's sight. This is what we need to understand by the help of the Spirit of God.

Saints, in our lives, several preparations and conditions need to be met to bring about the manifest presence of God. Certain workings need to take place in our lives so that God would be pulled out of His hiding place. Many factors are involved in His coming into our lives. God will not appear suddenly in our lives, without first making sure that certain essential changes have taken place. Only when those inward conditions are fulfilled can we expect the Lord to appear out of His hiding place.

We need to understand that the Lord is waiting and ever ready to reveal Himself to His people. However, He patiently waits for the right time. God is drawn out of His hiding place, into our gatherings and into our lives, only when the essential inward preparations have taken place and the outward circumstances are just right. This is something we always need to bear in mind. If the condition of our lives is not right before the Lord, or if our motives are wrong or if any there is some circumstance that prevails in the inward man, then we can be sure that the Lord could delay or wait for some more time

before emerging from His hiding place. When Isaiah went to the temple on the day that Uzziah died (Isaiah 6:1-4), the circumstances in his life were just right. The Lord revealed Himself to Isaiah because the inward and outward conditions satisfied God and met His approval.

Let us broach an example from nature, so that we understand this spiritual principal. We know that frost or small ice particles are formed on grassy lawns in extreme cold weather. Frost also appears on cars, roofs, electrical wires and things left outside in the open. What determines the formation of frost is the temperature of condensation and the amount of moisture in the air. We begin to see frost on our car windows when humidity is at the right percentage and the inside and outside temperatures are at certain points. The right conditions for the formation of frost do not exist at all times. Only when the specific conditions of temperature and humidity are met, does frost appear. Similarly, for God's manifest presence to be experienced during our worship and gatherings, specific conditions need to be met.

Frost appears only in certain climate and weather conditions such as during the winter or during the rainy season in tropical regions. It is important to understand that frost is nothing but the collection of ice particles. Frost is a crystallized form of water. Thus, as a form of water, it always exists in some form or other, just like water vapour or moisture, which is always present in the atmosphere in the form of minute water particles, though we cannot see it with our naked eyes. Water takes the form of crystallized ice or frost when specific conditions of temperature and humidity are met. When the specific

meteorological conditions are met, then we are able to actually see the water in its crystallized form of frost.

In the great mercies of God, His wonderful presence is always available to us in Christ. He is ever willing to manifest Himself to His people in many wonderful ways. We know that God is always 'there', for He is omnipresent. However, His omnipresence is different from His manifest presence. We can only experience His manifest presence when the right conditions are met. He manifests Himself to His people only when the right conditions prevail. It is just like the frost that appears on the ground or on the car when the right conditions of temperature combine with the appropriate conditions of moisture.

We know from God's Word and from the historical record of human encounters with the Lord, that He tends to move and act in somewhat predictable patterns. And yet we cannot limit God to some specific ways, for He is a sovereign God. Who can dictate the way God should move? At the same time, we see that when God's people generate and provide definite conditions, such as, by their love, obedience, hunger and so on, then God takes the initiative to come down to meet them. The movements and acts of the living God revealed in the Bible and the past experience of the saints, show that the conditions of the lives of His people are of supreme relevance. We cannot perceive and see the living God until we create the right environment and condition. Like frost, God appears only when the spiritual temperature and humidity are right, inside and outside. Spiritual frost, which is the crystalline presence of God, will appear in the midst of His people only when the

temperature-cum-humidity conditions in the spiritual realm are absolutely right.

The Lord is omnipresent, and yet sometimes it looks as if He is hiding Himself. For His manifest presence to be experienced there are some spiritual conditions that need to be met by us. His crystalline presence will come forth in our midst when the spiritual conditions of our lives are right in His sight. At that moment of time, when the right temperature exists for the formation of His crystalline presence, then there shall be a wonderful encounter between God and man. Then, He who is in another realm will manifest Himself in our realm!

Experiencing God's Crystalline Presence

How can we prepare the way for the Lord to come into the midst of our gatherings? We need to come together as people who have experienced changes in our inward man. In these days we need to be utterly sensitive to His presence. Preparing for a greater measure of His presence in our gatherings is not a matter of doing something or of singing some particular song. We must be a people who are worked upon in our inward man. This would undoubtedly bring the crystalline presence of God into the midst of our gatherings.

In a sense, God is always present in our midst, albeit in another dimension. The beautiful crystalline forms of frost always exist in space though invisible to the sight. They are visible only when a cold day is accompanied by a cool window pane! As a part of the infinite treasures of God, they are brought forth and instantly available, anywhere, when the

weather conditions are in perfect alignment. Spiritually, it is not very different.

May God help us to understand that He is always near us and that He waits to enter into the domain in which we live. Sometimes, we may find that the Lord suddenly comes by the Spirit into our midst, but in reality, He was always there, waiting for the right condition to enter into our sensual world. This is how we can experience His presence. We may call the experiencing of His manifest presence in our lives as the visitation of God. Though we cannot 'put on' His presence as we put on a cloak, yet we can experience His presence in a very real way.

I find that the very things that the Lord is ministering, are being performed by Him in my own heart! As I share what God had laid upon my heart, the Lord is conforming my life to the very word that I am instrumental in bringing forth! There is a kind of conforming of things right in the midst of God's people. It is necessary to realize what the Holy Spirit is doing in our midst. He is enabling us to share things which He is bringing about and making real in our midst. Many times we experience a working of the Spirit in our lives and the explanation of what the Lord does and is doing follows later. Some will recollect that during one of the sessions in the camp meetings in the summer of 2003, we had experienced a sudden manifestation of the Lord in our midst, but the Spirit brought forth explanations and revealed His purpose to us on another day. God had been in our midst all along in the camp meeting! What a precious truth! He waited and then came forth later, in what appeared to be a sudden act of grace, when the conditions were fully in

agreement, harmonious and perfectly synchronistic! May the Holy Spirit help us all to fully understand this principle and law governing His presence is constant and unchangeable.

God manifests and reveals Himself at certain definite times, such as during our worship, fasting and prayer. He comes forth and manifests Himself with might and power when the right conditions are fulfilled and when the purpose that He has in mind is being fulfilled. Do you know that crystals appear to the natural eye only in the presence of correct temperature? Only when there is a temperature change that meets certain conditions in the spirit realm will the crystalline presence of God suddenly show up. **At that moment, something that was always there in another dimension, will suddenly appear and move into your world!** God is not absent or missing when we do not feel a quickening in our spirit. The Lord is always present, though in another dimension. It is like the example of the winter frost. Though frost does not appear in the cold weather at all times, it is present in another realm, i.e. as dew or moisture. But when certain conditions are fulfilled, the frost appears on the window in the realm of the seen as well.

