

GOD'S
Manifest
PRESENCE

JOY THOMAS

www.oilnwine.org

CONTENTS

Preface	1
1. A Hunger for His Presence	1
2. Repentance Prepares us for His presence	18
3. False Finish Lines	30
4. Turn His Visitation into a Habitation	50
5. A Passion for His Presence	72
6. The Ultimate Reality of His Presence	85

P R E F A C E

In my visits to different places in the recent past, the Lord did a precious work in the midst of His people. Yet in the midst of it all, I experienced a vacuum and an emptiness in my inner being that was accompanied by a strong sense of His abiding and endearing nearness in many ways. I experienced His nourishing sustenance, His deep workings in the gatherings of His people, and yet every time I returned to the quietness of my abode and sat in His Presence, I could sense God working and doing something deep within my innermost being.

Ever since, I have felt a new hunger for His Presence that seems to have taken deep root within me. In all humility, I can say that God is turning my face to seek Him as never before. It seems that God has set a hunger for His Person deep within my heart.

Dear saints, I am experiencing a driving passion in my heart that whispers that there is more than what I already know or have in my life. At one time, I sought for a knowledge or an understanding of the Word, I looked for new things because I have become familiar with the doctrines and teachings I knew in the past. I had handled them for years and had begun to loath them. But now it is not so. It's different. The Lord has challenged me through the life of some men both in the Scriptures and also in the history of God's people. These men got a glimpse of the Lord and the kingdom, which others only dreamt of. Saints, I know, there's more! One reason why I know there's more is because of those who have encountered the 'more' were never the same! My prayer and the cry of my heart is, 'Lord, I want to see you as these men of old'.

Saints, God wants to repossess His Church in these days. One thing prevents Him from fulfilling His desires - the absence of an adequate

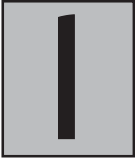
hunger! He will not reveal His Person and manifest Himself if He does not find an adequate hunger in His people. He looks for the hungry in this hour! A true hunger will bring a deep dissatisfaction!

Are you displeased with your style of life? Are you dissatisfied with your spiritual growth in the midst of God's people? Has the absence of hunger caused you to be satisfied with a substandard life in the church? Do you live far from the experience of His fullness? Has success and achievements in the ministry weaned you away from the things of God? If you are hungry for the Lord, you will always remain dissatisfied because nothing but His fullness will satisfy you. Forced to live without His fullness, you will always remain hungry for more of Him!

If this is your state, these messages will minister to you! He longs to unveil Himself to His people! You will be aroused in your inner man to set yourself to seek Him, even the One who loved you and gave Himself for you!

Joy Thomas

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A HUNGER FOR HIS PRESENCE

CHRIST - THE FOCUS OF THE AGES

“For by him(Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”¹

Christ alone is the focus of all things. He is the focus of the ages; He is also the focus of the eternities. What is Heaven extensively looking for and looking at? Heaven is essentially searching for Christ in the earth and its focus is upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven is not looking

for any symbols, figures, types, or representations. Heaven is not even looking for any kind of reality and actuality. Despite what people may think, Heaven is not even looking for the 'church' as something objective. The focus of Heaven is indeed upon Christ and Christ alone. In other words, Christ is what matters to God, and so it should be with His people in the earth.

There are many 'kingdom' teachers on the earth today! They hold on to the kingdom of God as a vision and a perception. Without going into many details, all one can say is that somehow their eyes are not upon the King who rules the kingdom, but upon many other aspects of His kingdom. The coming 'kingdom', and all its glory occupies their thoughts, but they miss the King, the person of Christ, in the midst of it all. Heaven is not looking for the Kingdom of Heaven as a place and an object of perception. It is fallacious to think and speak of the Kingdom of Heaven without thinking and implying that the Kingdom of Heaven is Christ, Himself. In the Gospels, the two are treated as one and the same. The Messiah is presented as both the King and the Kingdom. The very nature of the Kingdom corresponds to the Son of Man, the Christ from Heaven.

As far as God is concerned, the Church is not a subject or even an object! It is a fallacy to think and speak of the Church as a separate entity without knowing that the Church is Christ Himself. The Bible says that the Church is Christ's body. It is Christ. The Church is His bride, His wife. Ephesians five makes it clear that, the Church is His body and that being of one flesh She is an integral part of Him. Beloved, we must make sure that the Church, by itself, is not the object of our attention and devotion. We must not pursue after the Church as an object having a distinctive identity of its own, but rather

pursue after the person of Christ, Himself. It would be a tremendous tragedy if we have the Church but miss Christ! Then we would have the misfortune of having the blessing but missing the One who blesses! God and Heaven are not looking for something called the universal Church. O no, they are not! Neither are they looking out for any local church. The Father's eye is only upon Christ, His Son. God is looking for one thing only and that is Christ!

We thank God for the Church but it must not be a Christ-less Church, for she is the wife of the Lord, Jesus Christ. God is looking for Christ's nature, His life, His conduct and behavior, His virtue and character, His influence and impact, His victory over Satan and the forces of darkness.

The Spirit of God is combing the earth in search for only one thing. The Book of Acts shows us that there were many local churches in the first century. God looked for Christ in the churches at Ephesus, Laodecea and every other place. However, Heaven was interested only in the Presence of one Person in the churches, namely Christ. The Book of Revelation discloses that the penetrating eye of the Lord is looking for something more than just an edifice, a structure, or a gathering of people. The heavenly Father is perpetually looking for that something that is so definite and distinct — Christ, His Son. He is looking for the measure of Him, who defines the very Church. This is His constant desire even today. Our desire, therefore, must be for Christ and Christ alone. Everything in our lives needs to point to Him, for Christ is the ground of our very existence. We gather unto Him. We

seek Him and His Presence! We live to be like Him. He alone is all things unto us, the very centre of lives.

A HUNGER FOR HIS MANIFEST PRESENCE

“The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God, and the Church is famishing for want of His Presence. The instant cure of most of our religious ills would be to enter the Presence in spiritual experience.”²

Our paramount longing should be to seek Him and hear Him in these days. All that matters is the measure of Him that we possess. As you know, during the past three or four years, the Lord has been emphasizing the Person of Christ in our midst. We are experiencing a progressive work of the Holy Spirit in these days.

When I went to different places recently, the Lord did a precious work amidst the gatherings of His people. Yet, in the midst of it all, I experienced a vacuum and emptiness in my inner being that was accompanied by a strong sense of His abiding and endearing nearness in many ways. Throughout the trip, I experienced His nourishing sustenance, His deep workings in the gathering of His people, the prayers of His people, and yet, every time I returned to the quietness of my abode and sat in His Presence, I could sense God working and doing something deep within my innermost being. Ever since, I have felt a new hunger for His Presence that seems to have taken root within me. In all humility, I can say that He is turning my face to seek Him as never before. It seems that God has set a hunger for His Person, deep within my heart.

GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE

He is working and doing something in the depths of my being that has been increasing progressively. I sense and feel that the Lord has birthed within me a new hunger for His Presence that has settled deep within my heart. It is a new hunger for His manifest Presence, His person, and an unveiling of His face. He is turning my face to seek Him as never before. He is enabling me to seek the Lord like as those who have never met the Lord before! I sense birth pangs within as experienced by those who have never been born again! This is no exaggeration, dear brethren. A new hunger for His person seems to have gripped me. It is a new hunger for His manifest Presence, a new hunger for His Person, a longing for an unveiling of His face. I can truly say that it is precious to be in such a place of His grace and working!

David, a man after God's heart, always had a deep yearning for the Presence of the Lord as is seen from Psalm 63, which he wrote while wandering in the wilderness.

“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.” (Psalm 63: 1-8)

The same verses of Psalm 63, in the Amplified Bible, give us another, deeper picture of David's heart cry. “O God,

You are my God; earnestly will I seek You; my inner self thirsts for You, my flesh longs and is faint for You, in a dry and weary land, where no water is. So I have looked upon You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. So I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My whole being shall be satisfied as marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips, When I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the night watches. For You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice. My whole being follows hard after You and clings closely to You; Your right hand upholds me.”
(**Psalm 63: 1-8 Amp**)

Notice how David, the psalmist, sets himself to seek the Presence of the Lord! We find this man in a different realm altogether. Here was a man who ran after the Lord. In verse 8, he says, “My soul followeth hard after thee.” Some versions say, “My soul runneth after thee.” This man had a heart to run and continue running after the Lord. This is what God desires from us. This is what God’s people need to do in this hour. May God minister this to us in the depths of our beings!

Saints, God is going to repossess His church in these last days. Only one thing prevents Him from fulfilling His desires. He longs to be one with His people but He will not do anything superficially and outwardly. Many people in the earth are crying out for visitations and revivals. They seek His Presence but there is one thing that stops Him from manifesting Himself. He will not reveal His Person and manifest Himself if He does not find an adequate hunger in His people. He looks for the hungry in the earth in this hour, but He does not find a hungry people today. A true hunger brings a deep dissatisfaction.

Are you displeased with your style of life? Are you dissatisfied with your spiritual growth in the midst of God's people? Has the absence of hunger caused you to be satisfied with a substandard life in the church? Do you live far from the experience of His fullness? Has success and achievements in the ministry weaned you away from the things of God? If you are hungry for the Lord, you will always remain dissatisfied because nothing but His fullness will satisfy you. Forced to live without His fullness, you will always remain hungry for more of Him!

God's people today do not display the hunger that the psalmists had. There is a strong sense of spiritual poverty and a lack of true hunger in the Church. Many things are likely to happen in these last days. The Lord Himself said that the love of many would wax cold. Will He find faith when He returns? Many shall depart from faith. These very things are happening in these last days. Yet, in the midst of such spiritual apathy, the Lord's desire is to repossess His church. He is looking for the thirsty and the hungry in the earth, in this hour. One thing prevents Him and restrains Him from filling the desires of His people, beloved. He is waiting for His people to have a deeper hunger for His manifest Presence and Person.

I am deeply convicted in my heart that the Lord will only come when we are ready to turn it all over to Him. He is not satisfied with lip service. There is a certain degree of hunger amongst God's people today, but God does not respond to it. The kind of hunger He sees amongst us does not cause Him to long for our fellowship. We do not display the kind of desire that He would like us to have when He comes. The hunger we have is not deep enough to attract Him. It does not draw a reaction from Him. There are many spiritual gatherings taking

place all over the earth, even in our own land, but these do not catch His attention and attract Him. He longs to come to His people but there needs to be an adequate response from us. He would like to come and repossess His church in these days but He is waiting for us to express a deeper hunger towards Him.

Psalm 63 shows that the psalmist, David, had an immeasurable hunger for the Lord. The verses express a hunger that was not limited to a mere expression of the mouth. His whole person hungered for the living God. His entire being cried out for the Presence of the Lord. His was not the superficial cry of a man wandering in the wilderness. He sought and hungered for the living God as one who was wholly dependent upon Him.

A LONGING FOR HIS PRESENCE

“We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,

And long to feast upon Thee still;

We drink of Thee, the fountainhead

And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.”

- St. Bernard.

Verses 22 to 43 of John Chapter 6, show a company of the people who were actively involved in searching for the Lord. When they met the Lord, they expressed their longing for His companionship. They did not sit at home but extensively searched for Him all over the countryside. They took their boats and searched for Him.

The people sounded genuinely hungry. When they heard the Lord, they said, "Lord, ever more give us this bread" (verse 41). However, they murmured when Jesus told them that He was the True Bread. Then they cast doubts about His origin. They had a seeming hunger, for they did say, "Give us this bread.", but, when the Lord presented the Bread, their appetites seemed to vanish.

Today Christianity has a hunger that is somewhat supercilious and superficial. Beloved saints, it is a counterfeit hunger. It is seen everywhere amongst God's people. Such a hunger will not hasten His coming or His visitation. It will not cause the Lord to rush to meet His people. It will not cause Him to manifest Himself amongst His people. He is looking for a particular kind of hunger, which shall attract His attention and touch Him, causing Him to respond with favour towards His people. There is a kind of hunger that God is waiting for His people to have.

God is no respecter of persons. He would like to manifest Himself to His people, but He is looking for something specific in us – a true hunger. He will go wherever there is a true hunger for His Presence. He is coming back to repossess His Church, but we need to have the kind of hunger that He is looking for in these days.

The Word says quite categorically that no flesh shall glory in His Presence. God will not come to His people in their present spiritual state. Our desire for His Presence should be so strong that the flesh would suffer and pine for Him! God wants to manifest Himself in greater measure. Will your flesh be able to bear it? There needs to be a crucifixion of the flesh. This is happening in the lives of some hungry people. They are

experiencing an emptying of the power of the flesh in some degree. When the hunger of God's people grows to such an extent that the flesh is brought to nothingness or naught, then there can be no doubt that the unsaved will come to the Lord. They will be attracted to His Presence through such ones. Even unsaved people will not be able to resist the manifest Presence of the Lord amongst His people. They will be irresistibly drawn to the living God!

SEEKING HIS DESIRES

"I want to deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate." ³

For a long time the Church has been trying to make things happen and work things out in the power of its own strength! However, now, the Lord wants to make things happen by the power of His Presence. God wants us to turn our faces towards Him so that we can begin to see what He is doing. This involves a radical turn-about. Instead of asking Him to join us, we have to take the initiative to join Him! The general cry of His people, so far, has been, "Lord, I have a burden to do this work. I need your help, Lord. Please come and bless my sacrifice and this work!" However, what we need to do is to seek His face first, and know His will and the desire of His heart. Then, we have to give ourselves to the execution of His will. Though our ways are so different to the ways of the Lord, the Lord has set His heart upon drawing a people to Himself. Let us therefore, see what He is doing, and what is upon His heart. Let us not delay to join Him in this hour. That is what Jesus, the Son of Man did.

“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.” (*John 5:19,20*) What a tremendous relationship existed between Jesus and His Father! Read the Amplified version of this verse! “ So Jesus answered them by saying, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, the Son is able to do nothing from himself — of His own accord; but He is able to do only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does is what the Son does in the same way (in His turn). The Father dearly loves the Son and discloses (shows) to Him everything that He Himself does. And He will disclose to Him — let Him see — — greater things yet than these, so that you may marvel and be full of wonder and astonishment.”

