

God's Omnipotence - Part 2

by Richard Owen Roberts

God's omnipresence is a fundamental truth that should shape our understanding of his presence in our lives.

Duration: 19:26

Scripture: John 4:21

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the omnipresence of God, stating that God is always with us, even in the valley of the shadow. He highlights that this constant presence should be seen as a threat, as God will be there to judge us when the time comes. The preacher urges the listeners to live holy lives, knowing that God is always watching. He also encourages them to rely on God's power and presence to overcome temptation and become victorious Christians.

Transcript

Well, we could, I suppose, say that while he's always near, he is less near sometimes. But what does that mean? I don't think I understand that kind of language. If he is near, he is near.

If he is far, he is far. Now which is he? He is both. It is a very difficult thing, I ask you now, to set your mind as we weigh this ramification of God's wonderful omnipresence.

Consider the words of Jesus found in John 14.23. If a man loves me, says Jesus, he will keep my word. And my Father will love him. And we, we, says Jesus, will come unto him and we will make our abode with him.

Now, in this process of trying to come to grips with these words, near and far, and I fill all the heaven and all the earth, we somehow must distinguish between phases or aspects of God's presence. Now, you may not find my language quite satisfactory, and I didn't give you ample warning that you should study this in advance, and so you'll have to couple it with your assignment for next week, if you need to weigh this matter further. But I've come to my own conclusion here, and I think that the presence of God can be expressed in three phases.

And I don't ask you to accept this, I only ask you to weigh it carefully. First of all, there is that presence of God which we were speaking of to begin with. God's essential presence.

The essence of God is present everywhere. He fills this room. He fills every space, everywhere.

Now, the presence of God, or the essential presence of God, is to space. What everlasting is to time. You get that? Let me say it again.

The essential presence of God is to space. What everlasting is to time. As God is from everlasting to everlasting.

So God fills all the infinite reaches of space. His essence is everywhere, and it cannot be removed. And as we have read out of several passages of scripture, even those who are desperately determined to hide from God can't.

And yet, while they can't hide from him, they can be distant from him. He can be far away. He can be separated from them.

Now then, you see, he is not separated from them in his essential presence. That is always there. But he is separated from them in what I am calling his kindred presence.

Now, just so that you have this picture, let me say I'm going to use three expressions. God's essential presence, God's kindred presence, and God's cultivated presence. Let me repeat that, just so that you can be thinking with me about this.

God's essential presence, God's kindred presence, and God's cultivated presence. So let me say again, his essential presence cannot be avoided. He is everywhere at all times.

But his kindred presence can be avoided. Now, you know what kindred means. I am not kin in the earthly sense to any of you.

And yet, we are all kindred in the spiritual sense. That is, all who have truly embraced the Lord Jesus Christ in faith, and yielded their lives to him. We are brothers and sisters with him.

Kindred presence. Now, this is what our Lord is referring to in that passage we read out of John 14, 23. Let me read it again.

If any man love me, says Jesus, he will keep my word. My Father will love him. And we, the Father and I, and the Holy Spirit, will come to him, and we will make our abode with him.

Now, all of those to whom Jesus is addressing these words, cannot escape the essential presence of God. But only those who love him, and respond to him, enter into the kindred presence of God. Where as children, they know God not merely as an ever-present essence, but they know him as their own Father.

Now, no one has to know God as their own Father. They cannot escape his presence, but they can escape the kindred presence. They can always regard God as a stranger.

They can refuse to bow the knee to him. They can resist humbling themselves before him, and experiencing the broken heart and the contrite spirit. And all those that resist knowing God in this way, also prevent themselves from knowing him as a kindred presence.

And of course, this is the condition of most people in the world. They do not know God as their Father, though he is as much present in their lives as he is in ours. But I've mentioned also a cultivated presence, and I want you to think curiously about this.

Do you know the expression of self-sense of the presence of God? Is that an expression with which you're acquainted? Well, I am ashamed of many of you, but I can tell by the blank looks on your face that you don't know about that. We all know the essential presence. All those that love Christ and receive him as Lord and Savior know the kindred presence.

But certain earnest, sincere, devout individuals who seek after God with all their heart, day and night, know increasingly a self-sense of God's presence. I want to say to you brothers and sisters this morning, it is possible not only to have a vague sense of the ever-present of God, or a kindred presence with God, but also it is possible to cultivate a self-sense of God's presence so that you walk and talk with him, and you feel his nearness, and you know and experience his power in your life. And if you have not yet entered into a continuing self-sense of God's presence, I invite you this morning to begin a new quest, where hour by hour and day after day, you seek his blessed face, and you will begin to know what it means to walk and to talk with God, and to have his power and his influence in your life.

Well, there you see our three senses of God's presence, the sin that separates from God, separates from the self-presence. If you're a believer this morning, and there's sin in your life, you don't know the self-presence of God. There's only those who are holy, as he is holy, whose lives are in submission, whose hearts are consecrated, whose moments and hours are devoted to a quest for God, who experience his wonderful presence.

