

April 30 2000 Evening Service

by David Ravenhill

God desires a permanent and conscious presence within us, and we must create an environment that meets His specifications for dwelling.

Duration: 1:11:17

Scripture: Exodus 25:8, John 14:23, Revelation 4:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "Abiding Presence of God", "Holiness and Worship"

Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of creating an environment conducive to the abiding presence of God, contrasting the fleeting touch of God with the desire for a permanent relationship. He challenges the congregation to consider what it means to truly dwell with God, highlighting the need for holiness, surrender, and a heart of worship. Ravenhill uses various cultural examples to illustrate how our environments shape our relationship with God and stresses that God desires to dwell in a clean and holy habitation. He calls for a radical obedience and a willingness to yield the throne of our lives to God, ensuring that He is honored and worshiped in all aspects of our lives.

Transcript

There is a saying that the enemy of the best is the good, and I want to talk to you tonight on the habitation of God. I was going to minister on something else but I feel that I should go in this direction. There's a verse that challenges me in John chapter 14 and it says there that if anyone loves me, verse 23, he will keep my word and my father will love him and we will come and we will make our abode with him.

I don't know about you but as much as I appreciate the touch of God and I prayed for thousands of people I guess being involved with the Awake America Crusades and seeing some wonderful things happen and yet I'm convinced there's a greater realm and the greater realm is not just the touch of God but the abiding presence of God and I find that a lot of people running around from conference to conference from big shot to big shot wanting to be prayed and for and wanting to get the latest sort of fix and we have this wonderful promise, listen, there is the abiding presence, something that does not just sort of dissipate before the meetings over or before you get home but a conscious presence of God in your life 24 hours a day, day in and day out, the one that said I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you and I long and I know many of you do to have God dwelling within us and all the way through the scriptures you have men again like David we talked about in this morning asking that question Lord how can I abide will you abide? How can I ascend into your holy hill Lord? How can I dwell? Not just visit, the word there is dwell in your

presence. How can I sort of cohabit with you? I want to know God again in this abiding way if you abide in me John 15 and my words abide in you, not just if we visit each other once in a while, not if we just see we know one another once in a while but again that permanent relationship with God. I'm going to use a number of words interchangeably tonight and the first part of this message will be somewhat light-hearted but I'm going somewhere so bear with me but I'm going to use a number of words, the word environment, the word atmosphere, the word habitation that we've already mentioned and the word culture.

All of those words are sort of similar. I lived up in the Northwest for almost five years, passed it up there, very beautiful part of the nation with all its towering mountains and snow-capped peaks and wonderful rivers and the Puget Sound area and up there the environmentalists are alive and well. If you spit they declare it a national wetlands.

It's almost that radical but what they will tell you is that if we destroy certain elements of that land we will deprive certain creatures and bugs and insects and so on of their habitat and therefore we have to preserve certain type of foliage, you know, certain trees and this and that, the water and so on and so forth and obviously there is truth in that. And so there are certain elements that need to be brought together for a plant or an animal or whatever to survive a certain, again, habitation. The other word is the word environment or the word atmosphere rather and again an atmosphere talks about bringing together certain elements.

We could dim the lights as we had them dimmed a little earlier on, play a certain type of music and create an atmosphere in here. We could have you all sleeping snoring loudly within a matter of a little while if we played this sort of right, you know, mellow lullaby type of music. On the other hand we can brighten the lights, we can play militant marching music and all of a sudden you're aroused and you feel like fighting and so we can create an atmosphere.

And then the word culture. Culture is the way in which you and I have been raised. Our culture, we have the American culture, the British culture.

I didn't think there was too much of a difference between the two cultures until I came to this country as a fourteen-year-old, had my fifteenth birthday here. My father moved our family and we settled in Minnesota at a Bible college where my father sort of based his ministry for a while and I had not been at that school many, many days. I started to play with some of the staff kids.

It was a school that emphasized holiness, sanctification and I was horrified to find out that these kids were swearing. They were horrified to find out that Leonard Ravenhill's son was swearing. So we realized we had a clash of cultures.

You see I was not swearing in my culture but I was in yours. They were not swearing in your culture but they were in mine. And I realized that words that are swear words in England are not swear words in American, vice versa.

And we are raised in a particular culture, aren't we? A way of doing things. And I've traveled reasonably extensively and lived in a number of different places. Born in England, lived in Ireland, America here, all over America, New Zealand, up in New Guinea and then of course visited numerous other places and I am somewhat intrigued again with cultures, the way people do things.

Fascinating, isn't it? Our eldest daughter, Lisa, is in China. She was home at Christmas time and she is an avid sort of photographer. I don't mean professional.

She doesn't have any fancy equipment, just a little point and shoot camera but she's always taking pictures and in China, you know, for a couple of bucks you can get them developed and things are cheap. And so she's got literally albums full of pictures as she's traveled around different places in China and so I'm thumbing through her photo album. Here she is in a marketplace and I sort of flip back.

I think I see something but I'm not sure and sure enough, there in the marketplace is all this meat hanging there. But the meat that was hanging there were dogs. Great big dogs, all nicely skinned and ready to go.

Culture. Some of you sort of got wheezy stomachs and think of your poor dog at home. Heard about the pastor's dog today.