The Father disclosed His will to the Son. The Son's eyes were always set upon the Father. He always sought to know what was upon the heart of the Father. Jesus did not say, “This is what I want to do, Father!” He did not want anything for Himself nor did He want to do anything outside the Father's will. He feared to do anything on His own. Nevertheless, His heart was set towards the Father all the time. His cry was, “What are you doing Father? What is upon Your heart? I want to join You in that!”

God is looking for a similar attitude from His people in this hour. God wants to move in our lives, in our families and in our church family as well. This is His longing. This is what He desires. He is waiting for His people to have a deeper change within, a change in their attitudes, relationships, and activities.

This is, therefore, a crucial place and time in our lives. God longs to come into our lives and reveal Himself within us in a deeper way. He would like to enter into the lives of His people, be it individually, as families or as the greater family of God.

Is there a strong hunger and yearning in your depths for the Presence of the Lord? Have you come to a point where you do not care what your near and dear ones, relatives, and neighbours would say? Is your response to God, “Let the people say what they want to, but I deeply yearn for you, your Presence, and your person!” How long has it been since you hungered for more of God? Do you have a hunger for Him that consumes you to the point that nothing else counts?

God is looking for a certain condition in us. Today, we find plenty of religious literature with catchy titles such as, “Ten Steps to God”, “Five Principles to God’s Presence”, “Easy Steps to Know God” etc. These have not helped God’s people to progress and grow. We cannot use some forms and methods to approach the Lord and come into a greater intimacy with Him. First, there must be a deep dissatisfaction within. In the midst of your successes, your accomplishments, and even your spiritual growth, there must be a deep discontent. Forget about what people think of you or have thought of you in the past. Saints, let me challenge you to forget about every distraction, set aside every human opinion including your own, and let the Spirit of God cultivate one thing within each one of us, namely a genuine hunger and thirst for His manifest Presence.

A SPIRITUAL POSTURE BEFORE THE LORD

“The believing man is overwhelmed suddenly by a powerful feeling that only God matters...a mighty

desire to please only God lays hold of him.”⁴

The lives of some men of God reveal that they had a deep and profound hunger in their hearts for God. Then God began to disclose Himself to them, just as He had disclosed everything to His Son, the Lord Jesus. These men of God first set aside the things that distracted and diverted their attention. They got rid of every thing that appeared to be a substitute for the living God. They overlooked contrary opinions. They neglected the things that came in the way of pursuing God. Their insatiable, voracious hunger for the Lord drove them to such a place in Him. They maintained a spiritual posture before the Father, at all times.

“And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. (Genesis 18: 1-9)

Look at Abraham! Look at the posture he maintained towards the Lord who had made a covenant with Abraham. However, after this incident, we find the Lord re-affirming His promise to Abraham saying these words. “And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life: and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him”. (v 10)

There was a hastening of the work of the Lord in the life of Abraham because he maintained the right posture before the Lord. Again, let us remind ourselves that God is no respecter of persons. God does not have a high regard for some people and a lack of respect for others. If we maintain a posture of spiritual hunger before the Lord, He will surely reveal Himself in new ways to us. What matters is how deep our hunger is.

Saints, there was a bringing forth of God’s promise to Abraham. The Lord began to speak to him about the son that He had promised him. There was a surfacing and a breaking forth of God’s work in his life. There was an emphasizing of the promise, once again. God’s promises will not fall into our laps all of a sudden, merely because He has made a covenant with us. However, we all need to maintain a posture before the Lord continually. Because of Abraham’s posture and attitude towards the Lord, the Lord would not hide anything from Abraham. “And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;” (Genesis 18:16,17)

The Lord said to Himself, “Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do.” Just as the Father showed everything to the Son and hid nothing from Him, so also the Father hid nothing

from Abraham. Why did the God do that? He was not honour bound to tell all things to Abraham, but there was something in Abraham that began to draw God to Abraham. That something in Abraham prompted the Lord to think, "How can I withhold this from my friend Abraham?" What a relationship that was!

A people should arise like Abraham to maintain a posture before the Lord from whom the Lord would not hide anything. This is the need of the hour, beloved saints of God. This thought has been lingering within me for many a month. This is not a hunger just to know what is upon the heart of God and become a spiritual celebrity. Nor does it spring from a desire to earn a great name! The hunger within is to come to a place of knowing what God is about to do, so that one can participate in what God is doing in the earth. In saying that He would not hide anything from Abraham, the Lord gave a great 'certificate of friendship' to Abraham. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19)

God's certificate of approval to Abraham concerned his whole family; it was not just for the individual. The whole family of God surrendered themselves to seek the Lord in their lives.

"And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD". (Genesis 18:22) "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:" (Genesis 19:27)

Abraham yet stood before the Lord. It was a quality of life and attitude towards the Lord, beloved. These verses show the hunger that Abraham had for the living God. He maintained a posture of hunger and yearning for the Lord throughout his life. The Scripture tells us that before the Lord, Abraham maintained a certain quality of life that was pleasing to Him. The Bible makes a mention of the lives of many men of God and their families, who maintained a similar posture before the Lord. Take, for example, the life of Jehoshaphat:

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD... And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.” (2 Chronicles 20:3, 13)

They all set themselves to seek and serve the Lord, not only Jehosophat.

“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” (1 Kings 17:1). This shows that Elijah maintained a specific posture and stance before the Lord. The phrase, “Before whom I stand”, speaks volumes. These men of God had a driving hunger for the Lord and they maintained a thirsty posture before the Lord. The Lord began to disclose the secrets of His heart to these men. What do you feel when you read about these men of God? What goes through your heart? See how God invaded the lives of these men. What is gripping your heart this day? Do you feel an awakening within as you read and hear of what God did in the lives of some men of God?

GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE

We need to see what is really happening within us, in times such as these. This is very important. Brethren, it is time for God's people to rise up and pursue His Presence. As we look at the lives of these men, is there a quickening and an awakening within us? Does the Spirit touch your depths when you see how God invaded the lives of these men? As they sought the Lord, God Himself invaded them. No man can influence you in this manner but God can do this in your life. It is time for us to rise up. It is time for us to pursue His Presence. It is time to have a deep hunger for the Presence of God. Is something happening within your being? Do you find that the Spirit of God is laying hold of your life? Saints of God, it is time to pursue His Presence.

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- .1. *Col 1:16-17*
 - .2. *A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God*
 - .3. *A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God*
 - .4. *A.W. Tozer, The Divine Conquest*

2

REPENTANCE PREPARES US FOR HIS PRESENCE

THE WAY TO GOD IS THE WAY OF REPENTANCE

*The lack of desire is the ill of all ills;
Many thousands through it the dark pathway have trod;
The balsam, the wine of predestinate wills
Is a jubilant pining and longing for God*

·Fredric W. Faber

In our previous meditation, we have considered the need for having a hunger for His Person and Presence. God is looking for a people who maintain a posture of deep hunger before the Lord so that He can come and repossess His people, His Church. However, before this, some change has to take place in the lives of His people!

God's people, namely His Church, have lived in self-righteousness and smugness for so long that the stench of flesh

rises up into the nostrils of the Father! The reality is that Christianity, in general, is in a terrible state today. The lives of God's people are far from what God has designed for them. God looks upon their present state with utmost grief, pain, and distaste. One can even say with shame that God is uncomfortable in the midst of His people. As Christians, the disciples of Christ, we are not what we ought to be in the light of His making and design. Beloved, the way out of this miry situation is to repent and seek the Lord for mercy and grace. The present condition of God's people calls for a deep repentance by the Church as a whole. Beloved, the only way to God today is the way of repentance.

According to Matthew 3:2, 3 we know that after a gap of hundreds of years, John the Baptist began to preach with these words: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight".

John the Baptist opens the New Testament with a cry for repentance. He shows that repentance is the way to return to God. Repentance prepares the road of our heart that leads straight to the Lord. Repentance builds up every low place. Repentance brings down every exalted state and high thinking. Both individually and collectively, repentance prepares the way for the Lord to enter our lives. **Repentance prepares us for His Presence.** O may this go deep into our being. Let us not justify our ways, beloved people of God. If we do not have an attitude of repentance, we cannot hope to reach God.

We repented before we received Jesus Christ into our lives, but that is not good enough. Repentance has to work in

us continually. It is time to take note of this. To have a spirit of repentance we need to seek the face of God continually. If we find that we lack in a hunger for the Lord, it is because we have yet to repent of our ways fully. Repentance paves the way to get to God. It prepares us for His Presence. **We cannot live in His Presence without repentance!**

No one can live in the Presence of God without humility and meekness. It is through continual repentance alone that one is able to remain in the Presence of such a Holy One. A perpetual turning to Him and towards Him is necessary – this is what repentance is all about. We need to turn to the Lord in repentance incessantly, to experience His continuous Presence. In other words, **repentance prepares the way for a pursuit of His Presence.** If we hunger for His Presence and want to continue to live in His Presence, then we need to repent constantly. This is something that must grip and take hold of us. Repentance is a continuous process to seek the Lord. God's people require a posture of continuous repentance these days.

Repentance builds the road for us to get to God and for God to get to us! It paves the way to God; it makes our paths straight. It not only makes our paths to God straight, but it also makes God's paths to us straight. It not only gets us into God but it also gets God into us.

These days, when people share their testimony, they usually make a mention of the way they had repented from their sins before they received Christ in the past, may be 30, 20 or a few years earlier. We do thank God for our salvation! We praise God for the repentance that took place several years ago, but what matters now is what the Lord is doing in our lives at present. Beloved, it is not enough to have repented some years

ago. We need to maintain a continuous state of repentance so that God could set our courses right.

When John the Baptist began to preach a word of repentance to usher in the New Testament, the Lord, Jesus came walking up to him! Truly, repentance paves the way for the Lord to come into our lives. A continual working of repentance in the depths of our being, will keep His Presence alive within us.

How long has it been since you said, "Lord, I want you in my life"? When did you last lay down all things and cry out to the Lord, "Lord I desire you and none other. I desire nothing else and no one else in my life." When you pursue God in this manner and run after Him; when you run on the road of repentance and say, "Lord I want nothing else but you in my life", you will surely find Him. If you humble yourself, run on the road of repentance, crying out to Him and setting aside everything else, you will experience His Presence in greater measures in your life!

If we pursue God with all our heart, He will turn to meet us. When we run on the road of repentance, crying out to Him, we will find that He turns to meet us half way. This is what we see in the life of the prodigal son! When he repented of his ways in the midst of feeding with the swine, He saw the Father walk towards him with outstretched arms. Many will try to hinder us from going this way. They will stop and ask, "Where are you going? What are you doing?" However, do not stop to answer them, or wonder what we should say to them. All we have to say is, "I am running after Him. I am going after God. I must meet Him somehow." Let nothing discourage,

daunt, or dishearten you. Let your heart be set on one thing alone. You will meet with Him as you run on this road of repentance. This is not a matter of pride. It is a matter of hunger for the Lord! May we settle this in our heart!

I do not consider myself a finished product of His working. His workings are not over in my life. I wish to share the struggles I experienced when I waited upon the Lord in preparation for the Camp Meetings in Delhi where I shared these thoughts. I hesitated to share these thoughts because it is easy to preach from God's word and to share thoughts from God's word. I had a great struggle. I shared this with many brethren who could not really understand the struggle I was going through. Some of them said, "You always say this and yet the Camp messages do not end with the Camp. They spill over as messages to the local church in the weeks following the Camp." They did not realize that I went through a great struggle before bringing the Word of the Lord in the Camp Meetings. It was only with the assurance of the Spirit that I was able to share these thoughts in the gatherings of His people. I am not through with God but since God is working in my life, He has also given me the liberty to minister this word.

BEING RUINED FOR THE LORD

"No man has truly repented until his sin has wounded him near to death, until the wound has broken him and defeated him and taken all the fight and self-assurance out of him and he sees himself as the one who nailed his Saviour on the tree."¹

Dear brethren, the road of repentance will lead one to God. First, however, one must choose or make a positive decision to travel on this specific spiritual road. One must sojourn on the road of repentance. If you pursue God with all your heart, soul, and body, He will turn to meet you. And you will end up as one who is ruined — ruined for the world! When you meet the Lord on this road, you will find that you are ruined. In the eyes of the world, you will be a waste and a ruin. You will be useless, as far as the world is concerned, but you would have gained a precious place in the Lord's work of recovery. Are you prepared to ruin your life, for the world? Do you have a hunger to serve Him without counting the cost? Is such a hunger gripping you in these days?

“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. 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. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” (Isaiah 6:1-7)

The word ‘undone’ in Hebrew means ‘ruined’. When Isaiah met the Lord in His sanctuary, he cried out and said

that he was ruined. As you run on the road of repentance and cry out to Him, the Lord will not only meet you but you will come out of His Presence, as one who is ruined. The world will consider you a waste and a ruin! You will be ruined and unfit for this world. The religious world will shun you. But, you will be fit for the Lord! Amen.

When Jesus said, "I am the Bread," even the disciples lost their hunger for bread! They lost the desire for the bread of this world, but set their eyes upon the Bread of Heaven. Is this your condition today? Do you feel something deep within your being? Are you able to say and even proclaim, "Lord I am willing to be ruined. I am over and done with the world."