Dear brother Lawrence wrote a little book which he entitled *The Practice of the Presence of God*, and that's what I'm talking about. But having said that, it is now necessary for us to move to the third of our considerations this morning, that is the application of this precious truth to our lives. First, may I say to you that a correct understanding of the presence of God is a complete cure for religious indifference.

Now, you have friends for whom you've burdened, and people that you know you're supposed to reach for Christ. You want to be effective in reaching them, and what you must do is, by the grace of God, to draw them into a realization of his presence. And how can anyone understand that God is that close, and that real, and that privately and individually concerned with them, and still remain indifferent? Jonah tried to flee from God, and you know how he failed.

And no one can succeed in fleeing from God, who is brought to understand that God fills all the heavens and all the earth. Furthermore, may I suggest to you that a profound sense of the omnipresence of God will do more to provoke true prayer and genuine worship than anything else imaginable. If you have it in your mind that you come to church to worship, you will wait until you get here to do it.

If you think you can only pray in an appointed prayer closet, you will wait till you get there to do it. But if you recognize that God is everywhere with you on the job, with you in your car, with you while you're in bed, with you while you're cooking, and with you while you're eating, you will learn to worship this God who is everywhere present. Now the Samaritans thought they ought to go to their mountains to worship, and the Jews thought they ought to go to their holy city to worship, but our Lord says the day comes, and now is when men shall worship God in spirit and in truth everywhere, in all places, at all times.

That hour is now. And if your worship is weak, and if your prayer life is suffering, then I urge you to come to a fresh view of God's presence with you everywhere. May I add also that the correct view of God's omnipresence is bound to have a powerful effect upon our obedience.

Maybe you're one of those people who is stumbling in sin. I had a dear man say to me last night that he was so grateful for a conversation we had three weeks ago, because for the first time in his life he came to believe that it was possible for him to rise above certain besetting sins. He had given in and assumed that he would never be powerful and victorious over these sins, but he said, thank God I now see I can be a victor.

May I say to you if you are limping and suffering and wondering if you can ever be a victorious Christian, recognize God is with you. And all the power of God and all the presence of God surrounds you every moment to deliver you from temptation and to make you a powerful and a victorious servant of Jesus Christ. When you're headed for some sin, when you're in some place of questionable character, when you're watching something on television that's degrading to your morals, when your mind is possessed of something that is wrong, come quickly to the realization that God is there.

And if you realize that, and if you say to yourself, I wouldn't do this in front of my mother, and I wouldn't want my sister or my brother or my wife to know what I'm about, then ask yourself, how can I do this in the presence of God? And if you recognize that he is more present than your mother ever was or could be, or anyone else who loves you, you'll quit a lot of things that you've been indulging yourself with. And I hardly need to add that a correct view of the presence of God is a great booster of good work. If you remember that every time you are asked to serve, God is there to hear your answer.

And if you make excuse, he knows the validity or the feebleness of it. Every cup of cold water given in his name or with help, he beholds. Nothing can inspire good work like a true sense of the presence of God.

And if you're faced with some great tribulation or trial, some awful suffering, you can't face trouble alone. If it's fire, God is there. If it's flood, God is there.

Whatever the trial or the tribulation or the difficulty that you're bearing, God is there. He cannot be escaped. You'll find all the consolation and comfort you need in the awareness of his presence.

If you're a backslider, remember he is near. You have slid from him, he has not slid from you. He is as ready to come to your aid now as he ever was.

You don't have to go searching for him. You don't have to climb some holy mountain or make some pilgrimage somewhere. Call upon me and I will answer, says the Lord.

You don't have to call loudly, but he's right at hand, ready to reclaim. And I will underline something I've said already. This sense of the presence of God ought to open up for all of us in the depths of our heart, a sense of unparalleled opportunity in cultivating his presence.

I say to you once more, you can know and enjoy on a daily basis a felt sense of the presence of God. You don't have to think of God as off in the heavens or wonder how close he is. You can walk and talk with him if you will cultivate his presence.

He will be with you everywhere, even in the valley of the shadow. And let me say in conclusion that the omnipresence of God is the greatest threat hanging over every person's head. For when it comes to judgment, the God who has been with us every moment, whom we have never escaped, and from whom we have never hidden a single action or thought, that God will be there to judge us.

And if you say to him, well Lord, if I had had more opportunity I would have served better, he will be able to say, liar. Lord, if I had only known differently, I would have acted differently. Don't kid yourself.

I was there. For when your life is reviewed at the throne of judgment, the God who was with you every moment of that life will be present, and his eyes upon you will keep you from excuse. And in the light of that, is it not well to live as holy men and women of God, who will be unashamed before him, when we stand more fully in his presence than we do right now.

God fills the heavens and the earth. Father in heaven, affect us deeply by this realization. May it purify our mind and heart.

May it restructure the activities of our lives. May it provoke within us prayer and worship and holiness. May all that you designed in being the ever-present God have deep and profound and lasting significance in each of our lives for the everlasting glory of Christ.

Amen.

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