

A Craving for the Presence - Part 2

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson emphasizes the critical need for believers to crave the presence of God rather than merely relying on His promises and provisions.

Duration: 27:17

Scripture: Exodus 33:15, Deuteronomy 4:29, Psalm 27:8, Psalm 42:1, Psalm 105:4, Isaiah 55:6, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 3:10, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:8

Topics: "Intimacy With God", "Seeking His Presence"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of craving and seeking the presence of the Lord in our lives, rather than just relying on legal contracts or promises. It highlights the need for a deep, intimate relationship with God, where His presence is cherished above all else, even in times of hardship and uncertainty. The message calls for a genuine desire to know Jesus and experience His glory, urging believers to have a craving heart for the Lord.

Transcript

If you have everything and you sit there through that bored, murmuring, complaining, looking back to the good life, you don't have the presence of the Lord in you or with you, and you're growing more and more bitter and sour, even though sitting there while everybody around you is suffering, and you're sitting there in the lap of the good things, those good things will make you bored and restless and empty without the presence of the Lord. Jesus said, is not life more than meat and the body more than raiment? And what he's saying, don't focus on, he said, don't say what shall we eat and what shall we drink or what should we wear, but you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be taken care of, they'll be added unto you. The Lord says, no, it's not about security, it's about your relationship with me.

He's saying, don't focus on that. If you will focus on my presence in your life, if you will deal with sin in your life, if you will seek me with everything that's in you, I'll take care of you. You take care of your heart, I'll take care of your basket.

There's nobody in this world now to convince me that America is going to miss having a full-blown depression, nobody in the world, because the Holy Ghost has convinced me. I am totally convinced. I don't get this from reading books and economists' musings.

More than that, it's something clear from the Word of God and things that we know, and I don't care if the stock market bounces back to 15,000 points and be the biggest fool's market in the world's history, and the higher it goes, the worse will be the fall. But Moses knew well that without the presence of the Lord with them, not he or the nation could make it through the perilous times that had befallen them. Moses knew that he had to have more than a legal contract with God.

I want you to follow closely. Remember that the setting here is that Israel had corrupted themselves by worshiping a golden idol, and the whole nation had risen up to eat and drink and play before this idol in nakedness and shame, and God was angered by this blatant idolatry and he said, my wrath is waxing hot against them. He said to Moses, I'm going to consume them, and you know that Moses prevailed with God, and God had mercy on them, and he spared Israel, but on one awful condition.

He said, all right, I'm going to let you go up to the land of milk and honey. You go on. I'm going to I'm going to take care of your enemies.

I'll send hornets before you. I, in fact, am going to send an angel with you to lead you on, but he said, I'm not going with you. I'm not going.

My presence will no longer be in your midst. I am leaving the camp. Moses cried out to God.

Well, here's what the scripture said. Go on your way. I will not go with you.

I will send an angel to go before thee, for I will not go up in the midst of thee. Moses takes his tent outside the camp, his own tent, takes it outside the camp, far away to begin to intercede before God, and this is his prayer. He said, oh God, this people have sinned a great sin and have made gods of gold.

Now, I want you to look at this. He separated this two. There are two evils here.

One evil, the result of the first. He said, they have committed a great sin, and this is another sin, they have built a golden idol. In fact, this building the golden idol was a result of this great sin of Israel.

It's the sin of today, just as it was the sin then. What is this incredible, awful sin that Israel committed that Moses is crying out and said, oh Lord, we have committed a great sin against you. That great sin of then and today is a lack of respect for the presence of the Lord in our personal lives.

It's a lack of respect, a lack of desire for the presence of the Lord in our lives. Lightly esteeming the presence of the Lord, not having a craving in the heart to honor and preserve his presence in our life. It is to want his provision, to want his protection, and to not crave after his presence, the very presence that makes the provisions possible.

I'm telling you sadly, and I see something and it really hit me this past week. Now, I want every one of you here today that call yourself a Christian, you say, I am a Christian, I'm a believer. Somewhere along the line you heard a pastor, minister, somebody testified to you about the Word of God that said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, reach into your heart and get a hold of faith, lay hold of that promise, and believe that Jesus died for your sins, finished the work, you claim it, it's a legal contract, it's a covenant God has made with you, believe and thou shall be saved, and you did that and rightly so, and that's fine.