The crystalline presence of the Lord will be experienced, individually and collectively, when God's people rise up and exhibit the right temperatures (i.e. attitudes), both inside and outside. We must get hot enough for the 'frost' to appear on the window panes of our lives and our gatherings. We must create the right atmosphere within our lives and in our midst. Often we do not find a burning within for more of His presence and we miss meeting the Lord. But let us stir our spirits and

get really get 'hot' for the Lord and we shall surely experience His crystalline presence in our midst. If we maintain the right temperature within, individually and collectively, we shall certainly experience His marvellous crystalline presence in dynamic ways.

We know that worship can capture the heart of God, but not all manner of worship draws Him to our midst. There are times of worship, when the temperatures (attitudes and desires for the Lord) are not right and as a result, the Lord remains hidden. At other times, the body 'temperatures' are right, and God is drawn out of His hidden dimension into the dimension in which we are. It is not our zeal, our emotional abilities or our capabilities or anything in us that draws the Lord out of His hiding, but it is the condition of our broken hearts and contrite spirits that God never despises. This is something that needs to be set seen and set right. Many times we do not maintain the right 'temperature' in our hearts and so we are not 'hot' enough for the Lord to manifest Himself in our lives and in our midst. Thank God for His hand upon our lives and for His workings in our midst. When lives that are being worked upon by the Holy Spirit come together, a certain spiritual climate is maintained. When such lives are 'hot' for the Lord, within and without, there will most certainly be a dramatic manifestation of the crystalline presence of the Lord. Such experiences are very precious, Saints of God.

God does not intend to hide from His people and never be found; He is careful to hide Himself so that He may always be found by His people. He wants to be found. He wants us to find Him in these days. Can you really take it in and accept this

in your heart? Can you perceive in your spirit that the Lord is waiting for you to find Him and not vice-versa? While in our midst, He waits for us to arise and meet Him. He is waiting for you and me to find Him. He is ever desirous of unveiling Himself to us. His enduring and undeviating desire is to reveal and manifest Himself. The principle and law governing the presence of the Lord is constant. His unending desire is to be present in the midst of His people; He wants to inhabit His people; He wants to make His habitation amongst His people for ever.

The thought of the Lord waiting and longing to be present in the midst of His people has broken my heart several times. Whenever we gather together to worship the Lord, I look forward to His presence and nearness. There is an expectancy and anticipation in my spirit when we meet corporately. Sadly, we miss His real presence many a time. This brings a great sorrow within because **though He is there, present in our gathering, yet it is as if He is not there!** It is as if He is not able to invade our lives and come from the heavenly realm into our realm because we were not spiritually warm in our hearts. It seems that often we are not able to rise up to that temperature that is needed to bring forth His presence. We may do many right things outwardly, but if our hearts are not right and warm enough for Him to appear, then we miss meeting Him and experiencing His manifest presence. My prayer is that these mistakes would not be repeated. We really need God's help every time we gather to worship and exalt Him! We must remember that we are no longer coming together to satisfy an order of worship, or to complete some kind of formality. Our perspectives will change as our eyes remain focused upon the Lord.

The Presumptuousness of Uzziah

Isaiah 6:1. In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

One significant feature we see in this verse is that Isaiah experienced two things – **death** and **dependence**. On one side there was a death and on the other side there was a dependence upon the living God. **One king had died and another King took his place. God cannot be king in our lives until all other kings are done away in our lives.** Many times, we depend upon our natural abilities, strengths, mental understandings and available talents. This shows that we remain dependent on the king of the fleshly realm rather than upon the spiritual King. If we depend upon the king of the fleshly realm, then the patterns of God's presence will never be something realistic and we will not be able to experience His manifest presence in our lives.

Isaiah was a close relative of King Uzziah and in many ways he was intimate with the king. Uzziah was a popular king, but he sinned against the Lord. We read of Uzziah's life in the book of Chronicles. In the beginning of his reign King Uzziah sought the Lord and God made him to prosper (2 Chronicles 26:5), but subsequently he fell from grace because of his sins:

“But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him,

and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.” (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). Uzziah committed the same basic sin that King Saul had committed against the Lord. Saul sinned against the Lord through presumption, pride and disobedience.

We see this very clearly from the account of Saul's sins in the book of 1 Samuel. “And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from

me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: **I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.** And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.”(1 Samuel 13:8-14)

Uzziah's main sin and the subsequent cause of his unclean flesh, was that he mishandled the glory of God in presumption. He transgressed in his presumptuous approach to God. He insisted to do things his own way, instead of doing them in God's way. In his pride, he chose to do things in his own way thinking that he well knew how to do those things. Beloved we have to be very careful that we do not handle the things of God in presumption. A presumptuous approach to God will cause us to transgress His holy ways. Presumptuousness was the cause of Uzziah's unclean flesh. We must never try to do things in our own way when it comes to the handling of God's things. We need to be very careful. It is incumbent upon all of us to ever be sensitive and know that we cannot bring our unclean flesh into the things of God. The realm to which God has brought us, in the mercies of God, necessitates caution and we need to wait and seek the Lord before taking any step in our pride and arrogance. The priests confronted Uzziah with the

provisions of the law of God but he was not willing to receive their corrections. Many times we continue to do things in presumption and proud disobedience, contrary to what the Lord has made clear to us.

As a New Testament church we need to be very sensitive in these days. We are all priests unto God; we all are equal in Christ, and yet we need to be aware of the operations of His government and of His grace in our lives. These matters concerning the government of God and the operation of His grace cannot be explained in the course of the contemplation of this word, but we need to know that though we all have great privileges in Christ through His grace, yet we also experience some restrictions and limitations in our lives because of the operation of His government upon our lives. For example, the Apostle Paul says that in Christ there is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28) for all have the same grace in and through Christ. We share the same privileges by God's grace, whether it be a matter of being born again, or of baptism in water or of the baptism in the Spirit. But when it comes to the government of God, man is the head of the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). To know more about the government of God, I would encourage each one to please take time to read Volume 2 of the book, 'We have come unto Mount Zion'.

King Uzziah breached the governmental order of God when he offered up incense unto the Lord in the manner of an ordained priest. Uzziah was seduced by the power of his own importance and strength. Even when he was told by the priests in offering incense to God at the altar he would be taking a wrong step, he was unwilling to retreat.

“And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incens altar.” (2 Chronicles 26:18,19)

Uzziah's Syndrome

May God help us to understand what it means to defile God's governmental principle. May the Spirit reveal our shortcomings to us, for many of us have missed God's best in our lives because we have been presumptuous and unwilling for correction. Beloved, God's wisdom brings us into His divine arrangements and orders so that we may move on to higher ground and progress spiritually. Over the years, I have seen how many believers belittle God's divine arrangements and make a shipwreck of their lives. We need to be careful and maintain a watch over our lives. We need to ensure that we do not give any place to religious presumptuousness. Let us not be like Uzziah who being corrected would not retreat from his pride.