You can imagine that little fellow just all strung up there and nicely shaved, ready to go in the pot. Culture. What would make us sick would make them drool.

There's an area of that country again where my daughter is, where there are a lot of minority tribes and there's one of those tribes and everybody in that tribe has nice long fingernails. Not as a fashion statement but so you can more effectively pick your nose. And in that culture it's not wrong to sit there with your friends and sort of work away at whatever bothers you.

And what better way to do it than to have a tool with you at all times. It's fascinating isn't it? What we frown upon other people you know just take for granted. Some cultures were in the middle of your meal the louder the belch and the longer the belch the more you're telling your host that you're enjoying the meal and whoever's responsible for the cooking did a wonderful job.

We do it in our culture and father looks at you and brother nudges you and mother kicks you under the table reminds you that we've got company and please don't embarrass us. And so again what is wrong in one culture is perfectly acceptable and normal in another culture. Back in 1987 we were living in New Zealand and I traveled from Christchurch the city we were living in down to the city of Dunedin which is a Scottish city or at least established by the Scots.

My daughter was there in university at the time should say our daughter and I got up one morning and I was waiting for breakfast as I was staying with some people some friends of ours and picked up the morning newspaper and there was an article that sort of intrigued me. It was on the front page of the what was called the Otago Daily Times and it talked about a museum exhibit that was traveling throughout New Zealand of the Inca civilization and these various artifacts and pieces of jewelry and pottery and agricultural implements and so on weavings and were all being put on display but it said the pride and joy of this particular museum exhibit was the mummified remains of an Inca person and that mummy supposedly was twelve fifteen hundred years of age and this exhibit was touring around the various major cities of New Zealand then going over to Australia and so on and the article said that New Zealand was the only country where this mummy was not being displayed and then it gave the reason why it said because it would offend the Maori people the Maoris are the original inhabitants of New Zealand equivalent of our Native Americans they're very superstitious when it comes to things to do with death and so on they have certain cultural things that again would make that offensive to them and so the government was sensitive to their culture and rather than offend them chose not to display this particular mummy. See the Bible says a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.

Some of you have offended somebody and you've done everything you can to try and rectify that offense you've written letters you've phoned you've apologized and so on but to this day there's still a breach in your relationship and I could go on and on and on about different cultures and humorous things about the way in which people do things that you know would horrify us I'll just give you one more when my wife and I were in New Guinea we had a friend who worked in a very primitive area most of New Guinea is very primitive 3 million people 700 languages not dialects actual languages Wycliffe Wycliffe have the largest base in the world there and one of these missionaries was telling us that after he had been in this particular area for a while working on translating the scriptures that

one of the nationals came up to him and had a question and the question was concerning the missionary's handkerchief he'd never seen a handkerchief before it was a new thing to him novel thing to him but he noticed that every time the missionary blew his nose he took out this beautiful white piece of cloth proceeded to blow his nose and sort of fold it up put it in his pocket always sort of tapped his pocket you know make sure it was in there and the question was why'd you save that stuff and what'd you do with it after all it was always an immaculate piece of cloth that represented something of value obviously and it was gathered very carefully and folded up very carefully and in his mind maybe there was some sort of commodity here that he could trade in I don't know after all we've been

wasting on the ground for hundreds of years and these brilliant Europeans have got you know all these gadgets and so on they know a lot more than we do so maybe there's something of value here now I share all that to say this that I believe that God lives in a certain environment God has a particular atmosphere that he's looking for and God has his ways of doing things we looked this morning at Moses teach me your ways oh Lord Lord let me understand your culture because in our culture you know that's not wrong in our culture this is acceptable but Lord it seems in your culture that's not acceptable I mean really that's the essence of the ways of God isn't it the way why does he do things the way he does what is it that God values what is it what is it that God hates I think it's Tozer

that says if you want to flourish spiritually and grow and maturity love what God loves and hate what God hates and that's a simple definition really of the Christian life isn't it you can't reduce it down to a more basic formula than that if you love what God loves you'll thrive spiritually if you hate what God hates you'll thrive but if we love what God hates and we hate what God loves we've got problems so we need to say Lord teach me your ways and the word habitation again the word habitat in the Bible means according to the dictionary at least the usual place that a plant or an animal is found that's the dictionary definition of habitation a habitat the usual place that a plant or an animal is found the word habitation in the Bible is one of those words in the Hebrew and I'm not an

expert when it comes to Greek and Hebrew never really studied it thank God for Strong's and other works but it's one of those words that can be translated in many many ways it can be translated tabernacle it can be translated a place to rest we talked about tonight in that song Lord arise again to your resting place it's the word to marry the word to abide the word to settle the word to keep house and all of those words have a sense of permanence God is wanting to marry us the Bible says in Ephesians what we are the habitation of God or we are becoming the habitation of God the dwelling place of God and he wants to marry you he wants to rest in you he wants to settle in you he wants to keep house so to speak he wants you to become his tabernacle if you have your Bible turn to Exodus

chapter 25 and then we'll go to the New Testament I don't want you to think I only preach out of the Old Testament I love the Old Testament I'm more pictorial I guess and I like stories and so I can sort of get a

