

FELLOWSHIP OF GOD SERIES

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Tonight I want to talk about something that touches the heart of God. Something that is most precious to Him. I want to talk about what we must do in order to enter into the heavenly veil. We know that what Moses had in his revelation of the tabernacle was only a picture or pattern of what is real up there in heaven. We know that in the Old Testament the animals and blood sacrifices point to Jesus. And we know that Jesus had opened the veil for us to go through, so that we can come boldly to the throne of grace that we may find help in grace and mercy as we need from God.

No matter how much we have tasted of the presence of God. No matter how sometimes comfortable we feel at ease because we know He loves us and that we could come into His bosom and just love Him and let Him love us, I never lose that awesome holy fear of His presence. No matter how many times you have tasted His presence; no matter how many times you have entered into the most holy place, that freshness and that holiness and awesomeness of His fear is tremendous. The holy fear of His presence always remains. And it is in the heart of God. We could title this message in many ways. *How to touch the heart of God.* Or *The secret place of God's heart.* There is something that touches God very much. And I want to talk about the main thing that touches God's heart.

In the book of Leviticus 16 we see how the high priest on the Day of Atonement, which takes place once a year, is to enter into the Most Holy Place and what he must do.

Lev. 16:3-15 *Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bull for a sin offering*

and a ram for a burnt offering? He shall put on the holy linen coat, and shall have the linen breeches on his body, be girded with the linen girdle, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. Then he shall take the two goats, and set them before the Lord at the door of the tent of meeting; and Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord, and offer it as a sin offering; but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel. Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house; he shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself. And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small; and he shall bring it within the veil, and put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat which is upon the testimony, lest he die; and he shall take some of the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat he shall he shall sprinkle the blood with his finger seven times.

Take note of verse 12 and 13. How Aaron has to take a censer full of burning coal before the altar. And this is talking about the altar of incense. There are 6 pieces of furniture and there 3 parts to the tabernacle; the outer court where there is a brazen altar and the laver; then the second place called the holy place where you have the candle stick, the altar of incense and the table of show bread; then you have the veil. And once a year the high priest enters into the veil where you have the Ark of the Covenant. God gives instruction to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat. The blood is important and it points to the Blood of the Lamb.

But another thing is important too. And that is the incense. He cannot just enter with the blood. He must enter with something else that God prepared at the altar of incense. And that is Aaron must take coals of fire and put incense there. And as he puts the coal of fire and the incense immediately the incense will come forth like a smoke and an aroma that surrounds that place. And as he hold the incense stick on one hand and holds the blood on the other, under the covering of the cloud he must quickly go in. See there is only a certain amount of time that the incense will remain.

In verse 13 *the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat*. The high priest only had a glimpse of the mercy seat. He had to look at the mercy seat through the cloud of incense. And that is only the earthly pattern. And as the cloud of incense fill the place, he must go under the cloud. If he goes before the cloud he will die. That is why when God made the high priest garments all along the edge of his skirt are little bells and pomegranates. So when the high priest walks you can hear the tinkling sound of the bells. According to some Jewish writings, they had to tie one rope to the high priest's leg. When the high priest enters into the most holy place, the other priests would be waiting outside. And they would be all very concerned. As long as the rope is moving they look at one another and say it is all right. But if anytime they hear a fall, they would have to slowly pull the rope out with a dead priest. It's a dangerous assignment. I wonder how he felt emotionally. It must be very exciting in a sense that is once a year affair. But he knows that if he makes one mistake, that's the end of him. And if the priest was too slow and if before he could put the blood the incense cloud disappears he would die. Then he must not be clumsy. He must be very precise and time it nicely: put the blood there under the covering of the cloud and then quickly come out. He must quickly leave the place before the cloud disappears. If the cloud disappears and he hangs around and have a tour of the most holy place he will die.

That cloud has meaning in the New Testament. What is the meaning of that incense cloud? The Lord began to speak to me something special about that incense. I said, "Lord there must be something that pleases You." I know in the bible says faith pleases God. There is a time in your life as you walk with God you always has a desire to please Him. If you really love your wife sometimes you want to think of some ways you could show your love. That is the way we have in God. I want to know what moves God.

Do you know that if God can get angry God can also be touched? And there are some things that touch God more than others. Tonight I want to share with you the secret of touching the heart of Father God. Something that pleases Him so much, you could almost feel His pleasure. Do you know that in heaven if God smiles there is some power that flows from Him to our lives. And that incense is the secret of touching His heart. That incense in the New Testament has to do with the sacrifice

of worship. The Lord began to talk to me about the sacrifice of worship that costs you something and how much it meant to Him. I know that in Heb. 11:6 it says that without faith it is impossible to please God. But then God began to speak to me and said, "Did you have a look at what that kind of faith it is that pleases God?" That faith involves a sacrifice of worship.