What a difference there is between kings like Uzziah and David! What a great dissimilarity there is between the Saul and David as well! David offered himself to the Lord in brokenness and a contrite spirit. When he was corrected by Nathan he submitted meekly, in total dependence upon the Lord. Such a heart brought David into the inner chambers of intimacy

with the living Lord. **Uzziah assumed he was worthy and barged into God's chambers with an offering immersed in the fragrance of pride and presumption**, while David maintained a sorrowful, apologetic and rueful condition inwardly. The Uzziahs and Sauls of this day continue to assume they are worthy, while they make offerings immersed in their pride and presumption. But the Davids today will always approach the throne of His grace with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. This is the difference that makes complete sense to the spiritual man! May God help us to understand what the Spirit wants to do in us inwardly! May God's people never come into the presence of the Lord with presumption and a proud spirit like Uzziah had!

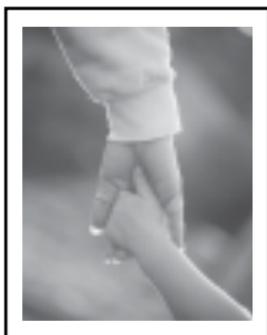
Many times believers think that they are righteous and worthy because of Christ, but at the same time they harbour an attitude of pride and presumption. We thank God that Christ has made us worthy, but we need to understand that the worthiness and righteousness that come from Him will never bring us to a place of pride, conceit, arrogance and haughtiness. If we study the life of the Son in the gospels, we will be able to catch a glimpse of the spirit that ruled the life of the Son. Our position in Christ must never become a matter of arrogance; it should lead us to have the humility that was in Christ Jesus. Our worthiness in Christ should always lead us to greater humility and brokenness. The un-worthier we are, the more broken we shall be. May God help us to understand this!

David was not a priest in the Levitical order, yet God gave him the great privilege of intimacy with God. David was able to enter the innermost chambers of God's presence because of

his heart towards the Lord and His purposes. No wonder the Lord says, "*After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David - - -* (Acts 15:16)." May we never underestimate the glory and the presence of the Lord! Though Uzziah underestimated and undervalued God's holiness, and blasphemed His name, yet the Lord in His mercy spared his life.

In the time of David, there was a man named Uzzah who drove a cart on which the Ark of the Lord was being carried. When the oxen began to shake the cart, Uzzah put out his hand to steady the Ark and God smote him to death (2 Samuel 6: 6 & 7). The unclean flesh of Uzzah touched the most holy, golden, Ark of God and God's hand of judgment came upon him with speed and certainty. Uzzah's death was immediate, but king Uzziah, by the mercy of God, was not mortified. He succumbed to the seduction of his strength. This godly king began well and hence the Lord spared his life. He underestimated and undervalued God's holiness. Ironically Uzziah means 'strength'. As we read in I Chronicles 26, God permanently branded Uzziah with leprosy on his forehead, while he was still in the temple of God. In Uzziah's case, God caused him to suffer a physical ailment when his prideful flesh came into unauthorized and unprotected contact with the holiness of the living God. When he was confronted with his sin, he dared to rise up in rebellion and defiance against the priests of God. His unclean nature rose to the surface, permanently revealing what he really was. It disqualified him to rule and his son came in as regent while he probably continued to rule as the power behind the throne! In the beginning Uzziah prospered, but when he stopped seeking the Lord, he also stopped prospering. He also was disqualified from being buried with the kings of Judah because of his leprosy. It seems that Isaiah was still mourning the fall of this anointed, but tragically condemned leader, when God restructured his

ENCOUNTERING GOD



Change Will Be Our Companion

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” (Isaiah 6:1)

Many of God’s people, like Uzziah, approach God in their own understanding and in their own ways. Uzziah breached the governmental order of God when he offered up incense unto the Lord in the manner of a priest. Uzziah was seduced by the power of his own importance and strength. Even when he was told that he would be taking a wrong step if he offered incense at the altar, he was unwilling to retreat. God is bringing an end to our own erroneous ways, thoughts, approaches and methods in these days. May God really help us as individuals and as body of believers! God’s thoughts need to govern our lives. For this to happen in a real way, many things of the flesh and the self that yet remain in our lives need to be removed. Though we have much pride and presumptuousness, we can be grateful to God for not cutting us off from the house of God, as He

did with Uzziah. It is only because of the unceasing mercies of the living God in our lives that we remain a part of His remnant in this hour.

Beloved, there are many brothers and sisters who made a good beginning in the Lord, but later in their lives they missed out on God's specific purpose and plan for their lives. They began well, but today, they are no longer linked to God's progressive purpose in the Lord Jesus. Like the old generation of Israel that was cut off from God's purposes, these brothers and sisters have also not been able to enter into the full desires of God for their lives. Therefore, we need to be very sensitive in our lives. We need to carefully examine how we seek God and how we approach the Lord personally as well as corporately. With due respects to brothers in responsibility, here and in other different places, I would like to add that we all need to be extremely sensitive to the Spirit of God, **for we all tend to get caught up with the organized system of religion, that we have been so used to in our lives, rather than with the things of the Spirit, which are of life.** May God help us to understand the seriousness of the revealed mind of God in this hour!

Let us ponder over Uzziah's life and dealings of God in him for another moment. One realizes with fear that although Uzziah lived to the end of his days after the judgment of the Lord had come upon him, what this meant to Uzziah was that he had been cut off forever from the house of God and removed from the very purpose of God. **Being alive, he remained separated from the purpose of God and from the house of God!** Let each of us understand that **though he was alive,**

yet he was dead! As far as God was concerned, Uzziah was no more linked to the purposes of God on the earth. Saints of God, it is not a matter of being alive or not; it is a matter of being linked to the Son in God's purpose upon the earth in this hour. O may God help us to value the mercies of God towards us! What is vital and important is to remain linked to the purpose of God for us in this age and time.

How do we come before the Lord? Do we appear before the Lord with sacrifices that are not pleasing to Him? Do we come before Him with some kind of religious presumptions that pollute our offerings and worship? Do we enter into His presence with our empty religious forms? We need to seriously examine our motives and our demeanor and see what kind of a heart we have when we meet Him. We need to be very sensitive to see whether our attitude of presumption, pride or self-importance has disqualified us from experiencing His manifest presence or not. We are not to judge ourselves by the number of years we have been in the Lord or the years we have been in the local church or the years we have been in the ministry serving Him. These can be matters of religious presumption! Saints of God, if this is our state we need deliverance from the bondage of the 'Uzziah syndrome'. May God help us!

The only answer to freedom from the clutches of the 'Uzziah syndrome' is to experience what Isaiah did when he entered the house of God. Isaiah beheld the Lord and was totally delivered from all the pride, self-righteousness and arrogance that were characteristic of king Uzziah. If we too have such an experience in the house of God we will surely be delivered from the effects of the 'Uzziah syndrome'.