hold of principles in the New Testament from stories in the Old Testament that's just the way my brain works I guess but Exodus chapter 25 God appears to Moses and I want you to see this this is not Moses begging God this is not Moses at the end of 40 days of prayer and fasting sort of twisting the arm of God trying to extract something from him this is God taking the initiative and he comes to Moses and he says in verse 8 Moses I want you to build or construct a sanctuary for me that I may dwell among you or among them in other words Moses I want to come and I want to dwell with

my people not just visit and I want you to build a sanctuary I want you to build a habitation I want you to build me a house I want you to build me a place where I can settle where I can marry where I can have a permanent abode with my people after all God's a father and as a father he wants to be with his children and so in verse 8 God expresses his desires and God's desire is and he is the unchanging God God's desire is to dwell in your life and my life I am the Lord and I change not thank God for that thank God that God has not become sort of grumpy over the years and sort of you know things get on his nerves now and he doesn't want to be with his kids you know we're not sort of grandchildren that you know he picks us up and plays with a while and sort of here you can have him back

that's the beauty of being a grandparent but God isn't a grandfather he doesn't have grandchildren he wants to be with his family he wants to be with his children and he wants to dwell with us permanently he's not one of those fathers that just sort of comes and goes and flits in and out and visits for a while and so on no I want to be with my family and so God expresses again his desire verse 9 God expresses now his demands and we need to see as we look at these two verses that we're understanding something about the ways of God notice he says according to all that I'm going to show you as to the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture just so you shall construct it in other words after expressing his desire he says now Moses before you get any bright ideas listen

I'm not gonna dwell anywhere as much as I want to come as much as I long to come I want you to build me a habitation according to my specifications and Moses make sure you build it exactly the way I tell you so we find out something about God God's finicky if you like he's fussy he's particular he won't dwell anywhere he's not flexible in that sense he doesn't say listen you know I realize you you know you don't have much room and any old place will do and so really what he does he takes Moses up into the mountain and I believe there there is an unveiling of what is going on in heaven and he said Moses I want you to replicate all of this on earth I want I want you to duplicate all this I want the same environment on earth that I have in heaven I want the same conditions on earth that I'm

used to in heaven make sure that you make it exactly the way I tell you I'll give you the type of furniture I'll give you the type the color scheme I'll give you the the length and the breadth of the tabernacle I'll tell you exactly where to place that furniture I'll tell you the height of that furniture I'll tell you what rooms to you know put it in and so on and so forth and make sure you don't take any liberties and so we find out something about God God longs to be in your life he longs to be in my life he wants to abide with us that's very clear but he won't abide anywhere conditions have to be met now you could tell a lot about a person by visiting their home sometimes as I travel I'm placed in people's homes and I've been in all types of homes over many many years I remember when

we were at Teen Challenge in New York City my father had an invitation to go up to the up to the Thousand Island area there between America and Canada up in the St.

Lawrence Seaway and there was a brother there I don't know what's happened to him but anyway he had bought an island called Dark Island it was a nine acre island and on that island there was a castle it was built by the head of the single sewing machine company back about 1904 or 1912 something like that and it was an absolutely fascinating place and he had acquired it for literally a song and here was this beautiful castle you know up on nine acres built up and you pulled up at the dock and there was a big long spiral sort of drive going up to the castle with a clock tower I mean it was a real castle you went inside there were all the stone arches there were knights of armor there were tapestries I mean it was unbelievable and we spend a week there we went into what would be the library

huge library with you know bookcases all the way around magnificent fireplace on either side of the fireplace there's a beautiful wood panel and then the books started and we discovered that actually we were shown but we discovered some others that if you reach behind the books there was a lever recessed back in the bookcase and you lift it up and this panel just swung open and you could wander all the way through that castle secret passages everywhere it was absolutely an amazing place still is I guess Hollywood had used it to film some sort of war thing it was used as a Nazi base but it was absolutely intriguing but I've also slept in grass huts in Fiji and almost shivered to death way up in the mountains of Fiji where you were thinking Fiji with all its palm trees and so on this was up

where there were pines and so I've been in all sorts of homes and you can go into a home and you can tell a lot about that person they may not even be there there's been times when I've been taken to a home by a pastor and say listen this is gonna be the place you're gonna be staying for the next few days these people have made the house available for you they're both working right now they'll be home in a little while they just said to make yourself comfortable and I can go into that home I've never met this couple but just looking around that home tells me a tremendous amount about them tells me the sort of likes and dislikes they have tells me many times if they're well off or if they're poor tells me if they're neat or sloppy tells me if they're clean or dirty tells me if they're

educated or uneducated many times just looking at the books and the type of things that they read maybe sometimes you know I'll come in through the garage and there's a whole bunch of jet skis and skis and a jet boat and fishing rods and everything else and I think boy these guys are really into sport they've obviously got teenagers and so on go inside maybe there's some animals mounted in the den and I think this guy's into hunting you know look in the shelves and see the type of books they're reading I think obviously there's a doctor a lawyer in the house these are all medical books are these all books about law you know sometimes we're all cooking books recipe books and I think this is gonna be a great weekend but you know they're not even there and I can look through that home and I

can see you know maybe there's a piano maybe there's a flute lying there maybe there's you know some music on the stand and I realize you know somebody here is playing the flute there's obviously a there are musical family and all of those things just by going into the house and say this is the atmosphere that these people live in this is their habitat and it tells me so much about them if you have your Bible again turn with me to Revelation because what we want to do now is go into the house of God and we want to see God's dwelling place we want to understand after all if we are becoming the habitation of God we need to know what God is looking for we need to have a little bit of a glimpse as to what he's used to and here in Revelation chapter 4 and don't get afraid I don't go any