You are legally saved, you are under contract, you've been brought into the family of God, but if all you have is a legal contract and a legal covenant with God, you've missed the point. It will never lead you to

holiness, it will never lead you to desire, you will never know him in his fullness, because you are standing on a legal contract. What Bible says this, I claim it, but where's the affection? Where is the love? Where is that craving in your heart? Where is that love? The Bible said, you are now a son of God, but where is that love a son should have a father who adopted him? Where is it? I don't see it in the land.

I picked up a sermon, a written sermon, or someone gave it to me from the internet, and it's a powerful, brilliant sermon by a man I know, a man, a preacher who smokes and drinks, and every time you see him in a restaurant, he's surrounded with beautiful actresses, a lawlessness, and what a sermon. He says, reach down into your gut, pull up some faith, lay a hold of the promise of the finished work of Christ, and don't ever let anybody shake you. But it's illegal, there is no love, there is no devotion, there is no crying out to God, there's no desire for the holiness of God, because anyone who's siding with God and craving his presence, that holy presence in his life will conform you to the image of Christ.

God offered Moses and Israel this legal deal. He said, I promised to send an angel before you, I'll take care of you, I'll defeat all your enemies, I'll give you a land of milk and honey. Now that's saying, I'll give you salvation, I'll bless you, I'll take care of you, and it's all legal.

It's a legal deal, it's a covenant. God made it, and he made it to a stiff-necked people that hadn't changed, that still had no hunger or thirst after him. He, out of sheer mercy, and that's what it is, salvation is absolute mercy.

The mercy of God came and found you, and you have a legal contract. I'm a son of God, the Bible says that that settles it, and so many go on their stiff-necked way, neglecting him. They don't pray, they don't seek the face of God, there's no love, there's no devotion, and all the time God had said to Israel, I'm bringing you out of Egypt, I'll break your bondage, but I want you to love me with all your heart, your mind, your soul, and strength.

This was a love affair, and here's an offer of a legal deal. God says, I have given you my binding promises, and you know, that's all some people want. No, I'm not going to hell.

I've been saved, and there are some people believe that they're saved, and they can live like the devil and still go to heaven. What a surprise awaits those poor blinded souls. You see, the stiff-necked people had no desire to get to know him or to embrace him, and now you and I have two testaments, the old and the new, filled with legal promises that are yea and amen to everyone who believes.

Yes, they are. He will keep his word. He will feed you.

He will clothe you. He will house you. He will make sure that the enemies don't prevail over you.

He's not going to keep you rich, but he'll keep you supplied. Now, you can go on with that legal deal. You can go on with that.

He'll keep his word to you. But see, Israel now has for the first time to deal with this issue of God's presence. They'd never dealt with it before.

They had just taken everything for granted. They took lightly the presence of the Lord. They saw all of his blessings and provisions and got bored under it all and really had no heart for him.

But now they've heard the word. God says, you've got your legal deal. Now you go on your own way.

I'm not going with you. I'll protect you. I'll supply all your needs.

Now, if that's all you want, folks, you can have it. If all you think, well, there's a depression coming, hard times, I want my legal deal. I want to make sure there's food, everything else.

That's enough for me. I have this settled faith. I've believed.

I'm saved. I'm not going to hell. He's going to take care of me.

Good. And when the people heard the evil tidings, you know, that the Lord's presence was going to leave, they mourned, and no man did put on his ornaments. And up to this moment, the men had been strutting around the wilderness, laden down with foolish ornaments.

They got it from Egypt. Ankle bracelets, arm bracelets, omelet bracelets, trinkets of brass hanging down their neck, trading around with the old baggage of Egypt. But now the message has come, my presence will not go with you.

And so now they take off all of their ornaments, and they begin to mourn. Mourn means to weep and cry and lament. They were crying and weeping and lamenting.

Now, that's a message many churches don't want to hear. You can go to nine out of ten churches in New York, and if I got up and preached about, come to the Lord and mourn for your sins, and get rid of all the baggage of your past life, half the congregation would think I'm stupid or walk out. You don't want to hear it.

Believe! Then God comes, they'd already put off their ornaments, and here's what he said, now put off your ornaments. They'd already put them off, and he's coming, but put them off now, that I may know what to do with you. What he's saying, all right, you put them off temporarily, but leave them off.

Don't go back to your old ways. Don't cry and mourn, and then go put your ornaments back on. Don't go back to the old sins.

