

God and the Rest of the Week

Title: Part 6 – Practicing the Presence of God

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Transition: Band Continues Softly / Prop: PHONE

If you guys would stay standing for the reading of God's Word today, we are going to be in **Psalm 139**.

Welcome to everyone joining us on our app or social channels.

For the past 6-weeks now we have been in a collection of messages called "God and the Rest of the Week." If you missed any of it you can watch or listen from our app or website, but the big idea is that we tend to ghetto God into a couple of hours on the weekend but then the rest of the week we are busy running our lives. AND the goal of saying that is not to make anyone feel guilty, the goal in highlighting this or elevating this tension is because God wants to be so much more TO you and has so much more FOR you!

SO, we are diving into some of these areas that consume us outside of church, things like work, family, our schedules, our finances... and how Scripture gives us insight into how we can bring God into the REST of our week. Today, I want to wrap this up by preaching a message I am calling:

Practicing the Presence of God

We're going to learn to practice His presence and as a result we're going to receive provision and power and peace. If that's something you could use in your life then say "amen!" Psalm 139, verse 1, David writes:

Lord, you have seen what is in my heart. You know all about me. You know when I sit down and when I get up. You know what I'm thinking even though you are far away. You know when I go out to work and when I come back home. You know exactly how I live. Lord, even before I speak a word, you know all about it. You are all around me, behind me and in front of me. You hold me safe in your hand. I'm amazed at how well you know me. It's more than I can understand. How can I get away from your Spirit? Where can I go to escape from you? If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I lie down in the deepest parts of the earth, you are also there. Suppose I were to rise with the sun in the east. Suppose I travel to the west where it sinks into the ocean. Your hand would always be there to guide me. Your right hand would still be holding me close. Suppose I were to say, "I'm sure the darkness will hide me. The light around me will become as dark as night." Even that darkness would not be dark to you. The night would shine like the day, because darkness is like light to you.

Let's thank God for His presence this morning and every morning, pray with me.

[PRAYER TIME]

Hey, before you grab a seat stop and say "Hi" to 3 people and then you can be seated. Thank you worship team.

As I was planning this collection of messages out back in July I had originally planned on ending it last week with part 5. But I felt like there was one more angle God wanted us to look at before we move on. Honestly, we probably should have started here, so really if this is your first time you are golden because you can get

this today and then binge on the other 5 parts on our app or website. I mean come on, NFL or watching 4 hours of church, no brainer, right?

BUT if the goal is to learn how to bring God into the REST of our week then we would be remiss if we didn't learn to recognize and tap into God's presence that David just about blew a gasket trying to understand in Psalm 139. And I know talking about God's presence is about as concrete for most of us as pre-calculus. But if you will stick with me today I want to bring this home in some really practical ways, like what does this look like on a daily basis.

SO, there are two attributes of God that we want to concern ourselves with today. I won't say try to understand, because there's no way any of us are ever going to successfully do that, but we're going to grapple with these things as best we can. The two attributes are God's omnipresence and His manifest presence. God's omnipresence and His manifest presence. These are attributes of God. And there are a number of these. In Psalm 139, David said you know all my thoughts. That's God's omniscience, that He knows all things. But I want to talk specifically about God's omnipresence and His manifest presence.

Omnipresence simply means always present. God is omni, always, present. He's always there. How, I don't know. My brain can't do those calculations, but throughout the pages of Scripture we see that God is always present. So, write this down if you are taking notes today:

Wherever you are there He is.

David is like, "Well, what if I go over here?" Yup. "Well, what if I go over there?" Yup there too. "What if I go down to hell, what if I go up to heaven?" Check there too. "What if I climb the highest mountain or go down to the depths of the seas?" David not only am I with you here, I'm also where you just came from, and I will be where you are going, all at the same time. *{Mind blown}*

If this is difficult to get your mind around, you are not alone! What did David say after trying to understand all this? Look at what he says in verse 6 in a little different translation this time, he says:

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain it.

David's like, I'm dealing with stuff that is so above my pay grade, it's scary. I cannot even begin to understand it. John Wesley said, "You don't have to understand something in order to believe it." AND this is what Scripture asks us to do. Because you have never been somewhere where God wasn't! AND you have never in your entire life, even for one moment, ever truly been alone!

David is just like theorizing here. But there's a guy in the Bible who actually tried to get away from God. His name is Jonah. The Bible says Jonah ran away from the presence of the Lord. Jonah tried to flee from God. And how did that work out? Anybody? Not so hot, right! Jonah found out the hard way that God is the worst person in the world to play hide and go seek with, because God is everywhere. Jonah tried to get away from God and did not succeed any more than you or I could. It doesn't matter if you cover your head in aluminum foil or whatever you think up, it's not going to happen. God will be there, and you are never really alone.

Now, here's what's interesting about that. Whether this truth makes you feel comforted or uncomfortable is a reflection of who you believe God is. If the thought of this causes you distress and it puts you on edge and it fills your heart with fear then listen to me today, you don't understand the true nature of God.