further in Revelation than chapter 4 or 5 I leave that to the experts I figure the muddy the waters are muddy enough without me making them any worse so I never preach or teach on eschatology because I

haven't figured it out I know he's coming back but I don't know when and that's the extent of it my eschatology is summarized and be ready for in such an hour as you think not and I don't know the bus schedule but I'm gonna be at the bus stop I think there's an awful lot of people think they've got the bus schedule down pat and they'll show up just in the nick of time chances are they'll miss it but those that are waiting will get it regardless of whether they know the schedule or not that's my the essence of my theology right there anyway Revelation chapter 4 John now is invited in to the

dwelling place of God we talked about the presence of God this morning tonight what we're trying to do is get a hold of how to continue on in the presence of God not just have it as a sort of a passing thing but Lord you're abiding presence in our lives verse 1 after these things I looked and behold the door was standing open in heaven and a voice which I heard like the sound of a trumpet speaking to me and he said come up here and I will show you what must take place after these things and immediately I was in the spirit so here is John now and he hears a voice and the door of heaven opens again in a sort of a candid way God's house has got a door just the same way your house has got a door I trust when you go home tonight you don't have to crawl through the window that you go in through

the door and so God opens the door there's a voice from inside John I want you to come in here and John is invited in to the house of God the dwelling place of God and he says immediately I was in the spirit and behold he says a throne was open in heaven or standing in heaven and one sitting on the throne now before John is conscious of anything else he is overwhelmed as he is ushered into the house of God into the presence of God there is only one thing that takes his attention and it's the throne and he says the very first thing I became conscious of was the throne and the throne was occupied there was one sitting on the throne now what is the throne the throne obviously is the place of power the place of authority the place where God reigns and rules a place where he decrees and sends

forth again his will and his purpose he executes his plan and purpose he extends his scepter it's a place again of his kingdom the place of his dominion and you say well what does that have to do with you and me it has everything to do with you and me you see God only has one dwelling place really that dwelling place is the throne the word habitation again according to the dictionary the usual place that someone or something is found the only place that God is found Old Testament New Testament is the throne swear not by heaven why it's the throne of God I saw the Lord high and lifted up what seated upon his throne God is always on the throne his kingdom rules over all and so if God is going to find rest in your life and my life if he's going to abide in your life and my life if he's going

to reside there he demands the throne he will not take a secondary role he will not sit in any other place he's the king and I think and I'm convinced after 35 years of ministry that one of the greatest mistakes that we've made it's to think that somehow we can have God in all of his majesty sort of sitting over here somewhere and we can maintain our position on the throne the Lord I want you to know you're welcome in this house but I'm in control it's my money it's my time I'll call the shots I'll make the decisions make yourself comfortable anywhere you want but don't touch the throne now we don't do it in so many ways but we really do do it don't we I'm sure a lot of people had legitimate excuses not to be in the house of God tonight but a lot of them just decided I don't want to go

because they are on the throne and they call the shots and they make the decisions and it's no wonder why we don't have the abiding presence of God because we grieve him we treat him like one of us in fact less than who we are we don't give him the honor we don't give him the respect we don't give him that which is due his holy name we don't treat him as a king and not just the king but the king of kings we have

the audacity to think that this God in all of his glory and all of his majesty the one that creates the heaven and the earth the one that rules again over the earth that sits above the vault of the earth and reduces rulers to nothing that can take the heart of a king and turn it as a river of water the God in all of his splendor and majesty can take a secondary role to me and my

ways and my kingdom and my will it's a very serious thing and it has to be settled I don't believe that we will ever ever ever I don't care how much theology you get I don't believe we will ever know the abiding presence of God until we come to that place of surrender absolute surrender of yielding everything and abdicating if you like the throne getting off the throne we had a king in England forget his name now is it Henry the eighth not Henry the eighth but Edward in my lifetime who served I think it was only three months or six months at the most fell in love with an American lady Spencer was it Spencer anyway and of course at that time the British would not accept the fact that he was marrying a divorcee and so he had a choice to continue to reign and give up his love affair or to

surrender the throne and embrace this woman he went on national radio there was no television in those days and he announced that he could not live without this woman and therefore he was surrendering the throne of England in favor of his love relationship with this woman how much you love him are you willing to surrender the throne willing to step down and say Lord I surrender all to Jesus I surrender all to him I freely give king of my life I crown thee now thine shall the glory be let's move on the next thing that John becomes aware of is in verse eight the four living creatures each one of them having six wings full of eyes around and within and day and night they do not cease but to say holy holy holy is the Lord God the Almighty who was who is who is to come John now becomes aware

of the fact that he is standing on holy ground and isn't this true consistently all the way through the Word of God that wherever God is it is holy and Moses approached that burning bush and he got within a certain distance the voice of the Spirit of God said to him Moses no further take your shoes off your feet the place you're standing is holy ground when Joshua was surveying Jericho out there musing meditating in the fields and he had that encounter again with the angel of the Lord the captain of the hosts and he began to approach and the angel says to him again remove your shoes your sandals the place you're standing is holy ground when Isaiah or Isaiah went into the house of God again I saw the Lord high and lifted up I saw the seraphim crying out one to another holy holy holy in the