The Bible tells us that when Uzziah became a strong king, his heart was lifted up unto his destruction (2 Chronicles 26:16). Soon he acquired a rebellious spirit and went into the temple of God with a censor to burn incense upon the altar – the offering of which was the sole prerogative of the priests. When Azariah, the chief priest, confronted him with the reality, Uzziah got angry and behaved in a rebellious way. Uzziah's self-righteous, arrogant and presumptuous ways were judged by God and he was smitten with leprosy.

How many times have God's people rebelled and got angry after receiving correction in the house of God? Instead of moving to sorrowful repentance, many of us have vented their displeasure and even anger against the ministers? Many insisted on going their own way when corrected and confronted with the truth. Many times we come into the house of God to make an offering to God in our own understanding, censor filled with unacceptable and unauthorized offerings! We insist on doing something before God that appeals to our own knowledge and understanding. When it comes to our secular jobs, we would never do things our own way, displaying our anger on being corrected, lest we lose our job and be thrown out!

Beloved, we need to be open to the working of the Holy Spirit. **If we remain open and yielding, we will be convicted of our offensive ways and mentalities**, which we often insist upon in approaching God and in doing His things. **What we need is burning lips and a hot heart!** That is what I call the '*Isaiah*' experience. A single hot coal from His altar will burn our lips and will cure our problems, will change our ways, and will change our past pursuits. Receiving a burning coal in the

house of God will change us – it is able to perform a great work in our lives. What we need is burning lips that have been touched by burning coals.

If the eyes of God's people are able to behold the Lord, then inward change will be their constant companion. The Lord's people should cry out to God to show His glory. Let the cry of our hearts be: "Lord, You have told us to seek Your face. Lord now we gather in our immaturity even to seek Your face. Lord, show us Your glory." **Instead majority of His people are trotting around in diapers of immaturity.** We do not even know what we are doing. We know that the 'Father' is in the house and we are hunting for Him!

Beloved, we don't have to be mature people to seek the Lord. We can seek the face of the Father even as infants. The Lord will never refuse the cry of His children. He longs to reveal His face to His children. Remember Moses who cried, "Father, show me Your glory". This has got to be the longing of our hearts. Despite what we are, we need to cry out to God to turn to His people. And, as we behold His face we shall be changed from one measure to another, from a lower degree of life to a higher one, from one level of glory to a higher level.

Your Life Has Room For Only One King

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” (Matthew 2:13-15)

There is room for only one king in the economy of God! When the wise men of the East went looking for the infant Jesus to worship Him, they first went to King Herod's palace, expecting Jesus would be born in the palace! But when Herod came to know that a King had been born, he was sorely troubled. Herod not only rejected the baby Jesus, the King of kings, the Lord Jesus, but he passed an order to put Him to death. The Bible tells us that an angel told Jesus' father, Joseph, to evacuate baby Jesus to Egypt. What we need to note is that after going to Egypt, the King of kings never came back to Jerusalem while King Herod lived and reigned. It was only after the earthly king had died that the Heavenly One, the King of kings, the Lord Jesus, returned, once again to Jerusalem. Jesus did not return until Herod was dead! **If you are to insist on retaining the ruler-ship over your life, God will just evacuate Himself and wait until something dies in you and despondency is recreated within you!**

If the natural, earthly man in us insists on ruling over our personal lives (as Herod the king ruled upon the lives of the Israelites), God will take Jesus out of our lives. The presence of the Lord will be evacuated from our lives. God will allow His presence to depart from us, and only after that which rules us dies within us, will there be a returning of His presence. May each of us be enlightened and cautioned this day! If we adamantly hold on to the rule of the Adamic man upon our lives, God will some day evacuate His presence from our lives.

God will wait until the rule of the natural man is brought to death before returning to occupy our beings. **In the economy of God there is room for only one king in our lives.**

The Lord waits till the unruly king within us is deposed. This calls for a greater dependency of man upon God. The Lord is looking for that dependency to be created in our lives. This is so true. God is not able to work in our lives because we insist upon retaining the ruler ship of the natural man in our lives. This is the reason why God is not able to bring changes in some areas of our lives, but He is waiting for us to dethrone the natural man and get rid of the rule of the unlawful occupant of our lives.

“But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.” (Matthew 2:19-21)

Beloved, dead fleshly kings make way for the living spiritual King and His kingdom. That is the divine pattern. In our lives, when that which stands up against God is brought to an end, God's mighty presence will be experienced by us in a fresh way. There will be a returning of God's mighty presence when Herod, the natural king within us, passes away. If we persistently deny the mind and rule of the flesh, in the days to come, we shall experience greater changes in our inward beings. All those who remain open to the working of the Holy Spirit will experience a returning of the Lord in greater dimensions.

When Herod's rule upon our lives is brought to an end, the Lord will appear in greater measures. There is room for only one king in our lives in the economy of God. We need to make greater room for Jesus, the King, in our lives and surely, He will appear again unto His people. And there will be greater deposits of His person and His presence in our lives.

In the year that Uzziah, the king, died, Isaiah experienced a greater dependence upon the Lord. His dependence upon the Lord brought him to a place of renewed and recreated life. **Every time we die to the self, the death that takes place in our lives brings us to a greater place of dependence upon God and fresh life is re-created within us.** Being the king's cousin as well as his preacher gave Isaiah tremendous influence in the palace. When the king died, Isaiah was totally shaken. The king's death brought about a greater dependency upon God. It created the right climate for a visitation of God in his life.

Isaiah was a regular and habitual visitor at the temple. He had been to the temple unaccountable number of times to meet the Lord in prayer and worship. There is no way one would be able to measure or count the number of occasions that Isaiah met the Lord and experienced the grace of His presence. However, on that day, after the king had passed away, Isaiah truly had a new, tremendous experience in the temple. Talking of meeting the presence of God in Church, sometimes people remark, "We had a tremendous experience! It was great. It was unlike anything we had experienced earlier." However, they have experienced something divine in a limited way. They do not have the measuring rod of His presence with them to

measure their experience. Their eyes have not been open to see the deeper levels. In their specific experience, the level of His presence may be said to have risen to the level of the knees only. But there are deeper levels of His presence that lie ahead.

“And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ancles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. (Ezekiel 47:4-9)

Some people experience the working of God in their lives up to the knee level. For them that is the limit! They think that that is the highest-level God has for them. A fewer number of

people are open to experience God up to the waist level. But they also come to a settled place in their lives! Like the disciples who accompanied Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration, **such people would like to stay at that place and build three tents at the place of their meeting the glory of the Lord!** However, we need to know that there are greater heights and deeper depths to which we must move.