The Lord is tired of the superficiality and hypocrisy of His people. He is weary of their double standards. What His people consider good is just not good enough for the Lord. He is exhausted with their pretentiousness and love for religious, showy, false, outward things. **Their good things have become the enemy of His best things.**

As you read this and hear the voice of the Spirit, I challenge you to let your heart be broken by the Holy Spirit. If you yearn and hunger for the Lord, the Holy Spirit will deal with you and break you. The power of the Spirit of God will crush and break you. It is time to be holy. It is time to make our lives holy. The time has come to choose God. It is time to refrain from many legitimate things that you indulge in. Quit reading other books more than you read the Word of God. Quit watching what you used to watch. Be diligent to redeem the time. It is time to reschedule your priorities and be holy (which really means to be separated and devoted). Therefore, take time to be holy. These are days when we must turn to the Lord

and say, "Lord I need you and not all these other things in my life." **He must be your first and greatest hunger!**

You cannot blame others for what you choose to be. What you choose is what you become! May we, with all deliberation, choose Him. Let us run on the road of repentance, meet Him, and be ruined! The Lord must be your first hunger, the only hunger and the greatest hunger. If you are satisfied with yourself and the way things are working out in your life, the Lord will leave you to fend for yourself and you will remain where you are. The Lord will not disturb your status quo. If you are content and satisfied with your Christian life, the Lord will allow you to settle down. He will not disturb you so that you could safely tread the path of your own choice. But, if you are hungry for the Lord, then there is a promise from the Lord for you and me.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6)

This verse is for those who are hungry and thirsty for the Lord. Blessed are those who hunger for Him. They shall be filled. Our problem is that we have never really been hungry for the Lord. We have not had the hunger for Him that we ought to have had. We have become satisfied with our Christian life. We have sated our hunger by consuming other food. We have allowed things of the world to come into our lives, quench our thirst, and satisfy our hunger. Week after week, we have gone to the House of God to fill the empty spaces of our lives! Our inadequate hunger for the Lord was easily satisfied. Beloved, God wants to change our attitudes of self-satisfaction, complacency, and smugness. **He is tired of occupying the second place in our lives.** Is it not true that He has held a

second place in almost all things? What place does God hold in your life? All things must flow out of His Presence. Have you come to a place of ruin and undoing? What you do depends only on the choice you make. Either you can choose to do what ever you want to do, or you could choose to do His will, but you cannot do both things at the same time.

**THE NEED FOR A HUNGER AND INTIMACY
FOR THE LORD**

Father, I want to know Thee, but my coward heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. Please root from my heart all those thing which I have cherished so long and which have become a part of my living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without rival...Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself wilt be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. Amen ²

For what do you truly hunger? Do you hunger to do many things for the Lord and then in the midst of all your activities give Him second place in your life? This is what is happening in churches all over the world. People gather to worship the Lord, but He is not found in their midst. The music instruments are there, the voices are there, the beautiful songs are there! But, where is the One whom they sought to worship? This is the tragedy that causes my heart to break. The main point is that in the midst of all the worship and the Christian activities that are taking place, He is missing. He occupies the second place in every worship service and meeting!

The motivating factor of our lives should be doing His will and meeting His pleasure. We should do nothing out of a selfish motive. Apart from His will and His pleasure, nothing else should draw us to Him. To do things for Him and forget Him midway is not the way of pursuing God. **What we do must be “Him” and not “His”!** God’s deep desire is for a people who will hunger and ask, “God where are you? Where are you in our midst?”

I am afraid that I may miss Him in my life if I continue to do things the way I have been doing them. I know that I have been saved and will go to heaven when I die, but there is a greater purpose and issue involved. That is what I am worried about. There is a greater issue gripping me these days. There is something happening deep within me and I sense and feel that it is not exclusively for me but for all His people, His remnant. Whatever we do must be Christ. It must be Him. I have found that it is not easy. Our worship must be Christ alone. I am afraid that God’s people have satiated their hunger by doing many other things. We have satiated our hunger for His Presence by opting for substitutes such as songs, interesting programmes, new subjects and themes etc. We have satiated our hunger for Him by filling our lives with many other things. Thus, He is absent from the midst of His people. No one asks, “Where is He?” People finish their meetings and return home! They are satisfied with their worship and their service to the Lord. We have satiated our hunger for Him by many unnecessary activities. They have satiated their hunger for Him by reading His letters to the Churches in the Epistles of the New Testament. We satiate our desire for Him by reading and meditating upon the letters to the churches in the New

Testament and then we discuss our thoughts, and arrange seminars on these things. We are satisfied that we are doing the work of God, but unfortunately, in the process, we miss His Presence.

God's people need to come into a place of intimacy with the Lord. We have shifted our hunger for His Presence by doing things for Him, in His name. The Scriptures call us to have an intimate relationship with the Lord, of a kind that is much higher and deeper than what we have at present. God's people have failed to come into an intimacy with Him. We have shifted our hunger for His Presence by doing many things for Him. A husband and wife can do many things for one other without really loving each another. They may never come to live the married life that God has ordained and designed. Many live at a lower level than God has intended for them. Likewise, we can be a people who do many things for the Lord but in the realm of intimacy, we are far from His intended level of intimacy. Most of us are not prepared to see "His train fill the temple". Saints, let us be prepared to walk on the road of repentance and humility. Let us ask the Lord right now to awaken an old, old hunger that we have almost lost or forgotten! Perhaps you used to feel a hunger for the Lord in the past, but you have allowed other things to take the place of His Presence.

Beloved brethren, I feel an urge in my spirit to commit you into the hands of the Lord. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I release you from every coldness and every deadness into a spiritual hunger for God to come to a point where you do

not care for anything else! May our prayer and lamentation be

*“Lord awaken that old hunger in me. Lord, I seek you as one who is meeting you for the first time. I come to you as one who is newly born, Lord. O Lord, come forth in me! Meet me on this road of repentance. Lord Jesus, I want none else but You. O my God, where are you? I seek your face, O God.”
Amen*

1. A.W. Tozer, *Man: The Dwelling Place of God*

2. A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

3

FALSE FINISH LINES

PRESSING THROUGH TO THE END

I know that many are settling for far less that God is waiting to give... They have not gained the heights where they can feel the warmth of the sun and yet they are not far enough down to be frozen in the valley. Certainly God is not honoured by our arrested development - our permanent half-way spiritual condition. ¹

Beloved, our deep desire in these days should be for the Lord and for more of the Presence of the Lord. The desire of God's people should be for the manifestation of His (Shekinah) glory in their midst. Everything else and everyone else should occupy the second place. Only one desire should grip God's people in these days — the desire for the tangible glory of the Lord to come forth and remain upon God's people. This should be the primary need of God's people, individually and corporately.

Unfortunately, God's people have built a religion and a life style around appetizers, while completely forgetting the main course. They have fashioned a life style around outward aspects of Christianity. They have become mere 'advertisers' and 'scriptwriters'. They talk of a Christian style of life but fail to live it and express it. This is what we see all around us.

In Christian circles, many fail to move forward towards the finish line. Many fail to press through to the end. Many stop short of the true finish line and are found running towards false finish lines in their lives. Instead of pursuing their course towards the true finish line, they begin to press towards false finish lines. As a result, they fail to receive the prize! Beloved, let us know that if one runs towards a false finish line, one will not receive any reward for one's labour.

The Bible tells us what happened to three, close disciples of Christ on a mountaintop! "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen." (Luke 9:30-36)

On the Mount of Transfiguration, when the disciples opened their eyes and came out of their sleep, they found that they were standing in the midst of a cloud of glory. They saw Moses and Elijah standing beside the Lord Jesus. We find a natural eagerness in Peter. He addressed Jesus as rabbi, which means teacher or master. Then he suggested that three separate structures should be built on the mount for Christ, Moses and Elijah. He desired that Christ, Moses and Elijah stand together. He equated Moses and Elijah to Jesus, as if they were equals. He saw no difference between that which was of the Law and that, which proceeds from Grace. He did not know that the best was yet to come! He arrived at His own conclusions. Peter had no idea of the things that were yet to be through Christ, but right there, he began to draw his own finish lines.

The Father interrupted Peter while he was still talking. Correcting Peter's earth-bound perspective, the Father said, "This is my beloved Son: hear him." We read that everything and every person, except the exalted Lord-of-All, faded from the disciples' sight. "And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone".

Too often, God's people draw false finish lines in their lives, because the flesh sometimes gets excited in matters concerning the Lord. The natural man would like to interpret God's revelations according to the flesh. We like to build our own sand castles, which are quickly built, but easily broken. We desire to make a monument and draw our own boundaries and lines. We choose to make our own memorials and portray our own opinions. In our zeal, we prefer to draw our own conclusions to events and situations, without grasping the whole picture. We feel so good about the spiritual things we have experienced, and delightedly exclaim, "It is good for us to be here, Lord."

Peter did not realize that there was much more in store for him, in the Lord. He had no idea in what manner God wanted to use him in the days ahead. In childish enthusiasm, Peter suggested that the three disciples build some structures (monuments), which did not quite fit into God's economy. At that point of his life, Peter innocently drew a false finish line. He thought it was good to be there.

Many have erected monuments around some good experiences in their lives and have settled there. Many others have false finish lines of having some good service, good music and good messages. We must meet God Himself in our gatherings.

To be honest, I am weary of all that is happening with God's people. I am tired of seeing false finish lines being drawn in the lives of God's people. People draw false finish lines with great enthusiasm. Leaders preach and teach false finish lines, with much passion and fervour. Today, multitudes run towards that sort of thing, but we must avoid drawing false finish lines. We must not be satisfied with some kind of worship that is half-hearted or with receiving some blessings, or attending some good meetings, or being involved in a few spiritual things. Let us all beware of drawing false finish lines in our lives.

God, the Father, spoke to Peter on the mount and told him to hear Jesus. God guided Peter's life. When we draw false finish lines in our lives, the Lord hurries to correct us and put us right. Do we not hear God saying, "Hear ye Him" in a small thin voice? Surely, God's people will receive words of correction from the Lord saying, "This is not a place for you to stay, however temporarily. I would have ye to move forward in my purposes." We must be prepared to meet God and hear

from Him. We need to have a strong desire to meet Him and experience Him in our lives. We need to set our eyes upon the One who reigns in Zion and move on in God's ultimate purpose.

**THE KNOCK UPON THE DOOR OF THE
CHURCH**

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”²

Beloved saints of God, it was to the lukewarm church of Laodicea that Jesus said these meaningful words. The Holy Spirit is standing and waiting at the front door of our churches for some one to open the door. “I stand at the door and knock, if any man . . .” The Holy Spirit is knocking at the door of the Church. He is waiting for the likes of David – for someone who has an unquenchable thirst for the Lord’s habitation. The Holy Spirit is waiting for a man who, like David, would prepare a place for God’s mighty habitation, a place where worshippers would willingly open the door of heaven, with their up-raised hands, so that the glory of God could come down and abide in their midst! The Holy Spirit is waiting at the door of the Church for some one to hear His voice and open the door. David had singers and choirs in the tabernacle who kept the windows of heaven open all the time. How did they do that? They worshipped the Lord, day and night, so that the glory of the Lord came down and remained in the midst of His people. In this hour, God is looking for a person, a church that will hear His gentle knock and open the door for Him.

In the Scriptures, both in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament, we find that the Lord knocks at the

door of His house. In the Old Testament, we see Him prophetically knocking at the door of His own House, seeking the attention of His beloved people, in the Song of Solomon, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." (S of S 5:2)

The Lord is knocking at the door of His own House! In the New Testament also, He is seeking the attention of His beloved, the Church. Why is the door of His own house locked? Who has the key to the door of His house? The door is locked because He has given the keys away. To whom has He given the keys? We read of this in the book of Matthew. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:18,19)

The Lord has given the key of His House to His own people! He has given His people the strength and ability to open the windows of heaven and close the gates of hell! In other words, **the Lord has given His Church the keys that will unlock the door to His own appearance!** If His people open the door, He will enter in. Opening the door will lead to His very Presence. The latch is on our side! Beloved, the Church has locked and bolted the door from inside. The door is securely locked from within. Therefore, it is up to His people to open the door so that He may come in! Who has locked the door? The religious traditions of men have barred the door and even closed the windows. There is no way for light

to filter into the Church through barred doors and windows. Religious men have painted the windows of His home with the traditions of man! Nevertheless, the reality is that the Lord has given the keys of the door to His people.

The seeming tragedy in this hour is that the Lord is persistently knocking at the door of His own house, and there is none to listen to His knock and open the door. In the Song of Solomon, we get an accurate picture of the Bridegroom (the Lord Jesus Christ), persistently and continually knocking at the door. We find a double-hearted woman (the Church) say, "I sleep but my heart waketh. . ." She has a divided heart for the Lord. She is able to hear and distinguish the voice of her Bridegroom who says, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, and my undefiled one"; but she responds weakly to say that she is half-asleep. The response of the Church to the call of her Bridegroom to open the door, is no different to the feeble, unenthusiastic, response of the woman to her Bridegroom in Chapter five of the Song of Solomon. "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him." (Song of Solomon 5:2-6)

The Lord's bride-to-be, the one He loves, the one to whom He is betrothed, has become too comfortable in her present state. She has become too relaxed, satisfied, and contented. She refuses to open the door because it is inconvenient for her to do so. The cost of intimacy seems too high for her. She is highly indifferent to the Lover of her soul. She refuses to bear any discomfort and

inconvenience for His sake. The discomfort has brought an apathy that causes her to move too slowly and casually when the Beloved knocks at the door! She is unwilling to move out of that position of ease and comfort. O, she is too casual in her attitude towards her Beloved! This perfectly mirrors the manner in which the Lord's people are responding to His knock in this hour.

“I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.” (Song of Solomon 5:6)

The moment the knocking ended, Solomon's bride arose to open the door. Finally, she got out of her bed or resting place, moved to the door and opened it. She took the keys and unlocked the door, but He had left. This is a close parallel to the Church. When the knocking stops, we will finally arise, like Solomon's lazy bride! Solomon's bride finally runs to the door to unlock it, but all that is left is his fleeting fragrance in the place where he used to be! So it is with the Church!

Saints, we need to know that the Lord will not continue to knock upon the door of His Church forever. The knocking will stop at some point of time. The moment it stops, the Church, like Solomon's bride will begin to arise. She will arise to open the door to meet Him, but all that she would get is the sweet fragrance in the place where He once used to be.

Can you hear a voice within the Voice? Can you hear something of what the Holy Spirit is trying to convey to His Church? The time is coming when the knocking will end. We cannot fabricate this knock according to our convenience. The

Church cannot dictate the hour of His knocking. The Church cannot specify or lay down the times of His knocking. It is up to the Lord. The Church can only rely on the pure mercies of the living God.

We see that Solomon's bride arose from her laziness and relaxed contentedness, as soon as the knocking stopped! But it was too late! The moment the knock upon the door ceased, she arose and opened the door. Yes, she was eager and excited when she went to the door to meet her Beloved, but He was no longer there. All she could sense was the fragrance of the One who once stood there. Could this be the fate of the Church?

The Amplified Bible says, "I opened to my beloved but my beloved had turned away and withdrawn himself and was gone. My soul went forth for Him, but now he is gone. I sought Him but I could not find him. I called Him but he gave me no answer."