tabernacle there is the outer court there is the holy place but you find the Spirit of God were in the holy of holies you see God says to Moses see to it that you make it Moses exactly according to the pattern I will not dwell in an unclean place I will not dwell where there's sin and rebellion Moses make it exactly the way you've seen it in heaven and notice something about this holiness verse 8 it says by day and by night they do not cease to say holy holy holy it was not a holiness of convenience that sort of kicked in on a Sunday morning between 10 and 12 or again Sunday evening 630 to 830 or whatever it was a day and night holiness it was constant it was consistent it was never changed that's the atmosphere that God dwells in and if he is going to rest in your life and marry into you

and dwell within you he doesn't want a holiness that he sort of just put on for a few hours but then when we get home we can sort of relax and kick back and flip on the television and watch things that we'd be embarrassed to watch if others were there watching them with us pick up a book and read some lewd sort of thing thumb through a magazine and gaze at the pictures and say well of course you know church is over now we can sort of know again we're understanding the ways of God teach me your ways Moses said that I may know you Lord what do you value what do you place value on Lord in your culture what is

important in my culture this isn't very important tonight's news major March there in Washington DC the gay rights movement blatantly flaunting their agenda and so on and we're not

allowed to say anything about it why because these days we have to be politically correct and we're the ones with the problem and so we sort of gradually over a period of years we begin to accommodate and we begin to adjust our thinking don't we because nobody wants to be looked at as being weird but we've got to understand the ways of God holy holy holy is the Lord God Almighty there's an interesting story there in the Old Testament you know it well but an interesting little insight into that story it's the story of Noah and at the end of the 40 days after the rain had ceased Noah was trying to determine whether it was safe to open the doors of the ark it would be clear from a study of that that the only light was divine light the only light that came in was from above there was no

porthole and so Noah releases a raven the Bible says and the raven flew here and there you see a raven is an unclean bird it will settle on debris it will settle on some sort of bloated carcass it will settle on filth as well as something clean and Moses could not or Noah rather could not determine that the waters had abated and so it says that he released a dove and the dove is female and it says that the dove flew around but there was no resting place for the sole of her foot and Noah knew that the waters had not abated you see the dove again a type of the Holy Spirit the dove being so sensitive the dove flew out there and it could not settle because all there was to settle on was that which was filthy and impure and the dove comes back and Noah takes that dove and he takes it into the

ark and he waits for seven days and then he releases the dove again and it says this time towards evening the dove came back with a freshly picked olive leaf in her mouth and Noah knew the waters have resided it's now safe to open the doors it's now safe to go out because the dove will only settle with his life and many times we're trying to get the dove to settle aren't we and he can't find a resting place for the sole of his feet I remember in New Guinea one night we had traveling evangelists that came through he had a small Bible school and they were out on a sort of an outreach they stayed with us there at the youth of the mission base that I was in charge of at the time and we had an altar call this man had spoken and there were a number of people that lined up wanting various things

to be dealt with in their life and three young men were standing there wanting the baptism of the Spirit and I knew them they'd only been saved a short period of time one a few weeks another just a matter of maybe six or seven weeks and this man did everything that you know you can imagine and things that I don't like seeing done but he was doing them trying to get them through to the baptism nothing nothing and he was I could tell getting a little bit frustrated so he left them and moved on to start praying for others and I went to the first young man and I opened the scriptures or at least I quoted the verse in the book of James James chapter 4 and verse 5 very beautiful verse the King James is very difficult to understand the spirit lusteth to envy but if you have a modern translation

it says the Spirit capital S the Holy Spirit which God has made to dwell in us and jealously desires us one of the few verses in the Bible that really expresses the longing of the Holy Spirit we know that God so loved the world he gave his son we know of course the compassion and love that the son has but the Bible says our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in other words when God created man in the beginning he created us to contain the breath of God the life of God the Spirit of God and so right from the very beginning we were created to be the habitation of God his dwelling place and the Bible says that the Spirit lusteth to envy in other words he's jealously desirous of us and I said to this young man I said listen the Holy Spirit longs to come into you because you were created by

God to contain the Holy Spirit but I said there's something that mustn't be right I said are you aware of anything I didn't want him to go on some great sort of you know hunt trying to unearth something from the past I just simply said is there any reason why the dove can't settle and right away just like that he said to me yes he said I took my first cigarette today since I was converted I never mentioned smoking it's not my job to play Holy Spirit in that sense but you see when he took that cigarette and he'd been delivered the moment he got saved he'd been set free and he'd reverted back and the moment he took that cigarette the Holy Spirit had sort of put up a stop sign in his heart so to speak there was something he knew he was doing wrong but he went ahead and did it and I didn't

have to say anything because the Spirit of God convicted him I said are you prepared to put that right he said yes I prayed for him and he came through to the baptism of spirit I went to the next young man I basically said the same thing are you aware why there's the Holy Spirit's not settling he said yes I said what is it he said I got angry today lost my temper and I said we I had a fight with a guy at work again these are young converts you see the Holy Spirit had said and listen this is wrong but he went ahead anyway but as soon as he repented the dove landed I can't remember the third one but it was similar see we've got to understand that we're dealing with God and he doesn't change he's not a sort of a 20th century a little more accommodating a little more flexible sort of a God