Don't go back to your old life, your old way of thinking. Leave it! God seems to be saying an unusual thing here. It's almost like God sounds undecided.

He said, take off your ornaments until I decide what I'm, I don't know what to do with you yet. He knew exactly what he was going to do, and he's waiting for something, and he found what he's waiting for in that tent out far from the camp, because there is Moses. God found the man who is going to give him what he's looking for, what he's been waiting for all of this time, not some kind of a legal contract, not just somebody relying on the promises of God, and begging and seeking for answers to prayer, and having protection for their flesh.

God says, I'm after more than that, and he found it in that tent. He found a pastor. He found an associate pastor, Joshua.

He found those men on their face before God, and in this perilous times, they turned away from all of their activities, every demand on their time. Everything had to go so that they could pour their hearts out before the Lord, and folks, I believe in these perilous times, God is going to raise up a holy remnant, just like these. The Bible said, everyone which sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle, which was outside the camp.

This means they made a special effort. They got up every day, and they went out where Moses was pleading with God, laying hold of God. I ask you Christian, do you have that time? I'm not talking about a five-minute devotion.

Do you have a craving room anywhere? Do you have a twisting spot? Do you have some place where you get alone with the Lord, and say, Lord, I want more than this legal deal. I want to know you. I want your presence in my life.

I want to feel you. Folks, I go into my craving room and say, Lord, I take it by faith, yes, but I want to feel your presence. I want to feel your love, and I want you to feel mine.

It's a feeling thing. They're mourning over the sins of the nation. You know, you hear it say, where's the outrage about what's happening in Washington? Where's the outrage? When a majority of the people say, it's okay as long as the economy is good.

Where's the outrage? I'll tell you where the outrage is. It's right here. These people are mourning for the sins of Israel.

Now they're mourning. It's not where you just get up in the pulpit, and you scream out again. I can stand and give you a scathing message.

I could rip Washington apart. I've got something in my gut and my flesh that would probably want to do it, but that's not the answer. The answer's on your face before God, mourning before Him, and repenting for the whole nation.

Us repenting. The outrage is expressed to the Lord, not to man. And oh, I've expressed, I've been outraged.

Yes, I've raised my hands in my craving room and cried out before God and confessed not only my sins, but the sins of the nation. Out of this prayer time came a cry, Lord, if your presence goes not with me, carry us no further. Boy, this is a powerful statement.

He's saying, Lord, unless I can have your presence, unless I have face-to-face intimacy with you, unless I can come to you and know that you are right there, I feel and I know and I sense your presence. Remember the Bible says this man talked face-to-face with God, and he said, I will not lose that. I am not going, I don't care what promises, I don't care what legally it is, I don't care if you send a host of angels.

No angel for me. You know, a couple of years ago, they were books about angels, and you go to the bookstore, angels. One woman told me, she got in the car and looked back, and there was a 12-foot angel in the back.

I thought, how can a 12-foot angel get in a six-foot car? You know, if you want an angel, the Bible said the angel of the Lord camps around about them that fear him. You've got your angel. Go your way satisfied.

Eat all the water, all the food. Bored, murmuring, complaining, whereas you can just say, oh Jesus, this is not about my surviving, this is about my getting to know you in hard times. This is giving me time to crave and yearn after you and get to know you with everything that's in my heart.

And he says to God, Lord, if you're not going to go with me, if your presence is not with me every day I get up in every waking hour, I'm stopping right here. I'm going to die. I have had it.

I'm not going another step. You're not going to get a craving for the Lord in these hard times unless you pray for it. It's in that secret closet.

It's in that place where you reach out and say, oh God, created me a hunger and thirst after you. God by his Spirit creates that. It's not, you can't do it in your human flesh.

Now you can hear the word and be convicted, and then you go to prayer and say, oh God, I want you with everything that's in my heart. Now here's what he's saying, Lord, thank you for your generous, gracious promise to take care of us. Thank you for your covenant promises to deal with our enemies.

Thank you for the promise of the angel. But Lord, we don't want to go that legal path. We want to go the love way.

We want to be devoted to you. Hallelujah. Then he knew, he knew God would be faithful.

He knew God would take care of him as he did in the past. But now he's drawn to--folks, let me close with an illustration. One of the highlights of our visit to Israel was to visit two wonderful sisters of Mary.

This is a Lutheran organization, have their headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany. I've known them for 40 years. They're wonderful people.