Dear brothers and sisters, **this is the sad state of the overly content Church.** This is the condition of those who are satisfied and content **with what God has given them.** There is a time when His knock upon the doors of their heart will end. Then it would be too late. As it is written, "I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer".

**WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN THE KNOCKING
STOPS?**

Why do some persons 'find' God in a way that others do not? Why does God manifest His Presence to

some and let multitudes of others struggle along in the half-light of imperfect Christian experience? Of course the will of God is the same for all. He has no favourites within His household. All He has ever done for any of His children He will do for all of His children. The difference lies not with God but with us. ³

Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death. (2 Samuel 6:20-23)

David's wife, Michal, became barren because of her attitude towards David, the king. She valued dignity over deity! She refused to look upon and behold the king in an uncovered state (without his kingly robes). She felt offended and slighted because David danced, sang, and worshipped before the Lord in an uncovered condition in front of his people. She paid more attention to the outward rather than to the inward. She placed greater emphasis upon the dignity of the king before the people, and did not value the desire of his heart to honour the Lord above all else. The Scripture says that she was barren from that day.

Could it be that David was never again intimate with Michal, his wife? Her barrenness may be because he was not intimate with her any longer!. The disgust she felt towards David locked the door to intimacy, joy and fruitfulness! May we not find ourselves barren like David's wife Michal!

Beloved, the Church's reluctance to pay the seemingly high cost of intimate worship is the root cause of her barrenness! The bride of Christ has grown accustomed to living in the King's house, in the absence of the King! The reality today is that the Church does not seem to feel the need to experience His Presence in worship any more! She is content to worship Him in absentia. However, if she would only change and return to the passion and hunger of her first love, she would realize her need and never be content unless the King Himself would be present with her in His house.

Beloved, reluctance to pay the price to meet the King will be perilous to our intimacy with Him. The price seems to be very high in this hour! The Church, the bride of Christ, has become accustomed to the luxuries of the King's palace and the absence of the King of Kings. Michal had already lost fellowship with the King; the Church's condition today is no different. The Church has been living in easiness within the King's palace, quite content in the knowledge that the King is absent. The continued absence of the King has led to a hardening of her heart towards Him and His Presence no longer seems to be necessary to her. Sadly, she no longer misses the Presence of the King!

It is time for God's people to return to their former passion and hunger for the Lord. It is time for the Church to return to her first love. Without Him, she should cease to be

content and comfortable. She should not be satisfied until the King returns to the palace. The Church cannot afford to be at ease until He, Himself is present in the house. She should nourish a deep longing for Him in her heart. However, instead of having such a heart that yearns for Him, the modern-day Church seems to stir just enough to moan and say, "Not now, not now, I cannot get up now as I am much too comfortable. I am sure He can wait for some more time. There are so many urgent problems that I have to attend to at present. He will understand that I am very busy just now. I will open the door later, as I have a headache right now. Let me rest a while more. Is it really necessary to open now?" This is the attitude of many believers in this hour.

When the Lord comes to us desiring to do a strong, powerful, and immense work in our lives, when He is knocking upon the door of our lives, we need to watch our mentality and attitude. **Let us note carefully that the most startling time is not the time when the Lord knocks at the door of our lives, but the time when His knocking shall cease!** The most alarming time is when the Lord will stop knocking on our doors! Solomon's bride was at ease as long as Solomon kept knocking upon the door. However, when he stopped knocking and left, she arose to open the door for him to come in! This couldn't-care-less attitude governs the lives of many people today. They say, "I am tired today. I have a headache now, but surely I will attend the next meeting."

Beloved, what is your mentality today? Are you prepared to pay the cost? Do you value your dignity, your time, and your priorities more than you value His deity?

The knocking upon the door of our hearts will surely come to an abrupt end if we cease to pay any attention to it. We

often ignore the importance of His knock upon our doors, because of our worldly condition. Our life styles, the comforts we enjoy, the desires and ambitions we cherish and the company we keep, often hampers us from responding to His knocks. But, what will we do if and when His knocks stops? No one knows how long we will continue to hear His knock on the door of our life. Reality returns with a shock the moment it dawns on us that our Beloved is no longer knocking! Oh then, we will instantly forget the importance of our comforts and lifestyle — only to find that He is no longer there for He has left us!

**THE PERSON AND NOT HIS FRAGRANCE
WILL SATISFY THE HUNGRY SOUL**

“I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh and my fingers with liquid (sweet smelling) myrrh, which he had left upon the handles of the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and withdrawn himself, and was gone! My soul went forth to him when he spoke, but it failed me and now he was gone! I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him but he gave me not answer.”⁴

The Amplified Bible tells us that when the betrothed bride placed her fingers on the bolt of the door, they come away dripping with the liquid myrrh left behind by the King! When the bride arose to answer the door, all she found was his sweet smelling fragrance at the place where he once stood. The fragrance of His Presence was all she received. Beloved, I fear that if we don't open the door when our Beloved knocks, or if we fail to open the windows of heavens through our repentant

worship or if we remain unwilling to create an opening for God's glory to enter our lives, then at some point of time, all we will be left with will be the fragrance of where He used to be! If we do not open the door when the Dove of the Holy Spirit is knocking at the door of our lives, then all we will have is the passing fragrance of the Lover of our soul. If we fail to open the door to Him, if we are unwilling to create an opening for the Lord to enter, then all we will be left with is the fragrance of His Presence. What a tragedy! All that we will have is His wispy fragrance!

By far, the greatest tragedy in the Christian world today is that people get satisfied with the fragrance of His Presence in some distant past. They are satisfied with the fragrance of where He stood at one time in His visitations, historically. Are you satisfied with the fragrance of His past workings in your life, or do you have a continuous longing for His person? Beloved, let our interest be for the Person of Christ, and not for His mere fragrance. In these days, what will count is the one who cries out for His Person rather than for His fragrance? Is your prayer, "Lord, I turn in repentance to open the door. Lord, I do not want to be satisfied with the scent of your person. Lord, I want the Presence of your person more than anything else in my life?"

Let us thank God for all the past visitations He has made amongst God's people. However, many are happy and content just to smell the fragrance or feel the tingle of where He used to be. They get thrilled and feel a tingle in their being when they read history. Beloved saints, I wish to confess that I am no longer interested in God's past visitations! What about you? The visitations of the Lord mentioned in historical accounts cannot satisfy His true people in this hour!

The cry of God's remnant in this hour must be for the Reviver Himself and not merely for revival! The cry of Lord's people today must not be for a visitation or a revival but a cry must go out from them for the Reviver Himself. Instead of seeking for the One who is the Reviver, God's people are running helter-skelter to find places where revivals are taking place. Some have named their church Revival Church, though the Reviver left them long ago! All their works and efforts are nothing but mere doctrine! The Church instead had memorialized the visitations of the past as if her Spouse has passed away and all future meetings with Him (except the meeting in the sky) are out of question! What a tragedy!

Saints of God, the Spirit of God tells me something different. And it is so with every one who can hear His voice. The Lord does not want me to embrace the hollow memory of what once was! I want Him! We must want Him! If we listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, we shall know when He knocks on the door of our lives. However good and nice our experiences have been with Him in the past, let us not be satisfied with the fragrance of 'where He once stood in our lives'. Let there be a cry, deep within, for His Presence. We must want His Person and not just a sign, symbol or indication of His Presence. We should long to see Jesus in all His power, might, beauty, and glory. Our cry should be, "Lord, show me your face. I am not content with your fragrance. I deeply yearn for your face, Lord. Show me your face."

Would God really stop knocking at the door of our lives? Has God stopped knocking at the door of your life? Can it happen that He will stop knocking? Beloved, let us believe that it can happen for it has happened before.

It is time for us to leap from our couches of complacency, while there is still time. Let us respond to His call, while we can still hear His knock. The Church is hearing the Lord's knock upon the door of the Church in these days, but who will respond? The Lord is waiting at the door. I am hearing that knock at the door of His Church. What bothers me most is the fear that at any moment the knocking may stop! Let us watch out for the knocking because the knocking may stop at any moment. This is the reality. I am not proposing a new doctrine or suggesting a new interpretation of God's word, but let me share my heart. It has happened that the knocking has ended. You may think that you have attained some spiritual stature, or have arrived at some spiritual standing, but if there is no brokenness within, if that deep desire for His Presence is missing, and if your longing for His Presence is only transitory, then you need to be careful. If your attention is moving from the Person of Christ to some other peripheral, minor matter, there is a vital need to exercise great caution, beloved. Let no one be at ease, or content, or satisfied with the state of their spiritual life. God is calling us to a place of beholding Him in this hour. Something from the Presence of the Lord needs to affect and influence each one of us in these days! Let none think that they have achieved something in their lives. Let us be humble and give in to the knock at the door of our life. It may cease at any time!

THE TIME OF HIS VISITATION

And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole

multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.” (Luke 19:35-40)

These verses tell us about the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. His disciples spread their cloaks to pave the way for Jesus, as He rode an untamed colt, into Jerusalem. They shouted His praises. This really angered the religious Pharisees who wanted Jesus to silence them!

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” (Luke 19:41-44)

What a tragedy it was! Please read the Amplified Bible to get another perspective. Verse 44, which is of special significance is reproduced here for you. “And they will dash you down to the ground, you (Jerusalem) and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another; (all) because you did not come progressively to recognize and know and understand (from observation and experience) the time of your visitation (that is, when God was visiting you,

the time in which God showed Himself gracious toward you and offered you salvation through Christ).”

Jesus' words, as He looked over Jerusalem, describe what it will be like when He shall stop knocking – “because you did not know the time of your visitation”. He wept audibly over the city of Jerusalem. The Jews of His time, did not heed the time in which God showed Himself as gracious towards them.

We have not come to know and understand progressively, from observation and experience, the time of His visitation, the time God visited us and showed Himself to be gracious towards us. Some say, God has done something in their lives but they did not give themselves to God in the way they ought to have given themselves to Him. Beloved, the times and seasons are not in our hands. If we fail to know the time of His visitations, it will greatly grieve His heart.

It could be that you were not interested when God was gracious to reveal Himself to you. May be the Lord said to you, “I knocked at your door but you never answered. I visited you but you received me not.” After Jesus addressed Jerusalem with similar words, He wept audibly, intensely, and with great grief. Rejected by His beloved, betrothed, Jerusalem, He wept inconsolably. He does the same when we reject Him. What a tragedy! He knocked at Jerusalem's door for three and a half years, but she did not open the door. Have you opened the door of your life to let Him enter?

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I

have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Luke 13:34-35)

We could easily miss His Presence in our lives. While we can yet hear His knock on the door of our lives, let us open the door. God has made His heart known to us. If any person or any church would open the door, He will surely enter in.

Can you hear the knock of the Beloved on the door of your heart? The knock will soon end. It has happened in the lives of many people and many churches. There is no guarantee that He will continue to knock at the door forever. There is no surety that He will wait for us to respond before He ceases to knock.

Are you happy and content with the fragrance of His Presence that you may have received in the past? God may have done many wonderful things in your life, bringing you contentedness and great comfort. What is your attitude to these things that the Lord has done? Do you still deeply cry out for more of the Person of Christ in the ‘now’ of your life? Jesus said to Jerusalem, “I knocked and you did not answer, I visited and you did not receive me”. The Lord said, “but you were not willing” (Luke 13:34 which version). What a great tragedy! This could happen to His Church or His people in this hour! Will He say the same words, “but you were not willing”, to His Church today? What would He say to you, personally, concerning your response to Him? Will the same words He said about Jerusalem be true of you?

GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE

My heart deeply yearns for Him. When His knock is yet on the door, I want to be the one to open the door.

My prayer and cry is that His remnant may not miss the Shekinah Presence of God! Oh, that we would be a people of His Presence, to give God that for which He longs the most — our intimate worship and communion!

May God help us!

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- .1. A.W. Tozer, *I Talk Back to the Devil*
 - .2. *Rev 3:20*
 - .3. A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*
 - .4. *Song Of Solomon 5:5,6*

4

TURN HIS VISITATION INTO A HABITATION

THE FAITH OF A BARTIMAEUS

“I would rather die, i would rather walk out here on the sidewalk and drop over and be gathered up by the authorities and carried away than to lose my receptivity and lose my hunger and lose my discontent with my present state.”¹

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his

garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.” (Mark 10:46-52)

We may have read this passage several times, but it takes on new meaning in the context of what God is doing in our midst.

Bartimaeus was the blind man who ignored the cries of disapproval from the crowd, but cried out to Jesus for mercy. He was a blind man who could not see Jesus himself, but had to have blind faith to believe the testimony of someone who told him, “Jesus is close by”.

Someone told Bartimaeus that Jesus had come to Jericho. He told him that Jesus would pass through the gates of Jericho city. Being a beggar who was considered useless by the citizens, he took his usual place outside the city gates. He did not know where the Lord Jesus was and when He would pass by. He confessed that there was no way he could know where He was. But someone came and told him that Jesus had come and was very close by. Bartimaeus believed him though he could not see Jesus. It was difficult for him to believe the testimony of another person, nor was he familiar with Jesus’ voice, yet he relied and believed upon someone else’s confession and experience that Jesus was near. Though Bartimaeus had never seen Jesus, believing in His Presence and in His nearness through someone else’s testimony, resulted in the commencement of a deep work of God in within him.

Beloved, something similar needs to happen in our lives. We may not have met Jesus, we may not know Him, but we need to believe the person who says that He is here because of his personal experience. If someone in whom the Spirit has done a deep work of deliverance, testifies that He is close to us, or somewhere around us, we need to believe him. We should be able to say, "Lord, I am blind." We may not have seen Him, but the testimony of others who have seen Him and are able to testify that He is close to us, is precious. There are many who have not seen Him, but nonetheless, have experienced God in their lives. The testimonies of such men who have served the living God, who have wrestled with God, and who have encountered the Lord in fires of closeness, are precious in the sight of the Lord. Based on their testimonies, we need to believe them, and then refuse to let the Lord pass us by.

Bartimaeus could not see the Lord himself but he heard the testimony of someone who said, "I saw Him; I met Him; I encountered Him. And I was ruined in my life." He heard such a testimony on the highway outside Jericho and he believed. He cast away all his doubts. Something happened within him. He said, "I will not let Him leave this place."