that's mellowed over the years and isn't quite as finicky and fussy as he used to be I am the Lord and I change not be holy as I am holy not partially holy I understand you know this is 20th century you guys have got a lot of more temptations these days and they had way back there and so you know I'll let you off a little bit that's not the God I read about and so we have to ask ourself again this question what is this environment like that God wants to dwell in in your life for my life is it day and night holiness oh I'm not saying that doesn't give you room to stumble and so on obviously we all make mistakes but I'm talking about a deep longing and desire to be like God and where we keep ourselves in cooperation with the Holy Spirit and there's a place where you and I become if you like

joint partners with the Holy Spirit where the Holy Spirit highlights something and it's our responsibility to deal with it Paul said to Timothy if a man purge himself from these things he will be a vessel you say well that sounds like works no we're saved by grace it's a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast but there is a place where you and I keep ourselves the best way I can explain that I guess is to look at the Feast of Israel and there is the Passover where they took the blood of the Lamb and they sprinkle that blood and caught it there first of all rather in the basin and took the hyssop and dipped it in the basin there and sprinkled the doorposts of the house and God said when I see the blood I'll pass over you and it was under the protection of blood it was not their

blood it was the blood of the Lamb they were spared judgment and death but the moment that Passover ended another feast began the Feast of Unleavened Bread and it was their responsibility to go through their homes and to literally ransack their homes and turn over every canister of God you see we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb nothing you can do you can't add to the atonement you can't add to the finished work of Christ but as the Holy Spirit begins to turn things over in your life it's your responsibility to deal with those areas and to repent to those areas and as long as we are cooperating with the Holy Spirit obviously the Spirit of God resides in us but the moment we begin to stop our cooperation with the Holy Spirit he begins to deal and point and highlight if you like and

underscore things and we refuse to deal with them then that moment we begin to grieve the Spirit of God as long as we're cooperating let's face it the moment we're saved there's a lot of maturing to do and we

realize things this is wrong and that's wrong God's work job is to convict us the Bible says there is the washing of regeneration there is the renewing of the Holy Ghost the washing of regeneration is instantaneous it's the blood of the Lamb but the renewing process takes time but as long as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit we work together if you like with the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit then is there to comfort and there to minister and convict and so on but the moment we stop then we grieve the Holy Spirit so it has to be again a holy place I'll never forget my wife and I taking

our children in New Zealand on what is called a farm holiday in New Zealand there are three and a half million people and between 50 and 70 million sheep depending if it's lambing season just as Iowa is known for its corn New Zealand is known for its sheep there's sheep everywhere and what will happen is a farmer will have a successful year and maybe his neighbor is retiring or something and he will buy up the adjacent property because he wants to expand his operation and in buying the adjacent property of course he acquires the farmer's house and everything else and he can't live in two houses and if the house is in reasonably good condition then he will make it available and there's a bureau you can call and you can rent these what they call farm holidays and go there for a week or a

month or as long as you want to stay and we have been told about a particular place being highly recommended to us down this magnificent Valley just a little sort of a gravel road off the main road in the back of the mountains of New Zealand there's beautiful beautiful mountains there snow covered year-round and so we had booked this place and anticipated going there were involved in the church and always busy and sort of wanted to get away and the day came we put our kids in the car and packed some belongings and went down sure enough we found this road gravel road going down beautiful mountains on either side magnificent river there we thought well this would be an idyllic place we can get out we can look around I can do a little bit of fishing and you can just enjoy being together as a

family and so we pulled in at the farm house to pick up the key and the lady said you know if you just keep going down the road another quarter mile or so there on the left is the house and so we picked up the key got back in the car drove down there sure enough found the house and pulled in the driveway farmhouse look normal on the outside went inside and it was anything but what we had expected it was filthy I mean it was terrible threadbare sort of carpets springs coming up through the couch dirt everywhere went into the kitchen it was just unbelievable there were dozens and if not hundreds of bottles empty you know alcoholic bottles beer bottles and all sorts of stuff went into the bedroom my wife looked at the mattress and said darling I will not sleep on that it was just

unbelievable well we finally made the best of it we brought some extra blankets put them on this mattress covered it up put our sheets over it put the kids down fell asleep thought well at least in the morning we can get out and enjoy God's beauty woke up in the morning and all I could hear was the pitter-patter of rain all the old buildings in New Zealand all the old homes have got corrugated roofs and so you know when it rains you can hear it and it got harder and harder and harder and all day long it rained and we were cooped up in this place every time I sat down I was convinced that you know I was coming down with some sort of bubonic plague or something and I'd been a missionary and I'm you know grew up on a farm and I'm not one of those that sort of a is you know fussy in that

sense I like things neat and tidy but I'm not you know crazy we went to bed that night woke up in the morning rain four days a solid non-stop rain weren't able to get out and we were cooped up in a place that was anything but what I enjoyed now you need to understand my wife her father was the last of his family to be born in America but they were all Germans so my wife was basically raised in a sort of a German

background home and has that BMW Mercedes mentality where everything is precise and she's basically a perfectionist and the kids and I have done our best to sort of modify her over the years but I'm not sure if it worked and here we were with all of this disorder and everything dirty and we were supposed to be enjoying our vacation and after four days we finally had enough and we