Let us ever be grateful to God for what He is doing in our lives. However, while we remain grateful, we need to make sure that we do not lose our hunger for the Lord. A grateful heart can sometimes take away the hunger for greater desire for His presence. We need to guard against losing our thirst for His presence in the light of His favours and grace. We need to remain grateful for what God has done, but we must also have a hunger for greater dimensions of God. **Israel was grateful for what God had done, but they had no hunger for what He yet wanted to do. They sang songs of praise, deliverance and miracles but they had no desire for the fulfillment of God's purposes. How true it is today!**

We have to be very careful not to feel satisfied with the level of God's presence we may have experienced. There are deeper levels of the Lord and His Presence we need to yet experience. We always need more of God; and more of God is always available to us. May God help us to understand this! We need to thank God for His presence in our lives, at whatever level we have, but this should bring us into places of greater hunger for Him. We need to look beyond the level of His present presence so that we may have greater depths of the Lord. May we ever keep saying, "There is more...there are

waters to swim in”

There were times when I had experienced His presence in depths that I always yearned for. I am truly grateful for the intimate times I have had with my God, but I long for many more of such moments of His manifested presence. I long for those moments! I am grateful to God for every increase of spiritual level, yet I yearn for greater measures of His person and His presence. The depths in me call out to the depths in God. A deep hunger for God will cry out for the deeper waters of His presence. The cry of Moses to see His glory echoes in my inward being. I feel like echoing the cry of Moses, “Show me Your glory”. The glory of God is ever the cry of the restless remnant. They will see Him in greater measures these days. God's presence should never bring us to places of settlement, but should draw us to measures of greater hunger for His presence.

Isaiah went to the Temple umpteen times and left with many good impressions on his spirit. However, he always cherished a desire to see the Lord in greater dimensions and depths. We may have felt that coming to this body of believers was greatly edifying and profitable. We may have even met the Lord in measures at every meeting. We may have been encouraged in the spirit and felt that this was right for us, even as Isaiah felt. However, let us remember that, one day, suddenly, Isaiah was able to behold the Lord in the Temple, the house of the Lord. This should also be the desire of our heart.

The Call of the Altar

“Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” (Isaiah 6:2-5)

Many times Isaiah had “been to the church” and left saying, “That was great, awesome, and incredible. We had a good service”. He felt so because he did not have any measuring rod to gauge his spiritual experience. **So he felt everything to be good and great until one day God really showed up!** The conditions were just right for the pattern of His presence to appear and suddenly Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up. It was different from all the other impressions of His glory that he had had. It can be so for us as well. In the past gatherings, we may have experienced numerous feelings and impressions. Perhaps our spirit carried a variety of revelations, understandings and thoughts in the past, but in the days ahead, these encounters are going to be different. We have always felt that the last camp meetings were most precious; but it will be different when we encounter the Lord in a fresh way. God wants us to meet Him in a way we have not had before. Such an encounter with the Lord will bring dramatic changes in our lives. In the past, at the close of meetings we might have made new resolutions and commitments, but in the fresh apprehension and visitation of

the Lord, we shall find that we will leave the meetings with burning lips and melted hearts. Like Isaiah we may have had many impressions of His glory in the house of God. But these encounters are going to be different from the opinions and impressions that we carried in our hearts and spirits in the past. It will be different when we encounter the living God. We will be changed within and God wants us to be different. God's intentions and desires are that we may encounter Him in these days. It is not a matter of experiencing something awesome and precious, but of being changed in our inward man .

You may read Isaiah chapters 1 to 5 and you may notice their contents and context. But after Isaiah experienced the glory of the Lord, he began to prophesy quite differently from the way he had been doing. After chapter six of the book of Isaiah, we encounter sixty more chapters of incredible prophecies, prophetic declarations and prophetic visions. Isaiah's life after chapter six when he saw the Lord high and lifted up, was drastically different. The coal of the altar touched his lips and brought about a radical change in his life. The way he began to see things thereafter were totally different. Amazingly, Isaiah began to prophesy about the Messiah in words that astound us chapter after chapter: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" and so goes on his declarations of God. Beloved, an encounter with the Lord and a beholding of the Lord is going to bring such tremendous changes in our lives that we will be ever amazed. If we ever see Him we are going to be totally changed. Beholding will change us. Suddenly, the person and the presence

of the Lord is all that will be reflected in our lives.

Beloved, all of us carry the potential for the ‘frost’ to appear in our lives. Even if the ‘frost’ is not appearing on the windows of your life today, you can be assured that there remains a potential for the ‘frost’ to appear. The ‘frost’ will appear and reappear in your life as the temperature within your spirit for His person increases. You will come into a greater awareness of His presence, irrespective of where you are. You will experience Him in fresh ways that will leave lasting impressions and registrations upon your heart. You will become a man or a woman who cannot but chase God. You will capture the heart of God. You will become a God-chaser. You will not be satisfied with the condition of your heart. You will come into a new awareness of the Spirit in some new way. Your heart will yearn for Him. You will have but one focus in your life and that will be of the Lord. You will be like Mary, who cried out when she came in search of the Lord, “Where have you taken my Lord? Where have you laid Him? Where did you take Him?”

Some are experiencing this in measures in their lives these days. God is doing something precious in their lives. They are broken hearted and of a contrite spirit. God takes delight in them who are of a broken heart and of a contrite spirit. When you have encountered Him in your lives in such measures no one else and nothing else will satisfy your heart. It is an experience many of us need to come into.

When Isaiah came into the temple of God, he saw six seraphim worshipping the Lord, simply doing what they were

created to do! They were crying out the praises of God in perfection. There were angels and seraphim crying out to God in total harmony and perfection — beating the atmosphere with their wings while covering their faces and their feet in humility. Although God is experiencing such high praise and perfect worship in the heavenlies, **yet He waits to hear the praises of His people on the earth.** This is amazing by all account! He longs to hear the cries of praise and worship of His people on the earth in preference to the worship of heavenly beings! When the Lord hears the faint praises of “Holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty”, from His people on the earth, something will happen. May be the Lord will tell His angels, “I hear the voice of My redeemed. I cannot ignore it; I must go and meet the redeemed of My people, whatever else may be happening in the heavens.” In a twinkling of an eye, the manifest presence of God is transported from heaven to earth, to the middle of a tear-stained circle, singing “Holy, Holy.....”. God will surely leave His magnificent throne of Heaven and come to the earth to be enthroned on the praises of His people! God will leave the heavens and be drawn to a company of people on the earth, and He will come to that company of saints who are seeking Him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit – a people with imperfections, but with a broken heart, crying out to Him. He will leave His heavenly realm and come into our realm. That is what our God will do!

I want to be in that company of people! I want to be with a people who are hungry, who have a raw hunger, who are hungry and seeking the Lord and worshipping Him with all their hearts. The Lord will leave His magnificent throne to be with such a people on the earth. The Lord will leave the heavens

and come to this earth to be enthroned by a tear stained people crying out to Him, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.” **My longing is to be with that remnant, that few, who have a raw hunger for God, who will worship Him in spirit and in truth, and will pay any cost to meet with Him in these days.**

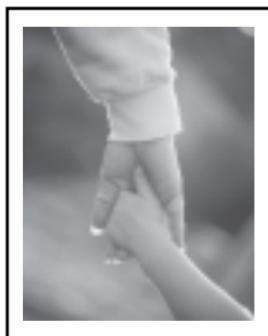
If you have ever had an encounter it will ruin you and the saints with whom you gather! If you have experienced the presence of God as Isaiah did and if you have encountered Him in your life, the things of this earth and the things that go on today in many Christian circles, will never satisfy you. You will not be able to accept man-centered worship activities that only satisfy the heart of man. You will not be able to hear man-centered sermons and man-centered songs ever again! Those things will make you sick; going through those motions will make you sad. Saints of God, **our heavenly Father wants us to rediscover the joy of innocence and excitement of His revelation and appearance in our lives.** God wants us to rediscover the joy of innocence and excitement in our encounters with Him.