Praise God! That was his attitude. He was able to say, "I have not seen Him, but I have met some people who have seen Him. I have heard of their experiences and I believe them. I will not let Him go."

Beloved, **we all need to be baptized with the spirit of Bartimaeus.** Even if we have met the Lord in the past, we need to realize that we are blind to many deeper things of the Lord. However, some people have experienced the Lord in the depths of their beings, and their testimonies of His work in

their lives should help us to believe and receive His deep workings in our lives!

Many of us suffer from spiritual blindness. Many things have clouded our eyes and dimmed our vision. We have many hindrances. Many things hinder our seeing of the Lord; the cares of life and the weariness of life can temporarily blind us or numb our senses so that we cannot perceive the nearness of God! (Nevertheless, there are men of God who were been able to see and experience the Presence of God)

Bartimaeus' blindness did not stop him from crying out to the Lord to receive a touch from Him. Why should our blindness stop us? Something incredible worked within him to bring forth a cry for Jesus, the Son of David. Let us be humble enough to admit that we are blind, but let our blindness not stop us from crying out to Jesus. When we hear that Christ is here, in our midst, let us not hesitate to cry out to Him from our depths!

If you cannot see, feel or sense the Presence of the Lord in these days, then it is time to find someone you can trust, who can sense His Presence. It is time to hear about the nearness of the Lord from such people. Take them at their word. They may have encountered God in some small measure only, but be willing to hear them and follow their example. As the word of God comes to us, let us say in our heart, "I will go for it in my life." Though we may not have seen the Lord, let us lift up our hands in faith and cry out to God.

Oh, we need to know that He is here and that He is drawing nearer to a people in these days. The hungry need to cry out for more of Him. When a people will cry and express themselves, He will surely draw near to them.

THE CRY OF THE PSALMIST

“Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking.”²

May the Lord minister these verses of Psalm 51 to us with new significance these days. There is a word for God’s people from this Psalm even today. When the hungry cry out to Him, He will not turn away, but He will come to them.

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy Presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted

unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips: and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice: else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.” (Psalm 51:1-19)

God cannot turn away from brokenness. The Lord cannot turn away from those who have a broken and contrite spirit. He will not fail to notice brokenness in His people. God will not despise, reject, or overlook brokenness in His people. Tears turn on the faucet of God’s compassion. Such an attitude will turn the face of God in compassion towards His people. However, we need to see whether we are truly broken within. This is not a matter of emotion but of initiation by the Spirit. The Spirit of God must initiate the brokenness of the inner man. We need a brokenness that comes by the working of the Spirit in us.

Bartimaeus was blind but he displayed a brokenness within, that was a work of the Spirit. We may be blind to the things of God, but we need the Spirit to initiate brokenness in us. An enlargement of brokenness, by the working of the Holy Spirit, is required in each one of us. Those who are hungry for the things of the Lord will develop a brokenness within that will come from the Spirit of God in these days. Let us be sensitive to the working of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

There are many in Christendom whose eyes remain dry. They were broken vessels at one time, but now they have lost their sensitivity for the Spirit of God. In the past, a slight touch from the Lord would have caused them to be broken, but they seem to have lost their feeling for heaven's workings. Some have lost that brokenness! I am not talking about emotions, but of something initiated by the Holy Spirit. We need to be open to the Spirit so that He can work upon us and bring about a brokenness upon our inner man. Only God can initiate a brokenness in us. True godly sorrow will invariably bring forth tears and deep emotions as well.

Tears are valuable to the Lord. Beloved, let us not waste our tears in self-pity. The tears that flow at railway stations, airports, and places of farewell are the product of our natural affections. However, the tears of brokenness and repentance, fall at the feet of the Lord. We need to wash His feet with such tears continually. Our tears are so precious to the Lord. They are meant for His feet. May God help us to understand this.

God's word is very clear. He has promised to accept the sacrifices, worship, and praises of those who have a broken spirit. He will not overlook such a heart. Are your eyes dry in these days? Is there a brokenness welling up within your being? I wish to say that something is happening deep within me afresh, even a new work of the Holy Spirit.

God is bringing forth a brokenness in His remnant in these days so that they would have a strong cry for His Person and His Presence. An absence of brokenness would show that one is not hearing the voice of God. We may be able to appreciate the Word that is preached, some new thoughts, or a new emphasis, but if the Spirit is not producing a brokenness within, these are of little spiritual value.

THE BLIND MUST SEE

Bartimaeus was a man who did not see the Lord but he cried out in faith. Having heard from others that the Lord was there, faith began to arise within him. If Bartimaeus had not cried out when he had heard that the Lord was close by, if had not reacted the way he did, he would have suffered a great loss. If he had not cried out with tears, how tragic it would have been, for he would have missed the one opportunity that God had given him. Think of that! Had Bartimaeus not cried out when the Lord was so near him, what a loss it would have been! However, he touched the heart of the Lord with his hungry pleas and brokenness! While many people in the busy streets of Jericho were not able to meet the Lord when He went by, Bartimaeus, sitting on the roadside of the town seized the one opportunity he had and experienced His Presence, with miraculous results. Many in Jericho, were not able to experience the Presence of God in their lives, but the beggar on the highway, who could not even see Him, was able to meet the Lord.

“And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.”

There were a ‘great number of people’ in Jericho city. As Jesus left the city with His disciples, a great crowd accompanied Him, but none cried out for Him as Bartimaeus did. Jesus had come to Jericho, walked through the entire city, but no one yearned and cried out for Him as Bartimaeus did. No one had such a strong desire for Jesus! He came to the city but no one cried out for His Presence. Only when He was about to leave the city walls, did a blind man raise his voice in

faith unto Him. Can we infer from this that there was no one in Jericho who needed the Lord as Bartimaeus did?

In Chapter 4 of John, we read about the Lord meeting the woman of Samaria. “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word:” (John 4:39-41)

May the Spirit of God enable us to see the difference between Jesus’ visit to Samaria and His visit to Jericho! God always meets those who truly desire to seek Him. When Jesus went to Samaria, He stayed there two days. The people sought Him and asked Him to stay with them. Jesus agreed to their request for He saw in them hearts that were hungry for His Presence. However, when He went to Jericho, no such request was made to Him. This is the reason He did not tarry in Jericho but turned away from that city. Jericho missed that moment. In Samaria, many more believed in Him because He stayed there for two days. **The visitation of the Lord became a habitation amongst His people in Samaria.** In Jericho, however, the visitation did not become a habitation. This is something we need to learn and apply to our lives. Frequently, a visitation of the Lord remains just a visit, a break, and a temporary abiding, in our lives. **Many visitations of God remain a visitation and never become a habitation.** The Lord had come and not much later, He left. However, we need to turn the visitation into a habitation. We need to have a true hunger for Him that will cause Him to tarry in our lives. Amen!

Many times in the past, by His grace, God may have met us, touched us, and even blessed us. He may have visited us, but His visitations did not become a habitation. It is not enough for us to receive some blessings from His hands and to be grateful for them. There needs to be a strong cry and a plea to Him to tarry and abide within. A petition to turn His visitation into a habitation must be the deep desire of His people in this hour! Then His visitation will surely turn out to be a habitation. Let us not be like the citizens of Jericho. Let us be true spiritual Samaritans! May God help us!

God is looking for a certain posture in us, in these days. He is waiting to see something in us that would attract His attention and cause Him to dwell and inhabit our lives in a greater measure. We must allow Him to become a habitation in us. We have seen that Abraham maintained a definite posture before the Lord when He visited Abraham in Mamre (Genesis 18), which resulted in the Lord sitting down to eat and dwell with him.

One blind man, Bartimaeus, saw more than the whole city saw! He saw what the whole city missed seeing. We too are spiritually blind in many respects. We have no ability to behold the Lord. May God help us to hear the voice of those who can see that He is drawing near, in this hour. Let us hear the ones who have had some experience of God and who are boldly declaring that God is drawing near to His people. Something needs to happen within your inner being. The Lord is drawing closer to His people. We can experience His Presence in the midst of His people. God, through His Presence, chooses to linger on in some places more than in other places. This is what He is doing in our midst in these days by His mercy. God is meeting us in a new way. This is the reason why several

people are experiencing brokenness in their spirits. They are experiencing something new in their depths, which is nothing but the curious work of the Spirit.

**LOSING SPIRITUAL MANNERS, PROTOCOL,
AND DIGNITY TO GAIN HIS PRESENCE**

“Occasionally there will appear on the religious scene a man whose unsatisfied spiritual longings become so big and important in his life that they crowd out every other interest. Such a man refuses to be content with the safe and conventional prayers of the frost-bound brethren who “lead in prayer” week after week and year after year in the local assemblies. His yearnings carry him away and often make something of a nuisance out of him....like the blind man who cried after his sight and was rebuked by the disciples, he “cries the more a great deal”³

When the Lord Jesus walked past Bartimaeus, the blind beggar asked people in the crowd that followed Him, whether Jesus was there.

Bartimaeus began to cry out with all his strength, “Is that Him? Is that He?” Someone answered, “Yes, it is Him”. Then he cried out all the more, without paying any heed to his manners! Bartimaeus forgot all about his dignity. Bartimaeus laid aside every claim of the natural man for dignity and self-esteem. He pursued the Lord with single-minded diligence. This was a chance in a lifetime for him. He was not going to lose it because of some idea of pride, prejudice, or narrow-mindedness. Perhaps, Bartimaeus heard a

discouraging voice say that Jesus was just an ordinary carpenter. Nevertheless, he refused to let such thoughts dominate his need for the Lord.

Beloved, you cannot preserve your dignity and also seek God's Presence. You cannot say, "I will not shed tears before men." Pride and dignity must be laid to rest before we come into His Presence. You can hold on to your dignity but you cannot seek the Lord and also keep your dignity. If one is determined to seek His divine Presence or deity then one must lay aside one's dignity and self-esteem.

Beloved, if you want to seek His face you have to hide your own face. At some point of time, you will have to lose your spiritual manners. You have to set aside your spiritual dignity. In order to seek His face, you will have to lose your spiritual protocol, your denominational protocol, your tribal/caste protocol, your educational protocol and your precious mannerisms. There is no way you can preserve your dignity and simultaneously preserve His Presence. **You cannot retain your integrity and have His deity.**

Saints of God, if you are really hungry for the person of Christ and His Presence, at some point you must leave your Charismatic, Pentecostal, Brethren, Baptist, Methodist, Anglican protocol behind! We need to forget what, when, where and how we are supposed to do things, as a matter of routine or form, without thinking! May God help each one of us to leave behind many things that have become a form and a tradition. There is a need to set aside some of our spiritual attitudes, forms, culture, and traditions in order to really seek Him in this hour.

Bartimaeus only wanted to know one thing. He cried out to know whether the Lord Himself was walking by. He yelled out and said, "I think He is here. I think He is very close. I know He is here. I refuse to let Him go from this place without touching me."

He cried, "I will not let Him pass me by."

He bellowed loudly "Lord Jesus, son of David, have mercy upon me. I will not allow you to pass me by,".

Saints of God, this is what I feel these days. I do not know how you feel, but I refuse to let Him come so close to me, only to pass me by!

My cry these days is, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

When Jesus passes by, what will your cry be? Will He pass you by?

"And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." (John 6:16-21)

The disciples saw Him walking on the sea. They saw Him pass them by. Perhaps, they cried out to Him! We know

that they were sore afraid. They would have called out to Him to come into their ship. Jesus responded to their cry and they received Him into their ship.

Jesus would have walked past blind Bartimaeus but for his strong cries unto the Lord. He continued crying unto Jesus, until Jesus turned aside to meet Him. He cried out, "Son of David have mercy upon me." Jesus would have walked out of that city, but that piercing, hungry, cry held Him back. A broken heart and a humble cry the Lord will not despise.

"And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." (Mark 5:25-34)

Jesus would have walked past this woman! The woman, who had a disease of the blood for twelve years, sought a healing touch from the Lord. However, so many people crowded around

Him. Somehow, she stretched forth her hand, and touched the hem of His garment by faith. Although many people surrounded Jesus and left no place for the woman to meet Him, yet she was able to reach out and touch His robe. That was something tremendous! She reached out for His Presence in spite of every difficulty.

When Jesus walked upon the earth, there were many who followed the Lord, but they never really knew the nearness of His Presence. There were many who thought that they were close to the Lord, but they never knew the true Presence of God in their lives. Several people walked in close proximity to the Lord, but they were not able to experience His Presence in an intimate way. It is the same today. Many people follow Christ, His teachings and His precepts, but few are able to know Him in an intimate manner. In the midst of today's general clamour for the Lord's Presence, some are reaching out to touch and behold the Lord Jesus in this hour.

Jesus walked through the city of Jerusalem numerous times, but religious people of that ancient city missed the moment and the hour of His visitation. Beloved, in these days the Holy Spirit is whispering a secret in our ears. He is telling us that the time for the glorious manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ is drawing near. The time has come for us to behold Him and have His Presence in our lives. Let the longing of our hearts only be for the greater manifestation of His Presence in our midst.

Would you recognize Him if you met Him? Has it been too long since you have seen Him? Would you embrace His visitation in humility?

THE AROMA OF THE LORD

“Hunger and thirst are physical sensations which, in their acute stages, may become real pain. It has been the experience of countless seekers after God that when their desires became a pain they were suddenly and wonderfully filled.”⁴

Beloved, would you believe me if I say that someone is knocking at the door of the Church? He is literally knocking at the door of His own house. Do you hear His voice? Can you hear the knock? This may be difficult to believe, but the Lord is knocking at the door of our Church at this very hour. The Lord desires to visit His Church. This knock upon the door will lead to His Presence. Let us not miss opening the door to His present knock. Let us not miss His visitation. His visitation will become a habitation. Let us be ready to turn the visitation into a habitation. I do not want the church to miss the moment or hour of His visitation!

God is yet knocking at the door of the Church, but who will open the door of the Church in this hour? There needs to be a response from His Church. We must respond to His knock before He leaves. If we do not respond, then we will only find His sweet aroma at the door of the Church.