put the kids in the car turned in the key we were booked to be there at least seven days and went home I remember walking in the house and never feeling more appreciative of my wife's cleanliness from that moment I mean you could literally eat off the floor everything was immaculate everything was in its place I could sit down and I was at home I mean I just you know I could touch anything and just feel this is this is where I belong I think God's that way does he feel that way in your life where he's at home because the atmosphere is what he's used to the conditions of what he's used to everything's clean there's integrity or is he sort of feeling uncomfortable verse 9 and the living creatures will give glory and honor and thanks to him that sits on the throne we could look at that I'm

sure and amplify it a lot more but notice that everything in heaven glorifies him the Bible says whatever you do word or deed do all to the glory of God not just on a Sunday morning your job I remember hearing Jack Hayford many many years ago and as only Jack can with all of his beautiful eloquence he was talking about that little verse that says is not this Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth and he emphasized the carpenter of Nazareth and he said I believe in Nazareth there were all sorts of men that did odd jobs and you know basically were carpenters but if you were wanting a job done that was the best job and you made inquiries and said listen I'm wanting to remodel and so on who would you suggest I get there's only one carpenter really in Nazareth the carpenter of Nazareth is Jesus

Christ and the plumber and the educator and the clerk and the secretary and so on and so forth should be you and should be me so we're not coming in to work late we're not trying to make excuses we're not witnessing all day on the phone we're not reading our Bible and so on so forth whatever you do in word or deed do all to the glory of God not only that but they honor him give him his due his respect and then they also give him thanks Thanksgiving that's a biggie with God isn't it you enter into his gates with Thanksgiving in other words when you go into God's house and you meet God he's used to something here in heaven there is Thanksgiving God is a good father he says listen if you're gonna be one of my kids I want you to learn to say thank you good parents do that don't we Johnny has

his birthday he's five years of age and all his friends you know come from kindergarten packages and you know bigger than they are Johnny's tearing into them you know all excited and mommy says now Johnny just a moment what'd you say to Fred he looks at you like you're speaking Chinese say well what'd you say Johnny thinks for a while and then it dawns on him thank you but we teach them don't we to be grateful and God has a real issue with Thanksgiving said to the children of Israel in the Old Testament because you did not serve the Lord your God with gladness and thankfulness for the abundance of all that he provided if you don't do that therefore you'll serve your enemies that sounds like a severe punishment for lack of Thanksgiving doesn't it I mean God turn you over to your enemies I

can understand if you're sinning and committing adultery and so on so forth but I mean you're just not being grateful God says listen there you go let your enemies take care of you New Testament in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you Romans chapter 1 when they knew God they were honored him not as God neither were they thankful God gave him over to a reprobate mind Paul and Silas in prison ready to go to sleep and one of them says hey you know let's sing or they get going you know no rhythm section so they've got these chains and you know they start and all

of a sudden God says hey that sounds like home see he inhabits the praises of his people it's the habitation that he's used to he's drawn into these atmospheres that we create there's a

throne I'll take that throne there's holiness there's and then the last one in verse 10 the 24 elders will fall down before him that sits on the throne and will worship him worship we don't know much about worship doing you see America's made a tragic mistake and that is that we equate praise and worship has been the same it was a number of years ago that I became a little bit convicted and began to do a little bit of a study and I have one message just on worship but I just feel I've only just begun to scratch the surface of what real worship is all you've got to do is pick up charisma magazine there's a worship conference here in a worship conference there you know there are a bunch of guys that can play guitars and they've written a few songs and so they're going to teach and instruct

and they may be good playing guitars and they may be good song leaders but it doesn't necessarily mean that they're good worshipers what is worship my father used to have a saying the prayer his preoccupation with our needs Lord bless me Lord keep me Lord heal me Lord provide for me Lord praise his preoccupation with our blessings thank you Lord for healing me thank you Lord for protecting me thank you Lord for meeting my need but worship is preoccupation with God alone regardless of whether my needs are met regardless of whether I'm not healed regardless of my circumstances he is still worthy it may surprise you to know that the greatest acts of worship in the Bible had no music associated with them none whatsoever you see there is a law that some of the old expositors used referred to

and they called it the law of first mention that when something is mentioned for the very first time in the Bible it gives us it sort of establishes if you like a precedent it it gives us an understanding of that particular term of that particular thought all the way through the rest of the Word of God and the very first time that worship is ever mentioned in the Bible we find it in the life of Abraham and God said to Abraham Abraham I want you to take your son your only son whom thou lovest Isaac I want you to put him on the altar and God tests this man he tested him many times are you willing to forsake father mother brother sister discipleship he was the first disciple after all he is the father of all those that believe and so as a father he establishes in the Word what God is looking

for in the lives of all his children he is the the father Israel is told remember the rock from whence you were dug remember Abraham your father he is the father of the Jew he's the father of the Gentile he was a Gentile he became a Jew but God has tested him many times and the ultimate test is Abraham I've been watching you and I'm I'm sort of not sure whether you love me more than you love that son that I gave you and so I'm gonna test you are you prepared to put him on the altar and the Bible says Abraham rose early that morning I'd have slept in and he settled his donkey and he split the wood and he took some servants with him and he made a three-day pilgrimage and God says this is a place stop and Abraham takes the wood and the knife and the son and says to the man you guys stay here

