

Having The Presence Of The Lord

by Dan Young

This sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing the presence of God in times of trials and suffering, highlighting the deepening of one's relationship with Jesus through hardships. It discusses the need to go beyond superficial love for God and embrace a deeper, transformative love that comes through sharing in His sufferings. The message encourages believers to seek discernment, endure persecution, and prioritize a wholehearted commitment to the Lord, even when faced with challenges and temptations.

Scripture: John 16:1, Luke 12:12, Luke 12:13, John 14:1

Topics: "Experiencing God's Presence", "Transformative Love through Suffering"

Description

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Transcript

On Friday, my son had his MRI and so I got to go with him and sit with him while he took this MRI test. And it's a pretty neat little machine, but I was really grateful that my son, he asked me to go in the room with him. So it was just me and him, he's in the machine.

And you know, I really could sense the presence of the Lord there. I had a peace come on me that, you know, all I could do was cry. I remember sitting in the room, just crying and thanking the Lord for the trials that he's brought into our life the past little while, and just how the Lord has carried us through it.

And, you know, I was just rejoicing in that. And it was reminding me of when I first came to the Lord, when you first get born again, I will say you experience the presence of God, like no other. All you can do is cry a lot of the time because you just sense the love of God for you.

And you feel so undeserving of that love. And you can't, you can say, Lord, why are you showing mercy to me? I remember I would cry, but I would have such joy because I knew that Jesus had saved me and changed my life. And if you haven't had that, I encourage you to seek the Lord, call on the name of Jesus, to come and meet with you personally.

When he met with me personally, I remember people looked at me and they said, there's something different about you. And you can always tell a person who's been born again, you can always see there's a change in their life, there's a change in their nature. They were once darkness, but now they become alive in the Lord.

And what happens at the beginning of your walk with the Lord is you have the presence of the Lord very strong in your life. But over time, as you start to grow and you start to get your feet under you and you start to lay a foundation, that presence sometimes withdraws itself from you. And Lord, he sometimes withholds that presence so you no longer rely on your feelings, but you learn to rely upon faith in Jesus Christ.

And so you can't get discouraged when sometimes you sense maybe the presence of God leaving you. It's actually for a purpose, because the Lord sometimes uses it to test you. He uses it to see what's your reaction going to be in that situation? How are you going to handle it? And that's how we grow spiritually.

So some of us were struggling, maybe not knowing a direction. And sometimes the Lord wants us to wait until he gives clarity for us as to what to do. And this is where we have to learn to walk by faith and not by sight.

And we can't learn to rely upon our own understanding, we have to trust in the Lord with all of our heart and lean upon his direction. But I remember in that room, just the peace of God that came over me, I just was sitting there crying. And there's a camera and I'm like, Oh, Lord, don't let them see me crying.

But I was praising the Lord because I was so thankful that he's done and is doing a work in my life. And I remember even saying in my heart, saying, Lord, whatever the outcome is, I'm just grateful that you're merciful to me. And I was thinking there at that time that, you know, many times I would say that, you know, at our church, there's a strong fear of God message.

And it's a very healthy thing. The fear of God is clean, it says in Psalm 19. And it's pure.

And sometimes I would say, Lord, I would say I lack the knowledge of the love of God. And sometimes we say we really want to hear messages about the love of God and this and that. And that's true, we do want to hear about the love of God.

But while I was there, the Lord exhorted me in that room. And he said, you know, Dan, you can't know the love of God until you share in his sufferings. Because you cannot experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit and the comfort of Jesus until you go through trials and you die to yourself.

And it's true. And you know, when I when you first get married, or you're courting somebody or whatnot, your love is very superficial. And some of us who've been married for a period of time would probably say it's very true, because at the time, you think that you love each other.

And then as you walk through seasons of life, and you go through different circumstances, you start to see that that love was very much on the surface. It was love, but it was very much on the surface. But as the Lord brings you through things, he starts to purify that love, he starts to break us down and causes us to be, you know, broken individuals where we have to learn to deny ourselves.

And then you start to realize that your love for one another has to go deeper. And in the same way, with our bridegroom with Jesus, our love for him when we first get born again, is very superficial. It's very much on the surface.

And we think that everything is so good, and everything is the best. But as we go through trials, and we start to go through his dealings, and his discipline in our life, his correction, his ways that he uses to bring us into a broken place, our love for him should grow deeper. And we start to experience the comfort of God in our affliction.

And I'm reminded of Paul in prison. You can read it in 1 Thessalonians, you can read it in Philippians, Colossians. He says, I have shared in the sufferings of Christ, so that I can learn to rejoice in the Lord.