The last time the Lord knocked upon the Church door, the Church responded, but the response of His people came too late. When they responded to His knock, He had already left! The response came a bit too late! As a Church, all that we experienced of His Presence was His aroma! If someone had opened the door for Him then, we would not be talking sadly about His last visitation and about how He smelled! After His

last visitation, all that the Church talked about was of His aroma and His fleeting Presence, but she did not experience the reality of His abiding Presence.

Is something different going to happen the next time He visits us? Will a people arise this time and respond to His knock? Is something gripping your heart? Does something prompt you to cry, "Lord, do not pass me by. I am opening the door."

Let us leave our dignity aside. Let us forget our protocol, manners, status, and image as individuals and as a church. Let us leave behind such things that dictate the manner in which we should approach God. **God prefers spiritual hunger in man to spiritual ritual.** However, man has tried to introduce his own methods and ways of approaching God. Man has tried to demonstrate how to approach God but it has not produced anything so far. Man has failed in every attempt to approach God in his own ways. Some say, "Do this and that to experience His Presence." Do not believe such people who take the name of the Lord and ask you to do this and that to experience His rich Presence. God's Word shows us that we should not tell God the ways for man to approach God. God has always looked for spiritual hunger in His people. Spiritual rituals and traditional forms do not lead to His Presence. A broken heart and a contrite spirit God will never despise.

Are you going to use this opportunity to meet Him or are you going to miss this chance to meet Him? If you feel Him edging closer and closer to you, then do not let Him pass you by.

Remember, God is looking for a place to break out! I can almost hear the Lord saying to His people, "Do you know

what happens when I visit a church? You have not yet seen what happens when I visit a life! Open the door and let me in.”

DISPLAY YOUR HUNGER FOR HIM

“Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long in vain...we must put away all efforts to impress, and come with the guileless condor of childhood. If we do this, without doubt God will quickly respond”⁵

Beloved, God is drawing nearer to His people in this hour. Let us not miss Him. Do you want to save your face in this hour? Do you want to live according to your spiritual mannerisms? Or do you want to seek His face in this hour and live? Beloved, make a way for Him to enter into your life. Put your spiritual hunger for Him on display. Put your spiritual desires on display. Cry out for the Lord with all your might.

During our meetings, while mothers are carefully listening to the sermons, their hungry babies often cry out loudly for milk. The babies could not care less who is preaching! Do you think that baby would stop to think, “Oh, that is the pastor speaking, so I better be quiet!” If that baby is hungry, things are going to get noisy. All that the baby is interested in is to satisfy its desire for food. Hungry babies make an open display of their hunger and refuse to stop crying. The babies do not think of the need to be quiet in the worship hall. When babies get hungry, they will cry. There will be a lot of noise until the babies get what they want. They are not bothered who watches

them. They do not care who hears them. They do not care who sits next to their mother. They proclaim their hunger with loud cries. **They put their hunger on display, wherever they are.** The baby says, "I do not care. I will continue to cry as long as my hunger is not satisfied." The babies do not care for our spiritual condition, our clothing, our religious belief, or our fervour. These things make no difference to the hungry ones. All that the baby knows is, "If I do not get some immediate nourishment or help, I shall die."

God's people need to display a strong cry in this hour for God's Presence. They need to display their hunger before the Lord. There needs to be an expression from the hungry in our midst. There needs to be a drawing near to His Presence in this hour. This is not the time for religious niceties. It is a time to display our hunger and bring forth a cry to seek Him with all that is within us. People who seek the approval of men cannot attain the approval of God. We need to be like babies who refuse to stop crying until their needs are met. Do you think this is what happened in the Gospel of Matthew?

"And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matthew 21:14-16)

When the lame and the blind cried out to the Lord for healing, the religious dignitaries were greatly displeased. They could not stand the cry of the babes! The word 'crying' here, in

the Greek, literally means to cry loudly, to scream, to entreat, to shriek, and to exclaim. The word does not refer to polite little cries of joy and soft sobbing! Spiritual babes cried out to the Lord for mercy, but religious pundits came and said, "Stop their mouths!" Jesus said, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? If their mouths had been stopped, the stones would cry out! Beloved people, a strong cry was on display in the house of God when Jesus passed by. The religious priests and pundits held on to their dignity. They were taken aback! But the babes continued to cry.

I think that many people are too concerned about the approval of man to pursue the Presence of God! We need to be like starving little children, crying out for help. It is time to put your hunger to display. It is time to be a little baby and say, "I don't care who hears me! I do not care who sees me! I have to have you! Lord, I'm so hungry!" Bartimaeus cried out like a babe on that miraculous day.

Saints of God, it is time to attract God, to draw the attention of God rather than to draw the attention of man! Today, the whole realm of Christianity is geared to attract men to their meetings. May a remnant arise in this hour who will attract God and His Presence! Let us be like little children in the Presence of God. Let there be no religious priests in our midst to disturb us or prevent us from crying. It is time to put our hunger on display. Let us not be worried whom we upset. Let us not be bothered with those who watch us with critical eyes. Let us ignore those who are critical of our cries.

It is time to say, "My Lord, I refuse to come so close to You and then let You pass by. I am not going to draw finish

lines any more! I do not want to live or continue to live another day with just the fading scent and fragrance of yesterday's Presence".

This is my conviction and my cry. I am going for it. Will you also move in this direction? I hope, I will make it as part of His remnant. I hope, I will get His attention. If I don't, it won't be because I did not try! Will you give yourself to this work? "Lord, I do not want to come to the door and just get a fragrance of Your Presence."

God has been doing a new work in my life. I am going for it. I am dissatisfied with the fragrance of yesterday. Would you go with me? I was not certain whether I should share these thoughts. I am blind, but I have heard and that is good enough for me. I do not know whether I am going to behold Him or not. I hope I am going to make it. I hope I will draw His attention. I will do all that is within me for crying out and let Him do the rest. I am going for it. Will we go together?

I wish, saints of God, that you will just forget your dignity and reach out for His Deity. You may cry out and say, "I am going for it. I want an encounter with you that I cannot get over."

Oh, my God, if only someone can open the door, we will be able to meet You.

Let us not wait for some special time or for an invitation to meet Him. If we do, we are not yet desperate enough to meet Him. Bartimaeus made an altar unto God from the dust of the road. No one told the woman with the issue of blood to touch Him! No, she erected a promise in her desperation and God honored it!

GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE

Saints of God, you can build your own altar from the hunger of your heart right now! It is time for He is close and you must not let Him pass by. Blessed are those who will cry out and say, "I am not going to let You get this close and pass me. I am desperate for you Lord! Have mercy on me!"

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- .1. *A. W. Tozer, Tozer on worship and entertainment*
 - .2. *A. W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God*
 - .3. *A. W. Tozer, Born after Midnight*
 - .4. *A. W. Tozer, Born after Midnight*
 - .5. *A. W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God*

5

A PASSION FOR HIS PRESENCE

O God, thou art my God: early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness: and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. But the king shall rejoice in God: every one that sweareth by him shall glory:

but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. (Psalms 63:1-10)

This Psalm makes it abundantly clear that the psalmist, David, had a deep longing for the Presence of God. David yearned for the Presence of the Lord with his whole being. He deeply desired the Lord over and above everything else. He did all he could to run after the Lord continuously. His heart was set upon the blue flame of God's Presence, in the midst of the cherubim, above the mercy seat of the Ark of the Lord!

David had a burning desire to restore the Ark to God's people, not because it was a precious work of art or a piece of Israel's inheritance, but because his heart longed for the blue flame above the mercy seat under the wings of the cherubim, which represented the very Presence of God. David was deeply interested in the blue flame of His Presence.

THE LONGING OF DAVID'S HEART

"The Presence of God is the central fact of Christianity. At the heart Christian message is God Himself waiting for His redeemed children to push in to conscious awareness of His Presence."¹

The Ark of the Covenant, which signified the very Presence of the Lord, was the most powerful component of the Tabernacle of David. However, David had in him a longing for God's Presence long before the actual, physical erection of the Tabernacle or tent. David longed for the Presence of the Lord even as a shepherd boy who grazed his father's sheep. He worshipped and met with God in the open fields, long before he

became king. He learned how to worship and commune with God while in the fields as a young shepherd boy. His longing for God's Presence came to full bloom during his campaign to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. The first thing David did when he became King of Israel was to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem. His heart ached to see the blue flame of the Ark, which signified the very Presence of the Lord, Himself. He nursed a strong desire to establish the Ark to its rightful place in Jerusalem. This is important to us because it is the picture of our journey to bring back God's Presence to the Church in our day.

David was able to capture something of the essence of God! He captured something that no one else seemed to accomplish. A verse in 1 Chronicles 13:3 makes this very clear, "And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul". We see, therefore, that the longing of David's heart moved him and motivated him to bring back God's Presence to Jerusalem, in spite of all the odds and difficulties. One thing that I have gathered from God's word is that such a passion for God's Presence is crucial! I feel that it is contagious as well!

"And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." (Acts 13:22)

Note that David is the only man in the Scriptures whom the Spirit has described as, "a man after mine own heart"! We need to realize in these days that David was a man who constantly sought, searched, and desired to know what was upon the heart of God. He was a pursuer of God's manifest

Presence. I am convinced that there are two meanings to the phrase, 'a man after mine own heart'. The standard interpretation is that David was a man whose heart was 'like God's heart'. I also believe that David was a man who was constantly 'after' God's heart. His determination to bring back the Ark to Jerusalem is a living proof of his passion for the Presence of God. David's life epitomizes an unmatched desire for God's Presence. The Psalms show David's intimate spiritual communion with God, and the intimacy with which David lived with God and walked with God continuously. God's Presence was something living and very real to him.

THE BLUE FLAME OF THE MERCY SEAT

*"God wills that we should push on into His Presence and live our whole life there. This is to be known to us in conscious experience. It is more than a doctrine to be held, it is a life to be enjoyed every moment of every day."*²

There were two main dwelling places of God in the Old Testament. One was the Tabernacle of Moses and the other was the Temple of Solomon. When David brought back the Ark to Jerusalem, he built a tent for the dwelling place of God at Zion. In Acts 15:3, this is referred to as the Tabernacle of David. Chronologically, the Tabernacle of David lay between the two major dwelling places of God in the Old Testament, namely the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon. Each of them had three compartments that signified the existence of three distinct realms namely, the Outer Court, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. In both these structures, a thick veil separated the Most Holy Place from God's people. The veil

always hid the blue flame of God's manifest Presence from the people's view. In reality, God never liked the veil. The veil was a necessity for that time, God had to have it, but He did not like the veil. In God's perfect will there was no place for a veil between God and man. In His permissible will, He allowed the provision of a veil in the house of God for a season, to meet a particular purpose, but He never desired to hide Himself from His creation. People came to worship Him, sinners came to His house to bring sacrifices and worship Him, but He would not part the veil and reveal Himself. He always had to remain behind the veil. Though He never desired to use a separating veil in the Tabernacle or the Temple, yet He allowed it to be used so that at the appropriate time, it could be dispensed with. In the fullness of time, when Jesus Christ died on the cross, that veil was ripped apart, from the top to the bottom. God hated that veil as a prisoner would hate the door of his cell! The veil had to remain in the temple until Christ would come to rend the veil, and thereby open the door for God's people to have a new and living way into His Presence.

In the Old Testament, in a sense, therefore, God was hidden in a room behind the veil! Until that day of Calvary, God had to hide Himself behind the veil to preserve the life of the fallen humanity that came to worship Him in His holiness. He had to wait for that day in the New Testament, when the veil would be torn asunder from top to bottom at Calvary. On that day, when the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus was crucified, the way was finally opened for God to commune with man unhindered.

In the Tabernacle of David, there was no separating veil. There was nothing to separate God from the people. This was the unique, beautiful feature of the Tabernacle of David as

compared to the Tabernacle of Moses or the Temple of Solomon. The Tabernacle of David reflected God's original thought to be one with His people. God, the Father, never wanted to separate himself from His children. From the beginning, God always desired one thing — to be with His people, as their God. We should remember this divine principle. God does not choose to separate Himself from us. He does not desire to have a wall of separation between Himself and His people. God went so far as to rip the 'veil' of His Son's flesh at Calvary. At the same time, unseen hands ripped the veil in the Temple. Let us thank God, who in His great mercy and wisdom, dispensed with the veil through the death of his beloved Son. On the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the separating veil disappeared forever. Today, nothing separates God from His people.

The Tabernacle of David was a representation of this eternal truth in the Old Testament. It symbolized God's deep desire to be with His people. It referred to God's provision for His people to be one with Him, and to remain in His Presence at all times. God does not want His people to adhere to some 'visiting hours'. He wants His people to remain in His Presence always. This is the longing of God. God does not want to hide Himself from His people. This is what David was able to sense in his spirit.

The Tabernacle of David was a simple structure. It had just the Ark with the Mercy seat under the wings of the cherubim. There were no other items of furniture such as the lampstand, the table of shewbread, or the altar of incense. David was able to perceive the heart of God in this matter. He was able to fathom the eternal desire of God to fellowship with His people. There was something in David that correlated with the very heart of God. He was one who always searched, sought,

and journeyed to the very heart of God. In bringing back the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, in writing many of the Psalms, in his desire to build a house for the Lord, we see his great longing for the unadulterated Presence of God.

THE CRY AT MIDNIGHT WATCHES

“...it requires a serious mind and a determined heart to pray past the ordinary into the unusual. Most Christians never do. And it is more than possible that the rare soul who presses on into the unusual experience reaches there after midnight.”³

In the Tabernacle of David, God’s blue flame, the manifest Presence of God, was the central and most important item! In fact the only thing encircling God’s Presence in David’s Tabernacle were the worshippers. David appointed singers to worship the Lord, all the year around. A continuous relay of priests and singers worshipped the Lord, round the clock, all through the year. David realized that God sought out His people and would like to be with His people at all times. All the year round, every moment of the day, people worshipped the Lord and lived in the Presence of the Lord. This practice continued for approximately thirty-six long years, all through the reign of David. What a heart David had for the Lord! He was truly a man after God’s heart. He was truly one who diligently sought the Presence of the Lord at all times.