I and the lad will go yonder and we will worship no choir no music no stringed instruments no orchestra we're gonna worship God what is worship worship is the unreserved giving of everything to God it's radical obedience it transcends praise it transcends music and dancing and all of those things it's the heart that says God I'll give you everything and Abraham takes that beautiful young man binds him and puts him on the altar and takes the knife and God says okay stop now I know that you fear me respect me love me now I know because you've not withheld your son he says your only son and he no longer adds whom thou lovest because he's already proved my love for you is greater than my love for the son worship then we have men like David after he sinned with Bathsheba nine months later

there is a child born beautiful little boy child is alive maybe for a matter of weeks maybe months at the most and all of a sudden God strikes that child with a fever the judgment of God because of David sin David disappears seven days he prays he fasts he wept before God begging God for the life of that child and then his servants notify him and he can tell by the look on their face the child is dead and it says David went into his room and he clothed himself and washed himself put on some garments went back into that place got on his face and worshipped no music no instruments just a man totally submitted to the will of God and said I'm sure in his mind God I don't understand why you took this life instead of this life this life didn't commit the sin this life did but Lord who am I to

say to the potter why I'm here just to bow in surrender then we have Job man that fear God this wonderful man of God and one day he buries what is it 11 children something like that was it can't remember if it was six sons and four daughters something along that order all in one home what a tragedy we've just celebrated a few weeks ago the Columbine anniversary 15 people that gave up their lives was it to imagine if all those basically were part of the same family here is a man and wife standing there one two three four five six seven more than that and his empire sort of collapses his homes are all wiped out again by the storm and the wind and the devil's had his day he wakes up in the next morning and he's covered from boil and boils all over his body and he has to sit there in the

ashes because it's the only thing seemingly don't give him some relief as he splashes all that dust on him to sort of get some sort of relief that's all I can think of and his wife of course is grieving and you can understand and she says why don't you just curse God and die what does Job do get on his face worshipped no choir no instruments just a heart surrendering acknowledging God as for God his way is perfect I don't understand it Lord to my mind I don't understand why these things happen but Lord your sovereign the Magi we've seen his star in the east we've come to worship him and they came into the house it says and they open up their treasures and they gave lavishly they gave extravagantly their gold and their frankincense and the myrrh and it says they fell down and they

worshipped no choir no music you see in the book of Revelation so often when you see the word worship you see the word Amen the end of chapter 5 there it says the four living creatures kept falling down saying Amen and the elders fell down and they worshipped and that word Amen according to the experts it means to be in harmony with to be in agreement with to sort of resonate with you see a worshipper is one whose heart resonates with God it's not in discord it's not in opposition and when tragedy happens and when things happen and so on all we can do is bow down and every act of worship in the Bible there was a bowing down why because worship acknowledges the worth let me say something you cannot be a worshipper cannot be a worshipper unless he has the throne you see one cancels out the

other it's impossible for you to worship and not have God on the throne that's what worship is it's an acknowledgement of his worth it's a bowing it's getting in that lower posture in humility in recognition that he's a great king oh we can sing songs we can dance we can wave banners we can do our thing but you can't be a worshipper a true worshipper without putting him in his rightful place and bowing down again the Greek word is to sort of lick the hand of or kiss the hand of it's like a dog to his master who comes and he's just so full of appreciation and he's licking away and wagging his tail and you know he's just a rather crude illustration but that's really what it's about you see I really don't think we know a lot about worship because you've not withheld your son your only son so

often we withhold don't we we withhold our reputation we withhold our prerogative to make choices we withhold you know this and we withhold that and Lord I'll give you a little bit of money but I'm gonna

withhold the rest I'll give you a little bit of time but I'm gonna withhold this the Bible says the father seeks those that will worship him you see it seems at least to me it's a rare commodity the father seeks them and yet the first and the foremost and the greatest commandment of all thou shalt love the Lord thy God thou shalt worship the Lord thy God with all of your soul with all of your heart with all of your mind this is where God dwells who shall ascend into the hill of how do I abide of course there's answers you've got to have clean hands David you've got to have a pure heart

David can't lift up your soul to vanity David can't swear deceitfully David there are conditions to dwelling with God the conditions to abiding in the presence of God he wants to come and make his abode in us let's just close in prayer you're prepared tonight to give him his rightful place you're prepared to deal with sin those secret sins the Bible talks about the secret sins in the light of his presence the sins that nobody else knows about that website that you've got earmarked that whenever people go to bed you can click on feast on a whole realm of uncleanness that book that you're reading that you'd be ashamed if other people found out could be there's an affair going on tonight you haven't told your wife you haven't told your husband about and yet you're still trying to maintain a

relationship with God in the midst of it how desperate you are are you really for God we will come and we will make our abode if you love me if you honor me if you worship me if you give me my rightful place Moses build it according to the pattern Mary build it according to the pattern John build it according to the pattern Fred build it according to the pattern father we look to you right now Lord we do desire to know you Lord to know your ways we've seen a little bit Lord of your standard tonight your ways the things that you value Lord in our culture we have our values Lord we're independents we're Americans we celebrate every year our independence nobody's gonna rule over us nobody goes is gonna tell us what to do and Lord we've done that with you and you're waiting again for that

place of surrender let's just stand tonight

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