Because let me tell you another one of His attributes. He's good! He is! He's good! He's not just there all the time. He's a good God! I came today to talk to people who have had to listen to cranky preachers and ornery Sunday school teachers, so let me just tell you how much God loves you! Let me tell you that He is for you! He's not against you. He's not mad at you! He's not trying to get you into trouble! He's a good God!

God didn't make you to mess with you! He wants to bless you and is eagerly desiring to give you good things and for you to experience the fullness of His joy on a daily basis!

God's not watching you like some kind of cosmic Santa to see if you are going to fall out of line just so He can add you to His naughty list. God already knows what you have done and what you will do! You're never going to shock God by sinning. You're never going to make God confused that you did something. He already knows the worst thing you will ever do for the rest of your life, and He loves you anyway! He already sees your mistakes, not just in the past, but in the future and still He loves you with a furious, unending, unchanging, undying, an alterable love! He loves you warts and all, we have a hard time loving ourselves because of what we've done, but He doesn't have a hard time loving you because of what Jesus has done!

Our knowledge of God's omnipresence should be for us a strength and a support, not a paranoia of eerie surveillance. He's not waiting for you to mess up so He can rub your nose in your failures. But He is, even though He knows what the outcome is, hoping you, urging you, cheering you on to do the right thing so He can reward you for your obedience. We should learn to find comfort in God always having eyes on us.

Think about it like this. If you were going undercover. You are involved in some kind of sting operation, and you are wearing a wire, but you don't have a weapon. Would it make you comfortable or uncomfortable knowing the police had eyes and ears on you? Would it make you feel comfortable in a hostile situation to know that there were two SWAT team vans ready to go the moment you gave the code word? Or would you be like, "Nah that would feel creepy. I would hate to know I was being watched." No! You're like, is this equipment working, has it all been tested properly, do you all know the code word, have you cleaned your ears today?

How many of you know that God is watching to swoop in, in time of need? And He's even given us the code word. That code word is Jesus! The one name given under heaven by which we all can be saved! You can strengthen yourself anytime you need it just by calling on His name! God keeps watch on you at all times wanting to come to your assistance. I think that's a better way to look at God's omnipresence.

Wherever you are, there He is also. Now write this down, point number two:

He is always there but wants to come near.

This is the part of the message where my head starts to hurt. BUT the Bible teaches two things that seem like they would be in tension, but they're both true. He's always there. And yet we have a God who desires to come near. "Uh, Pastor Brian could you please tell me how that works exactly?" No! But I will tell you I've experienced the truth of this in my own life.

Some examples from Scripture. Psalm 34:18:

The Lord is NEAR the brokenhearted; He saves those crushed in spirit.

Wait, I thought God was always near, now you are telling me He comes near when I'm brokenhearted? Yes. Which is it? Both! Psalm 145:18:

You DRAW NEAR to those who call out to you, listening closely, especially when their hearts are true.

Wait, if He is always near then how can He draw near when I call out with a pure heart? Exactly!

God's always there—omnipresence—but get this, He also wants to come near. That's the second attribute of God we are looking at today. Theologians call this the **manifest presence**. What is God's manifest

presence? It's when the God who is always with you comes closer to you. Always with you but comes even closer to you.

And again, this is something we can see throughout the entire Bible, even before the fall. This was true for Adam and Eve in the garden. They were always present with God because, as it will one day be again, in that day the glory of the Lord covered the earth like the waters cover the sea. So, God was always with them, when they were tending the garden, naming animals, spending time together, God was always present, right? And yet there were times when they would hear the sound of the Lord, they would hear Him before they would see Him, but they would hear the sound of the Lord and then they would go and walk with Him. They would get to take a walk with Jesus in the garden in the cool of the day. How awesome would that be? Omnipresent at all times but manifesting His presence in unique occasions.

Then what happened? Adam and Eve sinned; they chose to do what God said not to do and it changed everything! First they sowed fig leaves for themselves to cover their nakedness. That's natural. That's normal. "Nothing to see here folks!" Then the Bible says when they heard the sound of God walking they were filled with fear. God came near and what did they do next? They hid!

And I love how God was a good sport. Genesis 3:9:

But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

As He was right beside them, always with them, but wanting to come near to Adam. God put up with Adam's pretending to hide from His presence and says, "Adam, where are you?" FYI. God knows what it's like to play hide and seek with a toddler. Amen. "Where are you? You are certainly not hiding behind the chair with half your body still hanging out." That's what God's saying to Adam, "Where are you? I can't possibly see you behind those trees right over there."

But what was happening? God was close to them, omnipresence, but Adam was not receiving God's manifest presence. A.W. Tozer put it this way:

"The Presence and the manifestation of the Presence are not the same. There can be the one without the other. God is here when we are wholly unaware of it. He is manifest only when and as we are aware of His Presence." – A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God

That leads us to our third point:

Recognition leads to ignition.