Many times when we grow spiritually, things begin to change, even as we see changes taking place in our children when they grow naturally. When the children are young, they run to their fathers, they long to be with them! But when they grow up, they take their fathers for granted. The children become familiar with the things at home. Have you noticed that as they grow? They become arrogant and lose their innocence! This is what happens to many of us. We develop an attitude towards the body of Christ, towards worship, and

towards many things of God. We cultivate a certain mentality about the church, the messages we always hear, and the worship we have that reflects our familiarity towards God. We develop a kind of an attitude that says, "This is just another of our usual gatherings; this is just another Bible study; it is no different from the ones I have attended in the past. I can join them later and still I will not miss anything." This is the kind of attitude that destroys our spiritual lives. It is very dangerous. It is necessary to bear in mind that while we progress on in the Lord, we must never lose our sense of innocence towards the Lord. We should maintain our innocence. The Lord said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." We need to maintain that innocence. We need to watch over any arrogance that may come in to us as we grow in the Lord. A broken heart and a contrite spirit will keep one in a place of innocence. It will bring one to a place of desperation. It will keep us in a place of discovering Him afresh day after day. God's purpose is not to hide from us, but that we may seek Him. There is a joy in discovering Him in our lives. **Behind every song that we sing, there could be a fresh discovery of His presence.** That is what happens now and then in our midst. Though we may have sung a song many times over, yet every time we sing it again, we discover the Lord in a new and fresh way. At one time we learned to concentrate upon the meaning of the words we sang, but **now God is taking us further into discovering the Lord and His presence in the words we sing.** This is tremendous! My prayer is that we all may experience this, **that every song we sing may be a fresh discovery of His person and His presence and even a fresh revelation of Him.**

Beloved, when passionate pleas replace dry discourses, Church can become the celebration of His

DISCOVERING GOD



Looking Beyond The Veil

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” (Isaiah 6:1)

In that particular day when Isaiah came into the Temple of God, something unique happened to him. Having returned from the funeral of king Uzziah, Isaiah faced a new situation in his life upon entering the Temple of God. He realized that he had been cut off from his earthly source of dependence. The death of the king extinguished the source of his material and natural dependence. Isaiah came to a place where he felt the need to pursue and heavily depend upon the eternal King rather than any earthly resource.

Beloved, the desperate situations that we go through in our lives, here on the earth, create the need for greater dependence upon God. But in circumstances and situations that we face, we often fail to depend upon the Lord. God’s desire is to generate greater dependence upon Him. **Even a few seconds in the manifest presence of God can change everything.** A few second of His presence will reorganize our destiny and rearrange our lives in new ways. You will never be

the same. The Apostle Paul spent just a few seconds in His presence on the road to Damascus, but it was enough of time to change his destiny and reorganize his life. We do not know how long Paul beheld the Lord or how long that encounter lasted; but we know that that encounter completely changed and rearranged the future of this man. The lives of Isaiah and Paul reveal that a few seconds in His presence are adequate to change one's whole future: they were not the same persons after their encounter with the Lord.

The prophet Isaiah lived at a time of gross apostasy when situations were most unfavourable. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." (Isaiah 1:2-4) It is the same today for the climate is so far from what God has designed for His people. We may realize that what is happening today is not according to God's pattern and yet, we could be caught up in those very things. We talk of them being wrong, but we ourselves can be caught up in those very realms. Even those who really want to have God's highest in their lives have to be careful. Talking of the things happening all around us will not help. There are so many seminars and meetings going on all around to try and solve the problems in spiritual life and also in the church. But nothing can really change the situations for they attempt to follow after their earthly understanding and not the heavenly way. Man is

trying to pull all the strings and levers that he can unearth so, that he can rectify and fix things in the right order. But we cannot! If we really want to fix things right, it has to be done in the heavens! It does not matter what is happening around us. You can have an encounter with God right in the midst of religious apostasy. Your desperation will cause you to look past the circumstances, past the veil.

“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto

Gomorrah.” (Isaiah 1: 1-10)

Beloved, the situations into which we enter often make us desperate, but they should cause us to look beyond our circumstances. Isaiah had to look beyond the dark circumstances; he had to leave the past and look ahead, unto the Lord. To look beyond our circumstances we must leave them behind. Our desperation can be of great help in this for the desperation in our hearts will cause us to look beyond the veil. Our desperation can cause us to look past the veil, where our Lord dwells.

I am sure that in the past when Isaiah entered the House of the Lord, he had observed the priests praying behind a great big cloud of smoke that came from the incense that was being burned in the holy place. He would have seen them waving the censers. But on that particular day, Isaiah looked beyond the smoke and he saw the Lord high and lifted up. He looked beyond the veil that separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place, to view the One who was in the midst of the Cherubim. **Beloved, to encounter the Lord we need to look beyond the veil, beyond the things which normally separate us from His presence. To discover God’s presence, we need to look beyond the present situations that surround and overwhelm us. In your quest for the Presence of God you have to look past the priests and through the smoke.**

What does that mean to us today? We need to go beyond the immediate: we need to look beyond the brothers who lead the songs that we sing during our worship; we need to look

beyond those who help us worship the Lord. We need to go beyond the smoke screens: yes, we ought to also look beyond the veil that separates us from the Lord. The deepest longing of the heart should be to go beyond the veil. If we are singing just because the song-leader is singing, then you have stopped at the veil. We need to go beyond the smoke, beyond the songs and beyond the priests; yet how often we are caught up with such things when what we really need to do is to go beyond them, reaching forth to the Lord! We must never stop at the veil in our lives. Our eyes should be focused upon Him and not on anything else. May God open your eyes!

There may be many other things that impede or hinder our moving onward, but we ought not to stop at those places in our lives; for if we do, we stop at the veil. But if we suddenly step forth out of that dimension of the smoke and the veil, then it will be a different thing. You will find that you are not worshipping the Lord because someone is leading the worship; you will not be singing songs of worship because of the good words in the song, **but you will worship and sing unto the Lord because He is there, in our very midst.** We shall **begin to discover Him behind every song!** We shall begin to worship the Lord, not because of the song, the music, or the song-leader, or anyone else, but because the Lord is there, in our very midst. Many times we have missed the Lord because we failed to look beyond the veil.