Sister Basilia Slink is one of the great saints of this dinner. She's 94 years old and still praising Jesus as of this time. And these two sisters have been on the Mount of Olives.

They have a compound there. They have about a three, four-story house there overlooking the old city. And we went to visit.

There's two sisters, been there 36 years. Thirty-six years of ministering to Arabs and Jews, saintly. You could feel the presence of the Lord when you walk in.

And they served us some tea and cookies, and they began to tell us about the war that came. And the Jordanian army came and surrounded and dug trenches all around their compound. And they were screaming and yelling.

They were convinced they're going to take Jerusalem. And one of the officials came and told the sisters, you better get out. The war is going to break out shortly.

There's going to be bombing and strafing, and you're going to be right in the middle because the Israeli army is going to come from the left and over here to the right. The Jordanians have dug in their trenches and ready. And they prayed, and the Lord gave them a word, the same word he gave to Gideon.

I'm going to be with you. Don't be afraid. And the Lord told them to store up food before all this happened.

In the basement they had a full storage of food and water and supplies. The war broke out. Israelis came from one side, strafing, bombs, and the house was hit.

Came right through the roof. The walls collapsed. One wall, one wall remained, one corner of a wall that had a plaque on it.

God will keep his people, words of that. God will protect his people. The plaque stood there as a testimony.

Another shell came through and broke through two floors, but it didn't break into the basement. And those dear saints, they had food, they had water. No bullet could touch them.

No bomb could bomb them out. And they were there for 14 days in that basement. One almost broke through, but they fell on some, I think it was a pile of carpets or something they had in the corner, fell right on those carpets and didn't do any harm.

But they told us, and the thing that blessed my heart, they said, it wasn't that God so much, we thank God that he protected us and he provided the food, he told us how to prepare. That was all wonderful. But she said, if all of our years in Israel, those were the most precious hours we've ever spent, because Jesus manifested himself in that basement.

The presence of Jesus, as we've never known. She said, we look back, those were the most precious 14 days of our life in a basement, because Jesus so revealed himself, and they had such craving hearts, they just wanted more and more and more. And even today, they look back, they are, their work is finished, they leave in November, they go back to Darmstadt after 36 years, they go back with this precious memory.

And folks, they still have craving heart for Jesus. But in the hard times, they look back, they're not thinking food, they're not thinking shelter, or even protection for the flesh. It was the revelation of the presence of Jesus Christ.

Folks, in the days ahead, I've told you this, Pastor Carter's told you this, and I believe with all my heart, we are going to see manifestations of the presence of Jesus as no other generation has seen it. Paul the Apostle would be jealous if he could, he could even be near it. Every prophet in the Old Testament had yearned for it and see it.

We are going to see it. You think it's wonderful, sometimes you come here and the presence of the Lord just comes down, and we can't even talk. We sit here for 15 minutes in total silence, just drinking.

Wait till the manifestations that you see when you come with a craving heart, and it's only going to be revealed to the craving hearts. You've got to come with a craving heart to yearn after. I'm going to church not to hear Brother Dave or Pastor Carter or any of the other pastors.

I'm not going there to try to get a word that God's going to somehow keep me. I've got a craving heart. I want to get to know Jesus better.

Do you understand any of this? I do. It's all about Jesus. It's all about seeking Him first, giving Him everything in your life.

Check your devotion. Are you just satisfied to hand out money and be charitable? Is it just enough to be good? No, the Bible said all your goodness is filthy rags, and you say, no, no, no, no. He says, love me with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength.

Love me. Give me your heart. Folks, I heard that, and I'm doing that, and I am so enjoying, because you see, the more you crave, because this man, Moses had such a craving heart, and God says, all right, I'm going to go with you.

I'm going to give you my presence, but then he comes back again. He's so craving after the Lord. He said, now show me your goodness, and the Lord said, I'll show you my goodness, and then when he got to goodness, he said, now show me a revelation of your glory.

This man's not going to stop. I'm going for the glory. I'm going to get to know who you are.

I want a revelation of everything about you, Jesus. I'm not here on this world to live for myself, and just to say, I've finished 70 years, and so forth. Paul's whole thing was not, I fought a good fight, and I'm ready to be delivered.

No, it was that Christ revealed himself, not to me, but in me, and all these times, I have a revelation of Christ. I know where I'm going, and I know who he is. When I get there, I won't be a stranger.

I know him. Will you stand?

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