God is with you always like it or not, but that becomes a benefit to you only when you recognize it! Recognition leads to ignition, write that down.

You can't do anything about God's presence. His presence is with you at all times, but only when you recognize it, can you receive the presents from Him that He has put your name on and wrapped up lovingly for you? It will be a benefit only when you remember it, tell two people that, it will be a benefit... only when you remember it.

Which is why forgetfulness is our enemy in bringing God into the REST of the week! None of us want to put God on the shelf the rest of the week. It's not like we intentionally do this. We just get busy, and we forget—OR—we forget, and we get busy! So, our cure then is going to be to remember, which is why one of the most repeated commands in Scripture is, "Do not forget" or "Remember."

What does this look like? It means to regularly remind yourself that you are in God's presence. It means regularly telling yourself, "God is with me! God's here with me, right now! Here in traffic. Here in this meeting, I don't want to be at. He's here with me as I try to keep from killing my kids at bedtime." That's one of the greatest things you and I can do. To wake up each day and our first thought be, "God, thank you for this new day, I know that you're with me."

What if you said that next time you were stressed out? What if you said that next time you were angry? What if you said that next time you were being tempted? What if you said that next time your anxiety was raging? What if you just whispered, "God, I know that you're with me. I know that you're here." That is the recognition of His presence that can shift His omnipresence into manifest presence. And now you can begin to receive from Him the power and the peace and the provision He has for you!

It's like cars today, everything is push button start. You are in hurry, you are rushing the kids out the door, you get everyone loaded, everyone has at least two shoes on, they may not be the same two shoes, but everyone has two shoes on, you put your Yeti down and push the start button and nothing happens. Right? It's like, "Come on car, I'm in a hurry here. I've got places to be. I'm stressing out because I'm going to be late. It's getting hot in here. Why won't you start!" You can hit the start button all you want, but it's not until the computer RECOGNIZES the little key fob that you left in the kitchen next to the coffee pot that the car will come to life. Recognition is the key that leads to ignition.

That's what reminding yourself of God's presence does! That's what pausing and being present with Him for a moment in the middle of your day does! It's the spark that combusts your calling! And now you can roar to life! And now you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you! And now the fruits of the Spirit can begin to show up in your life! And now you can be tempted, but not given into it! And now you can be in situations that used to bug you, but now you can respond with love! It's the recognition of God's presence that leads to ignition!

And the truly crazy thing about this, is that there is no limit to where you can take it. There is no limit. There is no end to where you can take it. Here's our final point, here's what I mean:

He will fill whatever space you create.

He will fill. He will invade. He will flood into whatever space you create. There's no maximum amount. You can apply that principle of God's presence and use it as much, or as little, as you want to apply it.

Let me give that to you in the Bible, then I'll give you an example that helps me think about it. This is the promise of James 4: (v.8)

Come near to God, and God will come near to you.

So, if you go looking for God this week on a Monday or a Thursday, in the car line or on the jobsite, what are you going to find? Him! If you start opening your eyes to God's presence. If you start opening your eyes to His activity. If you quit going to work as usual, but instead you walk into work going, "God, show me where You are here. Show me what You want me to do. Why do you have me working here? Who do you want me to help? Who do you want me to encourage? What great job can I do that then will be a testimony to my boss?" If you start looking for God you are going to find Him!

You will start to see Him in the midst of what is normal to you now, but can become supernatural when it's infused by His presence. If you'll start seeking Him, you're going to find Him! And you can begin to benefit from the God who never goes away!

Maybe this will help...

Facebook, and Instagram, and Tik Tok, and Messenger, and WhatsApp, and Google and... How much different would your life be if you just managed a little better what apps were allowed to have your attention? That could be some space that you could create that God would fill.

Alright, I've got one more, I'd love for you to come up with your own list because if you seek Him, He said you'll find Him. But what if every day you took a **walk with God**. "How long does it gotta be!" Are you that guy? I don't know, around the block, around the building, I don't know, but take a walk with God. AND leave your phone behind! And at the beginning of your walk. Recognize that God is with you and recognize how good He wants to be to you. You can see it in His creation. Just walk and talk with Him about your cares and worries and listen for that still small voice. If you began to walk with God, how much would it impact your walk with God?

Because He will fill it. He will invade it. He will flood into whatever space you create in the rest of your week.

I came across an old hymn by Oliver Holden. He said this:

They who seek the throne of grace

Find that throne in every place;

If we live a life of prayer,

God is present everywhere.

In our sickness and our health,

In our want, or in our wealth,

If we look to God in prayer,

God is present everywhere.

Open your eyes and see that He's here! He's here now! AND He's with you on Monday, He's with you on a Tuesday, He's with you all day Wednesday and Thursday, He's even with you on a Friday night! He's here and He's there wherever you are! He cares for you, and He loves you! He's got good plans for you! He wants to be so much more TO and has so much more FOR you!

There's things He wants to do this week, but you've got to make space for Him. Recognize Him today! Let Him ignite your life!

[PRAYER TIME]