On that day, Isaiah looked beyond the normal hubbub of activities. Isaiah saw the glory of God that lay beyond and behind the veil. That which was hidden was revealed! Let us never stop at the veil when we gather together, but let us move

beyond the form and the routine, the good and sincere exercises!

The Train Of His Triumph

There is a validation that comes with the Presence of God that changes your perspective. Isaiah stumbled into God's presence. Isaiah saw the glory of God. In verse one we read, "*.....I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.*" I have always wondered what this means. But now I have discovered that there is a precious meaning to this verse. Colossians 2: 15 says, "*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*"

To see the Lord high and lifted up, is to see how the Lord victoriously made a public spectacle of Satan and his powers and principalities, having disarmed him of all power and authority. Jesus disarmed the enemy and made a public display of his defeat. Some writers relate this to the ancient practices of those times. They say that when a general was victorious in battle, he would bring the defeated king into the city square, and place his leg upon his neck. He would remove the enemy's royal robes and emblems strip him of all his costly embellishments and jewels. The jewels would be displayed on the walls of the conqueror's city. Furthermore a portion of the defeated king's robe would be attached to the robe of the victorious king. You could tell how many victories an emperor had won by the number of 'additions' that had been placed on the train of his robe! The train of the emperor's robe declared the victories he had achieved in his time. May the Lord open our eyes!

Isaiah 6:1 (Amplified) says, *“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the skirts of his train filled the most holy part of the temple.”*

Isaiah saw the **skirts of the Lord's train filling the House of God!** This means that the **Lord had won so many victories over the enemy that the train of His royal robe filled the whole house. The victories of the Lord filled the Temple.** The Lord's victories over the powers and principalities were so numerous that the glory filled the temple; His train filled the temple. His victories were displayed in the house.

Isaiah saw the display of the great victories of the great and living God. The Lord whom we seek to encounter is a great and mighty God. He is Elohim and He is mighty. That is what Isaiah beheld on that day when he came into the temple: He saw the victories of our Lord on display. Some times we think we had an encounter with the glory of God, but wait until you have glimpsed Him in His glory! Greater deposits are waiting. Many times we feel we have encountered the mightiness of God, but there are measures of His greatness that we have not yet encountered or come across.

Many a time we think that we have met with God! Ask Isaiah how many times he went to 'church' before the one day he really saw Him. Saints, we should never underestimate the potential of one service. We thank God for the church and for experiences that we have had in this place, but let it all bring a greater hunger for greater measures of the Lord in our lives.

Never underestimate the great potential of His glory from one meaningful gathering we may have experienced. Let us never think that by some special service we may have made unto the Lord, and we have nothing more to look forward to. If you have experienced the Lord in some measure, let the rest of your lives be given to finding and discovering more of Him. If you have seen a crack in the heavens, and if you have glimpsed beyond the veil, adopt a posture that will enable you to behold Him in much greater dimensions. Never underestimate the potential of God after and through one meeting or gathering. Let our hearts be warmed all the more every time we gather. If you have not experienced His manifest presence as you ought to, then all you would want to do the rest of your life is to discover His manifest presence. You just want to be with Him.

Passion Not Perfection Draws The Lord

Does God hide Himself? Yes, He does, but as we have seen He does not hide Himself so that we cannot find Him. He is very careful to hide Himself so that He can be found. We know that God could hide Himself in a place where we would never be able to find Him for He is infinite whereas we are of the finite. He can do so, but we thank God that He does not do that. He hides Himself in the folds of time so that when we start singing a song, however short it may be, with a contrite heart and a broken spirit, we suddenly see Him with our inward eyes. We begin to behold Him with our spiritual faculties though He had hidden Himself in the folds of time. He doesn't hide for long! He hides close so that you can find Him in worship. Undoubtedly it is the Lord who first makes Himself available

and see-able, but for us it is a new discovery of His person in a fresh manner. God is never unapproachable; He does not hide in places where we cannot find Him; He does not hide far away from us. He hides close to us so that we can find Him in the times of our worship and our gathering. **It is our passion that brings Him out from His hiding place.** It is our desperate passion for the Lord that lures Him out from His hiding place. **It is passion and not perfection that will bring the Lord out of His hiding places. It is our passion that will cause God to move from His infinite realm or dimension to our finite realm or dimension.** It is difficult to explain this, but we thank God that we are beginning to experience this in some measures in our midst. **It is not our perfection but our passion that will cause the Lord to descend from His infinite, heavenly realm to our finite, earthly realm.** Amen !

God takes our imperfect praise and perfects it in His own ears. O how we praise God for this! Our Heavenly Father does it in the same way as that of a natural mother does with her baby. **Though a baby cannot utter even two words, the mother understands all that the baby expresses. Those imperfect syllables are perfected! Oh my God, every imperfect syllable from a child of God is perfected in the Father's ears.** This is how our God knows every one of our unspoken & broken and imperfect expressions. **God is not looking for perfect beings on the earth; He is looking for passionate, broken and contrite hearts.** I thank God that He will perfect their imperfect praise in His ears. Jesus said, "Out of the mouth of babes and suckling thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt 21:16). The Father perfects the incomplete,

juvenile expressions of His children.

I know that our imperfections are being perfected in His ears in these days. I thank God for what He is doing in our lives. I can only say, “O help us God!” I have no other words or expressions before God. Even our broken, incomplete syllables, our imperfect expressions, and our inadequate love will be perfected by God in His ears in these days. His heart is moved when He hears the cries of redeemed children. It moves Him to hear the travail of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Our tears of deep conviction and our songs of longing for God, reach His ears. When broken-hearted saints and tear-stained souls cry out to God, the Lord is moved to compassion and mercy. When saints with contrite spirits and sorrowful hearts gather in godly sorrow, there is a definite response from a faithful God. When they reach out to God and cry out to Him, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,” the Father leaves the throne, where the seraphim sing in perfect rhythm and melody, and attends to the cries of His children. **He forsakes the worship of angelic beings in heavenly perfections to perfect the imperfections of His people.** He leaves the heavenly perfection of high-singing choruses and appears in the midst of His weak, tear-stained saints who cry out to Him. God hears the broken-hearted, contrite expressions of His people singing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty”. He takes their imperfect expressions and perfects them in His ears.

The deepest longing of my heart is to be a part of that company of saints who would seek the Lord with such a broken heart in these days. May God deliver us from the arrogance of maturity; may God help us to pursue

Him as do innocent, trusting, toddlers! **If we find His feet while searching for Him, may God help us to remember that His face is not far from us. Look up and you will find Him facing you. Your desperation for the Lord will draw Him out of His heavenly dimension into yours!** But remember that there is no set formula to do this. **We need to have the infatuation of a child;** we need to have the intense thirst of the hart. We have allowed the structures and the forms and the order of man to impede the passion of a child! The Lord said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt 18:3-4). We need to be like children, even though we are moving towards maturity. Let the cry of our heart be, "Lord, I want to find you; I want to capture you; I cannot figure out where you are, but I know you are here. O I need you so much!"