And you could tell that his walk with the Lord became deeper, and it wasn't so superficial. Many of us here would say we even have discernment. We can discern what a Christian is really in it with all of his heart, versus somebody who is not in it with all of his heart.

And if you lack that discernment, you need to ask the Lord that he would give you discernment, to understand that, to know who you're fellowshiping with. You need to be able to discern if the person that you're hanging out with is really somebody who is on fire for the Lord. I remember when I first got born again, I had to separate from the Christian friends that I had, because the Christian friends I had, I could tell their heart was not for the Lord wholeheartedly.

And they didn't like it, and they persecuted me at that time, and they didn't like it. But I knew that I had to do this, because Jesus was going in a different direction. It was either I'm all in, or I'm not.

So you can meddle on the fence, you can stand the line on one area and say, you know what, I go to church, I do all the right things. But unless we're wholehearted in him, we will not experience that relationship with the Lord that he wants us to have with him. So you need to be cautious.

You need to ask the Lord for discernment and clarity in your own life, first on yourself, to get light on yourself. Am I a wholehearted disciple of Jesus? Am I in it when things are good, or am I throwing in the towel when things are bad? When the Lord starts to bring you through trials, it says of the man who received the word with joy, he rejoices so quickly, but when the time of temptation comes, he quickly falls away. We don't want to be a Christian like that.

We need to say, Lord, I pray that I wouldn't have so much joy when things are easy, but that I would be prepared when things get tough, and the tests and the trials come, that I would be ready to endure those times. And this is what the Lord wants to do with us. I was reading in John 16, and there's a few verses in John 16 I want to share with you guys about things that comforted me.

It says in John 16, verse 1, it says, these things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. These things they will do because they have not known the father of me, but these things I have spoken to you so that when their hour comes, you remember that I told you of them.

These things I did not save you to the beginning because I was with you. So he was saying, guys, I've spoken these things to you now because when it comes, you guys won't get disheartened. You won't get discouraged.

One of the true fruits of walking with Jesus is you will suffer persecution. You will suffer persecution from those who are not wholehearted. They will be against you.

They will say that you're too radical. They will say that you're too on fire for the Lord. They'll say that the things that you're doing are wrong.

You need to be prepared in a situation like that as to how to handle that. A lot of the time, Christians will compromise in those situations, but we don't want to. A perfect example of that would be in our city right now.

There are many schools, there's many churches who are signing on with the government to say that we are wholeheartedly going to receive your funding, but we will not speak against the sins that are being committed, like homosexuality, like the LGBTQ movement, all those things. I speak about that because many places like that are actually doing that because they have to receive money from the government. And when you speak against that and say, guys, we shouldn't be siding with that just to receive money, it shows that we love money more than we love the Lord.

And we can't do that. And that is a common thing that's happening in North American churches at the moment. For the sake of political correctness, they will not stand for the truth only so that they will get a little bit of funding from the government.

Guys, that's one perfect example. Another example would be that we become just religious and comfortable in our position rather than having a wholehearted desire for the Lord. This is how we become lukewarm Christians, where we come to a point where we say, I have need of nothing, but we do not know that we're wretched, poor, miserable, blind, and naked, and we need to get light on ourselves in that area.

And we don't want to be lukewarm Christians. We want to be Christians who are on fire for the Lord. I believe this is why the Lord allows trials and difficulties in our life so that fire keeps burning for the Lord.

And that's one thing we want to ask the Lord to not take away from us. Lord, give me a love for you. Give me that first love for you.

The greatest danger in a marriage is when you go through trials is you lose that love for one another. We don't want to lose the love for one another, especially in a natural example like a marriage. That's the one thing that can happen is your love grows cold.

In the same way with our trials with the Lord, does our love for him grow cold? Do we get bitter? Do we get frustrated? Do we get disheartened? No, we can't do that. We need to grow strong in faith and learn to encourage ourselves in the Lord at that time. This is something in the lesson that the Lord wants to teach me and teach you guys.

But the Lord tells us beforehand that these things will happen. If we skip down here to verse 5, I'll finish here. But it says, But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, where are you going? But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

Jesus is leaving them, and he's telling them now, and they're now sorrowful. Lord, how can you take your presence away from me? But he says this, But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

And I remember really struggling one time with, I don't sense the presence or the comfort of the Lord at this time. But the Lord showed me this verse, and he says, Dan, it's to your advantage that I go away at this time, because you will not have the helper be sent to you. And that brought encouragement to me

that, hey, I can endure this trial right now.

I may not sense the presence of the Lord, I may not sense his leading and his guiding, but if I wait patiently, the Lord will send the helper to me. So I need to wait in faith, I need to trust the Lord in faith, until he comes to meet with me. We don't want to do and run away from that.