Today churches are open only for two hours a week! Most of the time in the week, the churches are closed and empty. Beloved saints, in these days we need to have a heart like that of David towards the Lord. It is not enough to attend meetings, meet the Lord for a few days, sense His Presence, taste of Him

and then forget all about Him, thereafter. It is not enough to be fervent for the Lord and His things, while the meetings are going on and to give Him no thought, the moment the meetings close.

We need to have a heart like that of David to experience the Presence of God and to remain in communion with Him, all the days of our lives. It appears that David never had a whole night's sleep. He often woke up at midnight with royal insomnia! He used to have sleepless nights, as one who has been afflicted with insomnia! He used to lie awake in his bed thinking of the Lord's Presence in the Tabernacle. When he awoke in the middle of the night, he would hear the voice of priests chanting scriptures, the tingling of cymbals and the sounds of the praises of His people. David's heart would leap with joy. He would long to stand with the priests in the Presence of the Lord. He used to yearn for the Tabernacle, where the Ark was at rest. He would look towards the hills, adjacent to His palace, and see the shadows of shuffling feet, dancing around the Ark, illuminated by the flickering candle light and lamps! He longed to see that blue flame in the midst of the worshipping priests in the Tabernacle. May be it was at just such a time that he began to write Psalm 134.

“Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.”
(Ps 134:1-3)

From his room in the palace, David was able to see the priestly Levites and the servants of the Lord, standing around the mercy seat in the Tabernacle all night. It would be dark all

around, but the house of the Lord would be lit up with the light of burning torches. The priests would bless, worship and seek the Presence of the Lord. This is the background to the hymn, "Come bless the Lord" that we so often sing in the house of God, even today. Yes, we lift up our hands in the sanctuary today, but do we really have the kind of heart that the singers had in the days of old? Day and night worshippers stood before the Presence of the Lord. They kept the heavens above them open with their praises and worship. It was as if they were holding open, heaven, with their upraised hands! In the quietness of his palatial abode, David rejoiced in his heart and longed to be in the midst of all that was happening in the Tabernacle at midnight. He longed to be in the courts of the Lord and in the Presence of the Lord, even in the middle of the night. May be, he could look more intently and he could see the glory, the blue flame of His Presence between the outstretched arms of the priests. What a sight! Oh may God open our eyes to behold such a thing in our lives in this hour! Is it not surprising that the simple tent or Tabernacle of David was the one place that the Lord was pleased to be! This was because there was nothing to separate God from His people in the Tabernacle of David. Even when the Ark of the Covenant was not in Israel, David's only thought was how to get the Ark back to Jerusalem. He enquired of the Lord, 'How can I get the Ark back?'. He always pondered about ways and means to have the manifest Presence of God in the midst of God's people. He also acted on that desire with all his being. The miracle of 'God's favorite man' can be traced to David's passion for God's Presence.

I do believe that the Lord saw the deep hunger of this man for the things of the Lord and gave David much grace. May be, God responded to the cries of David with words such as these.

“My son, I see the deep longing of your heart for My Presence. As you seek to please me, know that My desire is not to have some kind of Tabernacle or traditional abode. My son, a simple tent will meet My need. All I am looking for is a simple tent! But keep your heart hot and aflame for Me and for My Presence in your life.”

Beloved, the Lord would say even to the Davids of this day, “I have kept you from imbibing the ills of the religious systems of man. All that I need is a simple tent to house My Presence and to glorify My Person. Give Me the tent of your life. That is what I want more than anything else. Allow Me to make your tent a habitation for Myself. And neglect not to keep your heart aflame for Me.”

David’s life was a delight to the Lord. He arose in the middle of the night; he heard the Levites chanting, singing and worshipping; he heard the clanging sound of cymbals and his heart yearned for the courts of the Lord. His heart longed to meet the Lord. “Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains.” (1 **Chronicles** 17:1)

Look at David’s heart! Even in his meditations at night, his thoughts did not stray away from God and His Presence! “LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions: How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; Surely I will not come into the Tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine

eyelids, Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” (Ps 132:1-5)

**A SPIRITUAL POSTURE FOR HIS
PRESENCE**

“...something in them was open to heaven, something which urged them God-ward...they differed from the average person in that when they felt the inward longing, they did something about it. They acquired the lifelong habit of spiritual response....As David put it neatly, “when thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.”⁴

In David, we not only find a heart that longed for God’s Presence, but we also see a spiritual posture that he continued to maintain despite the conditions around. The Lord said that though a simple tent would be good enough for Him, yet maintaining a heart, that is aflame for the Lord at all times, was more important to Him. David’s heart never lost its fervency for the Lord. He was perpetually a living flame before the Lord. Even in the small hours of the darkest nights, the house of the Lord was the centre of David’s attention. He would arise from his bed, and long for the courts of the Lord. He refused to give his eyelids any rest. He refused to take a break until he could find a place for the habitation of the Lord.

Let us make sure that our hearts remain on fire for the Lord. Let us make certain that despite the situations and the adverse circumstances we face, we shall endeavor to remain in His Presence all the hours of the day and night. God longs

to linger in the midst of His people, but our sins separate us from His Presence. The sins of His people break the heart of God. Nothing else grieves Him quite so much. This is the reason why God had to leave a veil hanging in the Tabernacle and the Temple. He sent His Son so that the veil may be ripped apart or rendered in twain. He sent His Son to remove that veil of separation between man and God. The veil in the Old Testament was a curtain that hid Him from His people, but it was for the good of humanity. It was for our sake that God allowed a veil to remain in the Holy Place.

If you cannot sleep in the night watches, let your heart meditate upon the Lord. Let there be a strong call upon your heart to remain in His Presence. God will give you times to hear Him, if you so desire. He will give you nights to seek His face and express your desire for His Presence. You will experience a spirit of brokenness in your lives, if you pursue a desire for His Presence above all other things. God will initiate something in your life. God will begin a new work in you, if you persist with such a desire, and maintain His Presence all day and night. When you awake and rise up from your bed, tune your ears to the sound of the cymbals and long for the courts of the Lord! God will help you by His Spirit.

Let your cry be, "Lord, I do not want to miss this opportunity in my life. I don't want anything to separate me from Your Presence." O may God help us to love the Presence of the Lord above everything else. Let Him never go away from the tents of our hearts.

Let us remember that the cry of David's heart was to bring back the Ark of His testimony to Jerusalem. After he brought it back, his heart pursued the Lord, even more. In the

night watches, he heard voices arising from the courts of the Lord, and his heart ached for the Lord all the more. The Lord told David that a simple tent was sufficient as long as there was an undivided heart, reaching out for more of His Person. O may God help us to have such a heart towards Him!

Let our prayer be, “Lord, let nothing come between You and me. I want to maintain this posture in my life. I long for your Person and Presence”.

Beloved, I urge you to seek the face of God. Please do not fear man, but have a reverential fear of God. God’s remnant shall be a people of His Presence in this hour! Amen!

Beloved, God will never fail us.

.1. A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

.2. A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

.3. A. W. Tozer, *Born After Midnight*

.4. A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

6

THE ULTIMATE REALITY OF HIS PRESENCE

GOD'S PRESENCE IS THE CENTRAL FACT OF OUR LIVES

"The flame of His Presence was the heart of the Levitical Order. Without it, all the appointments of the Tabernacle were of some unknown language, having no meaning for Israel or for us. The greatest fact of the Tabernacle was that Jehovah was there. A Presence was raging within the veil. Similarly, the Presence of God is the central fact of Christianity. The heart of the Christian message is the heart of God waiting for His redeemed children to push into conscious awareness of His Presence."¹

We thank the Lord that the Holy Spirit has been emphasizing the importance of the 'Presence of God' in our individual lives as well as in our gatherings these days. Every expression that the Holy Spirit has wrought

in our midst has been a matter of encouragement and edification. I really sense a new awareness of God in my whole being. I feel that I am being gripped within by His Presence in ways, which I had never experienced before. The Lord has been ministering a great deal concerning the 'Presence of God' to me in the inner recesses of my heart. The ministration of the Spirit has not come as some kind of doctrine, or instruction. It has come into my depths as the Spirit has been drawing me by His own workings. God is working something out in our lives that centres upon His very Presence. The Lord is bringing His purposes to greater fulfillment in His people in this hour. God and His purposes do not seem to be very realistic to the natural man, but to the spiritual man there is nothing more realistic and pragmatic.

The path upon which the Lord is taking us is not an easy one. It is strewn with obstacles. It is not an easy walk. The path often seems to be filled with potholes. It appears to be broken, rough, and eroded, at the best of times. Those who walk along this path will be required to shed blood and pay a heavy price. Sometimes one would like to question the Lord and ask, "Lord, is this the only way you want us to take? Is this the only way that will lead us to the goal of His Presence, His face and His Person?" One may even be tempted to ask the Lord, "Lord, are you sure, this is the way?" Undoubtedly, many people are wary about walking this way; they find it undesirable and unattractive. But God has set this way before us. This path is one of repentance and brokenness. The path of His Presence is a very rough, broken, and difficult path that is strewn with the bloodstains of His people!

GOD'S PRESENCE OR HIS PRESENTS!

“There is a place in the religious experience where we love God for Himself alone, with never a thought of His benefits.”²

The Old and the New Testaments give an account of several men who have walked on this bloodstained path before. Moses was such a man. He earnestly sought the face of God for he had a strong desire to see the glory of God.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way.” (Exodus 33:1-3)

The Lord told Moses that He would not go with the people of Israel, but He would send an angel to show them the way. He said that they were a stiff-necked people and therefore, He would not go with them. The people were not happy when they heard what the Lord had said.

The Lord told them that if He went with them, He would consume them. In other words, God told them that He would be forced to destroy them because of their nature and their life style. This prompted Moses to intercede with the Lord.

“Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy Presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.”(Exodus 33:13-16)

The children of Israel had become content and satisfied with the blessings that they received from the hand of the Lord. They did not want anything more. They were not prepared to exert themselves for the things of the Lord. However, Moses was a different kind of a person. Only one thing would satisfy his strong hunger for the Lord – to experience the very Presence of the Lord.

Today many believers seek for ‘presents’ from the Lord, rather than the ‘Presence’ of the Lord. While the children of Israel were satisfied with His ‘presents’ Moses was only satisfied with His Presence. What is your desire? Do you desire His presents or His Presence? Moses set his heart to seek the Presence of the Lord. He set his mind to seek the face of the Lord and said, “If thy Presence goes not with me, carry us not up hence”. What a bold request he made to God - if your Presence goes not with us, do not take us on! Many people seek presents, and gifts, and blessings, from the Lord, but God wants His people to set themselves to seek His face and His Presence.

Seeking the Lord, to Moses, was not an end in itself. It did not end with a request or a statement. He desired to move

towards the very centre of the throne of God. "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." (Exodus 33:19)

'Show me Thy glory' was Moses' continuous refrain. Look at this man! He set himself to seek the face of the living God! What a goal! "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."(v 20)

ONLY THE DEAD CAN SEE THE LORD

"God is a consuming fire. We are told that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God...we Christians should be men and women out of the fire. God can only burn and burn on and on against sin for ever. In another passage Isaiah asked, Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?(33:14)"³

The Lord warned Moses that no man could see Him and live. Even in the New Covenant, this statement stands as the truth. Only a dead man can see the face of God. **There is a close connection between His glory and our death.** In the past, we had received some light concerning the manifestation of His glory, the reality of the glorious Church, and the Glory of God that shall fill His temple etc. However, now the Lord is showing us that we need to be further prepared in our inner man to experience and practically realize the glory of God in our lives. God is preparing His people for His glory in

these days. This is what God would have us know so that we could point our lives in the direction of His preparations. The Spirit wants us to set our face towards God, as Moses did. God would say even to His remnant in these days, "Let your face be set to see My glory. But always remember that only the dead shall see My face". Let the depths of this pronouncement reach the depths of our own beings in these crucial days!

God had chosen Moses to, not only receive the architectural details of the pre-Calvary model of salvation, but also to receive some knowledge of the ultimate restoration of His Presence to humanity. Moses had received many details concerning the Tabernacle, the priesthood and several other spiritual things from the Lord, but Moses wanted to press forward towards the throne or the dwelling place of God. He was not content with the understanding of these things! His cry before God was to behold the glory of God, to the exclusion of everything else. When Moses looked at the things that God had revealed to him concerning the Tabernacle, the priesthood, and many other truths, something within him began to say, "This is not really the ultimate. There is something more. This is just a model of what God is going to do. This is only a type and a shadow of the heavenly." He realized that the curtains, the veil, and all the furniture in the Tabernacle had a symbolic meaning that pointed to something he had not yet seen.

Today, people are caught up with many things! They are enjoying the 'furniture', the 'curtains', the curious work in the tabernacle! Many are found admiring the law, the priesthood and the feasts. These are of the Lord but the majority of saints are satisfied with these beautiful things and do not have a heart like the Moses of old for the essence of God's Presence.

Moses cried out to the Lord, "*O God I want to see the finished product. The types and shadows are not enough. Oh Lord, show me your glory, the real thing.*"

The Lord said, "*Moses, you cannot see My face, My glory. Only the dead can see My face.*"

Beloved, brothers, and sisters, this expression of Moses conveys his deep desire for the fullness of God. Such a cry should also come forth from within us in these days. Greater depths of God will be revealed to us as we give such an expression to our longing for Him.

TRAVAILING FOR HIS PRESENCE

"O God, let thy glory be revealed once more to men: through me if it please thee, or without me or apart from me, it matters not."

In the Asouza street revival in Los Angeles, there was a man called William Seymour. It is said of him that he used to stick his head into an apple crate and spend the whole night seeking the face of God, the Presence of God. He sought the Lord in brokenness and deadness of the flesh. In the past there have been many men who have had a deep yearning for the Lord. They experienced great brokenness and contriteness before God.

I sense and feel that as we seek the Lord in these days, both individually and collectively, we shall experience great changes in the inner man. If we go to Him with an intense hunger for His Presence, our seeking of the Lord would result in deep changes within. Then the Lord would surely not hesitate

to reveal Himself. He would not delay to answer our cry. God would not delay to manifest Himself if there is an intense hunger for Him. Then and then alone will He surely rise and say, "Now is time for me to reveal My glory to My people!"

Such travail for the Lord's Presence does not take the form of some kind of earthly weeping and lamentation. A heavenly weeping shall come upon God's people in this hour. This is what I sense in my spirit. Only the Spirit of God can produce true brokenness in our lives.