Whenever **there is a display of brokenness and contrition, we can be sure that the Lord is definitely there.** As long as you are pretending that everything is well, He'll allow you to go through it your way. If you think that everything is alright with you, or if you pretend and fake brokenness, He will allow you to go your own chosen ways. The need in our lives is to be broken-hearted, to be a people of godly sorrow in these days, knowing that everything is not alright in our lives. We must quit trying to display our independence, sovereignty, and our religious ways and exercises. Saints, start showing our total dependence upon the Lord. If we do so, even our worship, our gathering together and the ministration of the word will undergo a change. Saints start displaying your full dependence upon the Lord and see what happens. It is something to be

experienced. Let us say, “Lord, I am wholly and desperately dependent upon You!”

Look what happened to Isaiah. He walked into the temple (his church!) in the midst of the prevailing apostasy and happenings in his life and cried out to the Lord. There was an open display of his utter dependence upon the Lord. That is when the Lord showed up! Had not the Lord been present in the temple always? Yes, the Lord was always there in His house, but the inward conditions were not right in Isaiah’s life. He had heard the Lord, he had prophesied, but still it was different. The Lord had always been a part of His life, but the conditions of his life were not just right for a manifest Presence to display Himself. He caught a glimpse of God on that day! That is what it means to be a God-catcher! The testimony of Isaiah, ‘ I caught a glimpse, I saw Him and His train filled the temple, I’ve never been the same since He touched my lips.’

Becoming A God Catcher

Let us always remember that we need to be God-catchers, after which we shall never be the same. Changes will be part of our lives. It is not just our words, but it is our passion for Him that will bring His presence into focus in our lives.

How hungry are you for the Lord?

How desperate are you for the Lord?

Can you draw God into your dimension and realm?

Can you find and catch Him?

Have you found His feet that you can now behold His face?

In my experience I have discovered that God sometimes hides in the same place, again and again. **However you cannot formulize love! If you attempt to use formula and equations, God will move the doors of these secret places every time! In this way, the secret place is a secret place every time.** Therefore, we need to keep away from the temptation to establish a technique or a system to meet God. What we need to do is to always have sensitivity and a passion for Him. Remember He does not meet us in the same song time again. Let us therefore maintain the warmth and passion for the Lord at all times.

Saints, **passion knows no logic**; it does not follow the course of human reason and common sense. **Logic would have told Mary not to break the alabaster box and anoint the Lord.** Logic would have said, "You cannot afford to waste this precious ointment." But passion would say, "I cannot afford not to anoint Him, irrespective of the cost involved, I must do this in my life." Passion would bring us to a place where we would do whatever logic tells us not to do. We miss God and His workings many times because we resort to logic and reason. Many people have missed God in their lives because they gave their ear to logic who said, "I cannot afford to..." They failed to attend the gatherings of God's people because logic told them that they could not afford to go to the meetings in the midst of all their circumstances. But if they had a passion for the Lord, then Passion would have told them, "I cannot stay, I must go; I must go and be there."

We can apply this to our lives in many ways. Many times our logic compels us to miss many precious opportunities. We cannot underestimate the potential of the opportunities God grants us! May God help us to be like Mary who had a relentless passion to have an encounter with Jesus. The disciples said to Mary, “Why this waste? We could have sold it and used the money for a better purpose.” But she insisted to continue to pour out the alabaster oil because she had a passion for the Lord.

What happened in Mary’s life? Mary discovered the Lord and experienced Him in a different dimension. The disciples thought that Jesus was in the room with them that day in the Pharisee’s house. Sure, **Jesus was with them in one dimension, but Mary had Him in another dimension!** Herein lay the difference. Mary had opened the door to a whole new dimension; she had experienced Him in ways that the disciples had not because she had a different attitude towards the Lord.

Our meetings with the Lord during the times of our gathering will greatly depend upon our attitudes towards the Lord. The disciples were satisfied that their Master was with them, but Mary with her passion for the Lord opened another door to a new experience with the Lord in another dimension. Many believers are like the disciples, satisfied to be believers, and some are like Mary, with a passion for the Lord and His manifest presence. These two companies can be found in the midst of God’s people! A door to a new experience with the Lord, in a new dimension, can be opened if there is a passion for the Lord. But, if we behave like those disciples without real

passion and say, "He is my Lord; He is my Master; I worship Him; I will follow Him", then there is a danger that we would remain in the dimension in which we belong to Him and have Him. Mary's heart was broken with love for Jesus; she had a broken spirit; she had a driving passion for Him; she was willing to take a personal risk to open the door and experience Jesus in a new dimension. What about you? What will you choose?

Returning From The Funeral Of Our Desires

These are precious days for the display of our passion unto the Lord. God wants to manifest His glory in our midst. He wants to open a door and reveal His person and His glory. He is simply waiting to get the conditions just right: the temperature of the heart must turn to desperation. We have to increase the setting of the knob of our heart so that we approach the degree of desperation; we have to turn the heat on, so to say, till we are absolutely desperate. And surely, the 'frost' of His presence will appear on the window panes of our lives and in the church. We will experience His crystalline presence in our lives in ways we have never had before. Remember, Isaiah spent only few seconds in His presence, but it totally transformed the man's life and ministry. After Isaiah's encounter with God, his theme of ministry and life underwent a drastic change. No longer did he prophesy about the things in general. After that day his prophecies were different. The scholars of the Scripture calls Isaiah the messianic prophet. I was greatly blessed when I was able to connect this to what we read in John 12:41, "*These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*" . Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament prophets.

Let us underline the fact that after Isaiah saw God's glory

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MY TIMES ARE IN THY HANDS (SECOND EDITION)

While many are keen to know the happenings in the natural, few know how to determine the times in the spiritual. If one does not know the times in the spiritual, one will seldom know what to do or what not to do.

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The book brings out valuable historical background of the Church to

portray its ordination, deterioration, restoration and the church's ultimate destination. The Church means more to Christ, than all the wealth of the universe. The Lord loved the Church and gave himself for her.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SON

The word 'Fellowship' is one of the most misquoted and misunderstood words which carries a very shallow meaning to-day. We are called to know the Eternal Son and to have fellowship with Him, without which we will not be able to progress spiritually.

"YE ARE COME UNTO MOUNT ZION" (VOL I, II)

For many today, Zion means a mountain or at best a city in the natural. But Zion is a people in the complete and perfect work of Christ.

I KNEW A MAN IN CHRIST (VOL I, II)

The great Apostle Paul, expressing his deepest yearnings from a Roman prison near the end of His life worded it thus: '...that I may win Christ, and be found in Him...' (Ph.3:8b,9a). What does it mean to be IN CHRIST?

THE RECOVERY OF GOD'S ORIGINAL THOUGHT.

The Church has lost its primal and original character and nature. God's people need to know what is God's original intention for mankind and for the Church.

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