So we need to learn to wait on the helper, and ask the Lord to send us the helper. It says in Luke chapter 13, it says this, or Luke chapter 12, it says that if we ask the Lord for the Holy Spirit, he will give it to us. And it says right here, when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me. Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and they no longer see me. And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

How does the Holy Spirit convict people of sin, when the Holy Spirit is working in your life? People around you will not like the light that's shining in you. They will not like it, and the darkness will manifest in them. There will be no fellowship.

This is how you know when you go to fellowship with some believers, and there's actually no fellowship there. And the difference in the fellowship is because there's sin. There's in the camp, darkness comes, and the light needs to come.

And the Holy Spirit will come to convict them of that sin, and they have two reactions. They can either get angry because they're sinful, and they don't like the light, or they can come to the light, and they can say, man, I've been doing wrong. I need to change my ways.

This is how you know the people that you're fellowshiping with really have a wholehearted desire to come to the Lord. That's one thing I get really encouraged about here. They talk about sin in this area, and we have one choice.

We can either come to the light and say, Lord, I have need of change, or we can say, you know what, I don't want to hear that message anymore. And if you don't want to hear that message anymore, your attitude is not right. You need to be able to say, you know what, it's tough to hear this message right now, but you know what, Lord, if there's areas in my life that are not right, then I need to come to the light.

And that's the Holy Spirit's job, so He can present to Him a pure and spotless church. The Lord desires a pure and spotless bride, not one who is defiled by the world. We need one that's not defiled by the world, but one that's pure in His eyes.

So this is something that we should seek for. It says right here, concerning sin, because they do not believe in me, and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see me. The righteousness of Christ, they no longer see it.

We have to be that testimony. It says right here, but verse 13, or verse 12, I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. It's amazing that Jesus would say to His own disciples, and I would say that to us and leave this challenge with us.

Does Jesus have more things to say to us, but are we not able to bear them at this time? I think the Lord would probably have many things to say to each and every one of us, but He can't say it to us. He can't say it to us. Why? Because our hearts are not ready to receive it.

When I sat there in the room and I asked the Lord, I said, Lord, why do I not know this love of God? And the Lord said, you do, Dan. You're sensing my comfort in the midst of the affliction. This is how you grow in a relationship with Jesus.

You have to allow Him to take you through this trial so that you can grow into His image, and unless He takes you through trials, you will remain a superficial Christian. You will only know the love of God on the surface, and so there's many messages today that talk about the love of God, and you hear it in many churches, but it does not produce a change in their life. Some of us would say, well, I do it because I love Jesus, but yet when we talk about the love of God, there's still no change in their heart, and you can see the superficial level of the Christianity that's being preached today, but when you hear a message that talks about sin, that talks about repentance, that talks about coming to Jesus with a whole heart, you will start to see a fire burning within their midst.

It may be a small amount of people. It may be a few brothers or sisters, but they have a sincere desire to know the Lord, and you can sense that there's fellowship there. Those are the people that I want to surround myself.

That's the type of message that I want to hear that fuels me and causes me to go deeper with the Lord, and I say, Lord, if I can't bear the things that you want to say to me now, then I pray that I will search my heart so that I will be prepared to receive the things that you want to say to me. The Lord can only entrust so much to us, brothers, depending on how much faithfulness we have with him, and we need to remember that the trials that the Lord brings us through are for a season, they're for a reason, and they're going to produce in us the likeness of Jesus Christ, and then he can entrust more to us. I'll leave this last thing for you.

Jesus said, some of you will not taste death until you see me, and he took with him Peter, James, and John up on the mountain. Why did he not take any of the other disciples? Why did he only take Peter, James, and John? I don't know about you guys, but I want to be one of those three. I don't want to be like the other disciples that have to sit at the bottom of the mountain and hear later what had happened.

I want to be one of those ones that's close to Jesus, that gets to see his glory high and lifted up, and let me know you more, Lord. I hope you guys aren't satisfied with being at the bottom of the mountain with all the good things the world has to offer, having a successful life, a successful business, a successful family, a nice home, the things that the world seeks after. I hope that we do not have that desire in our heart at this church.

At our church, I hope that we have a desire to seek the Lord, to come to know him in a deeper way, and if it means that we lose things in our life, if it means that we go through sufferings and our reputations are tarnished, if it means that we have to get a little bit humbler or a little bit more broken, and we don't have the glory that we desire, then praise God, because we get to know the Lord. This is something that the Lord challenged me with while I sat there, and I was thankful for what he's doing in my life, because I realized that my love for him is very superficial, and I'm thankful to him that he's causing me to know his love more through the sufferings of the trial.

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