One day, a brother came to me looking very heart-broken. I had never seen him like that before. He broke down and wept bitterly as he said, "Brother, we need to really worship the Lord in these days. I feel we have not come into the realms of true worship yet." The travail that he manifested was not merely a feeling of the natural man or the self-pity of the soul. The crying came from the depths of his being in waves of remorse and repentance for what is happening.

God is not looking for an earthly weeping or an earthly travail in this hour. He desires His people to have a 'heavenly travail' which shall be the product of a godly sorrow within them. Then, they will seek the face of the Lord intensely. Many would misunderstand them for it would appear to the human eye that it is just an earthly lamentation. Others will not be able to perceive the origins of the travail and will misunderstand the ones who seek His face.

In the book of First Samuel, we read about the woman Hannah, in the house of the Lord, who prayed and sought His Presence with a heavenly weeping. However, the priesthood of that time did not understand the kind of prayer she was making.

The religious order of the day, failed to understand what this woman was doing in the house of the Lord. She was misunderstood and wrongly judged by them.

“And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.”
(1 Sam 1:12-15)

God is drawing His people to a place where they come to Him, pouring out their souls to Him in brokenness before the Lord. If we take heed to the voice of God, we shall experience a great difference in our prayers before the Lord. We have to stand before the Lord with a contrite heart. We can draw strength from the lives of men of God who stood before the Lord, day after day, with wet eyes and broken spirits. We need not know the doctrines they followed, but we ought to see the manner in which they prepared themselves to meet God. Some of them stood in the puddle of their own tears, before the Lord seeking His Presence, and waiting for His response. They went to God with a contrite heart and spirit and poured out their soul before the Lord.

OUR GATHERING WILL BE DIFFERENT!

If we assemble before the Lord with broken hearts, we can expect our gatherings unto the Lord to take on a different

tone, texture, and touch. Let us be sensitive in our gatherings and be prepared to meet Him on a different ground. God is bringing in a difference. Let us not gather with our old ideas. We are called to meet with God, to be in His Presence and to be found in His Presence. God is going to birth something in the midst of His people. Let God's people come to His sanctuary with brokenness. Let our gathering in the days ahead be different because we are being changed. Let us come together as a prepared people. Our worship will be different because we will come into His Presence with a different spirit. God will set us on a new path because He has brought changes and done something fresh and new in our lives.

Saints, the problem today is that whenever God's people have a good worship service or feel like some good thing is happening, they feel contented! Beloved, remember and realize that **one cannot dance around the burning bush!** God is a consuming fire. He is a God of glory. His desire for His people is that they may come to His glory and live in the glory that He has.

The Old Testament says that the dead shall see the glory of the Lord. The New Testament equivalent of this truth lies in repentance, brokenness, and humility before the Lord. Often we agree to this mentally and accept it, but we seldom remain in a condition of death to the self. If the Lord says that only a dead man can see His face, then the one who sees His face cannot live.

If you desire to see God's glory, He will show it to you but then you will not be able to live any longer. If God were to show His glory to us in full measure we would all be dead! We need to realize that there is truth in what God says. His glory

is not an ordinary matter. The Scripture says, “the mountains melt down before the Lord...” (Judges 5:5). Again prophet Nahum says, “The mountains quake at him and the hills melt and the earth is burned at his Presence...”. If this is so, how much more must man’s flesh experience a death when face to face with His glory. Beloved, we may have known something of His glory, but a greater glory remains hidden to us. We ought to be able to see His full glory, if we yield ourselves to His workings and experience a death.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap:” (Malachi 3:1-2)

We have failed to grasp the glory of God fully! Perhaps, we are still unable to do so! The word ‘abide’ in Malachi 3:2 means ‘endure’. Who will endure the day of His coming? None of us will be able to endure the Presence of the Lord unless the Holy Spirit prepares us for this encounter. The Word says, in 1 Corinthians 1:29, *“That no flesh should glory in his Presence”*. If there is an exhibition of flesh when the glory of God is manifest, then it will have to be ‘dead’ flesh because nothing can live in His Presence. The only mortal thing that can survive His manifest Presence and remain standing is ‘dead’ flesh. This means that a ‘deadness’ needs to come upon us — a deadness of the flesh. Yes, only a man given to such death can see His face!

There are a variety of doctrines and positive teachings coming forth these days. The doctrine of Positive Confessions, amongst other things, emphasizes that the Lord is living within us; that He is abiding within us. This is true no doubt, but there is also a need for the maturing of this life. God would like to do something more than merely enter into our lives by His Spirit. That greater measure of His life in us can only come forth when there is a greater measure of brokenness and repentance in our lives. Those who talk of positive confession, talk of a positional truth, but in the lives of most of them, there is no brokenness. There is an absence of brokenness in their lives. Many people talk about positional truths in the church, but most of them lack one thing, namely a spirit of repentance and brokenness. Beloved saints, if the spirit of brokenness and repentance is missing in us, our hearts cannot be right before God.

**DEPTHS OF REPENTANCE WILL BRING
GREATER MEASURES OF HIS PRESENCE**

Beloved, there needs to be a greater measure of repentance and brokenness in our lives in these days. The depths of repentance in us will determine the measure of His Presence in our lives.

There have been many precious souls, who began their Christian lives with repentance, broken hearts and contrite spirits, but later in their lives, they lost their spirit of brokenness. The world and the cares of life took hold of them and soon they found that they had lost their desire for the Lord and His things. When brokenness departed, their lives became

empty and barren. The loss of that precious unction of brokenness became the major cause of their drift from the Lord.

The more death that God smells in our lives, the closer He comes to us.

Positive confessions, confessing the word of God, saying 'I am crucified with Christ', or saying 'it is no longer I but Christ who lives within', will not help us in our spiritual walk with Christ. There is something more we need in our lives. We need the work of the Holy Spirit in our depths. The working of the Holy Spirit in us is a reality that greatly counts towards our spiritual growth and maturity. In the Apostle Paul's life the workings of the Holy Spirit were a daily reality that brought him to a place where death worked in him and life in others. Death in Christ was a reality to the apostle Paul. In 2 Corinthians 4:12, he writes, "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." We need more than doctrine in our lives! We must experience the workings of the Lord by His Holy Spirit. He will make the cross a reality in our lives! The condition of death and brokenness in the apostle's life was the basis for bringing forth life in others.

Beloved, one can only know and experience the Presence of God through broken vessels, in whom the Spirit has had full liberty to bring about a brokenness. The apostles, (and sundry men of God, over the ages), who had met the Lord, walked with Him and talked to Him, were broken, humbled and crushed vessels. They were broken vessels because they had met God. They had something more than doctrines; the doctrines did not break them. They had seen the glory of God and they had experienced His Presence in some measure. These men could never make a cheap offer to the saints and believers of their

time. They could never stoop down to saying, "All you need is to take three steps to God's Presence", like many preachers do today! The desire of these broken vessels was only that God's people would seek the very face of God with repentance and humility. Without a true brokenness and repentance, it is almost impossible to experience His rich Presence

In the Tabernacle of Moses, as the smell of the sacrifices rose up and filled the nostrils of God, His Presence descended amongst His people. It was as if the sacrifice was a signal that God could draw near! He drew near to His people, without striking them down, when He got the smell of death that arose from the sacrifice. This is true for us as well. God's Presence is manifested in our lives when the aroma of the death of our flesh rises up unto Him. If God were to descend in our midst and find that there is no sweet aroma of death or sacrifice, we would all be struck down by His awesome Presence. That is why it is so essential to come to Him with sacrifices of our own lives as a living sacrifice upon the altar. God will not come if He does not see a sacrifice on the altar! God's end goal has always been reunion and intimate communion with mankind. However, God cannot come close to living flesh; God will destroy it. He waits to receive the smell of burnt, dead flesh. The Lord looks for that smell of dead flesh and of burning hair so that He could come close to His people. **The more death God smell in our lives, the closer He will come to us.**

. We need to prepare ourselves to come before God. We need to bring a proper sacrifice at the altar of God. We need to give ourselves to the Spirit of God and to the work of the Spirit. Do you find an agreement in your spirit with these spiritual principles? If we observe these tenets, our gatherings and meetings will be different in the days to come. As we cry out to

God to come closer and to reveal His manifest Presence in our midst, the Lord would say, "My children, I long to come to you. I love to be in your midst. However, I cannot really come any closer, because I see the absence of death in your midst. There needs to be a greater preparation of your lives before I can meet with you. If I come now, to meet you as you are, you'll be destroyed! I want you to know that if you'll just go ahead and die, then I can come near you".

May the Lord help us to know what we are asking of the Lord. In the past, men of God sought the Lord with fear and reverence. With death working in their beings, they sought the Lord's mercy. God wants us to understand the gravity of our prayers and pleadings to Him. It is necessary to understand by the Spirit that if we come before the Lord without the sacrifice of our flesh, something terrible could happen to us. However, if we allow death to work in our flesh, if we give into brokenness and to the working of the Spirit deep within, then we can experience the nearness of God in our midst. **The more death He smells, the closer He will come!**

The Lord would like to work repentance and brokenness into us in greater dimensions and depths in our lives. Repentance and brokenness is the New Testament equivalent of death. May God help us to be a people of godly sorrow and of repentance. This will bring the manifest Presence of God nearer to us! Let us be a people whose hearts are filled with heavenly weeping. Many of us do not like the smell of death in our lives. We dislike the smell of burning flesh; the smell of burning skin and hair probably fills us with nausea. The smell of burnt flesh is not attractive to man's senses but it is enticing to God. It does not appeal to the senses of our natural man but it is a signal to Him to draw closer to us for it is of great appeal to the Divine will.

The Lord takes pleasure in the death of the saints!

Let us look at the example of the high priest in the Old Testament. He entered the most holy place in the Tabernacle with great preparations. Concerning the practices of the high priests, the writers say, that the high priest never slept the night before he had to enter the most holy place. The children of Israel had to keep the high priest awake all night, to prevent the high priest from dreaming while asleep! They were afraid that the High Priest would defile himself, if he dreamt. All night long, the Levites sat with the high priest and kept him awake by reading the Law of Moses to him.

After the high priest had made all preparations to enter the Tabernacle, according to the Mosaic Law, he would sorrowfully tell his family, "I do not know whether I will return after I have entered the most holy place, where I am going to seek the face of God on behalf of all Israel. According to the Law and the commandments of God, no one can see His face and live. I will enter the most holy place with the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat. I fear that if there be any iniquity amongst God's people, I will die. God will smite me down and I will not return alive. But if I die, I die for I am going to see the King!"

Finally, before entering the most holy place of the Tabernacle, the high priest would have to tie a rope around his ankles, so that if he died there, other priests would be able to pull him out, without their having to enter the sacred place.

Beloved brothers and sisters, there is something about the living God that the Aaronic priesthood knew and experienced. We have not yet experienced the reality of what they knew.

Praise God that we are priests of a higher order — a priesthood, after the order of Melchisidec.

KEEPING THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN OPEN

Today, God's people fail to take their God seriously. They have become too familiar with God's Presence and His person. They take His name without ascribing to Him all the glory, honour and power that is due to Him. Who shall endure the day of His appearing?

Saints of God, be ready to meet with the living Lord these days. Are you willing to tie a rope around your ankles and seek the Lord? As we seek His face, let us maintain a spirit of brokenness in our lives. Let us fear to come into His Presence without the manifestation of death in our lives.

This is not the time to take things lightly. The time to fool around with the things of God has come to an end. The time to play 'church-church' is over. Did this happen in the early church of the New Testament? In Acts 5, we read that some people came to the house of God without preparations. What happened to them? The Spirit of God judged them. May God help us to be a serious people before God. There is a preparation that is necessary in our lives as we gather and come before the Lord. There is a need for death to work into us — for repentance and brokenness — for a posture of contriteness in our lives.

Let us be reminded of the Biblical example of a godly woman who after many days of fasting and preparations (Esther 2:12) said, "I am going to meet the king. And if I perish I perish." She said that she had done all that she could to prepare

herself. She neither ate nor drank for several days, so that the flesh would wither away and totally die. She went into the Presence of the King with full preparations, ready to lay down her life if need be. She realized that she was born in this world with one purpose, namely to meet the need of an hour such as that. She stood convicted that she had been raised for a time such as that! Her only desire was to behold the king, even though it would cost her life.

May God find a people in these days who would not hesitate to say, "I am prepared to meet the King. I know that I was made alive in Christ, that I received salvation, that I have been kept by His grace, and that I have come to this place for a time such as this. My only longing is to meet the King. And if I perish, I perish. I must meet the King, whatever happens."

Let the people say, "We have been sustained, preserved, and kept for a time such as this. Lord, I am willing to tie a rope around my ankles, but the longing of my heart is to see your face. I have given my self to every preparation. Now help me to see you."

Let the brokenness of our heart and our lives keep the windows of heaven open, beloved. Let there be a spirit of brokenness in our lives and in our midst in these days. May the rivers of our tears never run dry before His Presence. May the smell of death in us draw Him closer to us day by day. Whatever religious men would say in criticism, let us be counted amongst those who would set their hearts towards the Lord. The Lord is doing something in our beings. It is something true men of God experienced in their lives. God wants to bring His people to see His glory. And if we perish, we perish.

GOD'S MANIFEST PRESENCE

May our prayer be, *“Lord I want to seek your face. I want to have a vision of the King. I want to come into the Presence of the King. All this time you have kept me, O God, for such a time as this.”*

Saints of God, get ready to meet with the Lord in the days to come. A broken heart will keep the windows of heaven open. We will not be the same if we experience Him. He will come forth in us. He will be pleased in us. Let us keep the desires of our hearts towards Him in these days. May we go to Him saying, “If I perish, I perish.” Let us leave aside every religious protocol. Let us look ahead with anticipation because he will never fail His people. Let us remain broken and contrite, allowing repentance to work within us. Repentance will release the Presence of the Lord in our lives and in our midst. May God help us. May we give ourselves to the Lord in full measure in these days.

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- .1. A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*
 - .2. A.W. Tozer, *The Root of the Righteous*
 - .3. A.W. Tozer, *Whatever Happened to Worship*

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