Heb.11: 6 *Without faith it is impossible to please God.* Then he lists the many people who live by faith. Verse 7 Noah, verse 8 Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Enoch and all these other people. And if you look down the list you notice one thing common. Each one of them paid a price to love God. It was not just by saying I believe, I confess and that's all. There was a price they paid to walk with God and to love God. Abraham by faith left his homeland to go to a strange new land. That was a sacrifice. Noah had to prepare and give up everything and spend the rest of his days building the ark. That was a sacrifice. What about Cain and Abel? Abel's sacrifice pleased God. Now Cain also sacrificed. But the sacrifice was different. Abel's sacrifice cost him something. Cain's sacrifice didn't cost him anything. The bible tells us that Able gave the firstlings. What Cain should have done was to give first fruits with the blood sacrifice. There is something that is meaningful when it costs us something. And you give it to God as worship. It is something that costs you something. When Abraham offered Isaac it meant everything to him. You could feel the feelings of what a holy sacrifice is. To give all that you love, all that is dear and precious to you and pour it before God as an incense of worship. I want to make it very clear that is not just sacrifice alone. It has to be a sacrifice based on a heart of love and worship.

In Matt. 9 and Matt. 12 where Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and he says I desire mercy and not sacrifice. Now He is talking about the attitudes. The Pharisees were having a form of religion and doing something but it was not costing them anything. They didn't understand mercy and the deeper things of God. You can love God and your love for God will cost you to surrender many things because of love. You can't love without giving. Because when you love you want to give. But you can give without loving. And that's what some of the people in the bible did. For example in Isa. 1, Jer. 6 God told the people and said I am tired of your sacrifices. I am tired of your incense because you don't obey My Word. You don't follow My Word. And to you all these sacrifices of Moses are just nothing. So take it in the context when God was against those sacrifices. It is not that He is against all

sacrifices. He is just against the sacrifices that don't cost us anything. And it is just a pattern or a form of religious thing that we do day in and day out.

God also rebuked Saul in the book of I Samuel in chapter 15 through Samuel. When God commanded him to go and slay Amalekites, he didn't obey God's word and he kept the best of the flock. I don't think he really had God in mind. He probably was thinking of something for himself or for the people. When God rebuked him he just said that it was for God. When Samuel says to him what is this sound of the animals and then Saul excused himself in verse 21 it says *But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.* The way he said the Lord your God instead of the Lord my God shows that there is a lot of differences.

In verse 22-23 *And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king."*

Now take it in the context that here Saul didn't really love the Lord. And what he is saying is more like a form of a religion, something that we just do because we have to do. Those things don't please God. And that's what God means when He says that those sacrifices don't please Him.

However, there is an area of sacrifice that touched the core of the heart of God. And that is when our worship cost us something. And that was the way David who was known as a man after God's heart. You know why God loved him. He knew how to touch God's heart. He knew how to give his best to God. When David made a mistake by numbering the Israelites, God brought judgment on Israel. As the plague was taking place, David humbled himself put on sackcloth and ashes and began to pray and seek God. And he repented before God.

As he prayed in repentance to God in I Chron. 21:16 *And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.* It must have been awesome. And look how he acknowledges his sin. He was even willing to take the price on himself. He said Lord don't punish the people punish me.

Look at his prayer in verse 17. *And David said to God, "Was it not I who gave command to number the people? It is I who have sinned and done very wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be against me and against my father's house, but let not the plagues be upon the people."* He knew he made a mistake. And he was willing to pay the price for his own mistake. He said, "God don't punish the people. If you have to punish, then punish me O Lord."

Verse 18-19 *Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and rear an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. So David went up at Gad's word, which he had spoken in the name of the Lord. And now David has come to bring a sacrifice to God. And as he came to see Ornan in verse 21 As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David and went forth from the threshing floor, and did obeisance to David with his face to the ground. And David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the Lord - give it to me at its full price- that the plague may be averted from the people." Then Ornan said to David, "Take it; and let my lord the king do what seems good to him; see, I give the oxen for burnt offerings, and the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for a cereal offering. I give it all.*

Any other ordinary man would have accepted that. Many pastors would say thank you. And then they share their testimony how God provided. But David was different. All of us have a public life and a private life. Our private life must be consistent with our public life. There is something in the heart of David that is different from other people. I want you to know that there are millions of people all over the earth worshiping God. If you know how to touch the heart of God you will make a difference. There is something about the sacrifice of worship that God bypass the millions of people and come to you. Jesus said to the woman in the well at the gospel of John chapter 4 and says that the Father seeks those who worship

Him in spirit and in truth. Those who really know to worship God, God will bypass the millions of people and come to you.

I want to share with you the secret of David's worship in God. There was something different about David's life. There was something different in his heart. David doesn't take his relationship with God lightly. When he did anything for God he doesn't do it the same way that he will do it for anybody else. You can see David rejoicing when the ark was coming in. David had many happy moments. David didn't rejoice when he conquered Jerusalem. He didn't rejoice in that way. He didn't rejoice when he became king of Israel. He didn't rejoice in the same way when he conquered all his enemies. But when the ark of God enters Jerusalem David was dancing and leaping like a mad man. Some of his closest folks didn't understand David. There was something different about his life. He knew how to touch the heart of God.

Now this David said to Ornan and said I appreciate all that you have done. But Ornan this is for God. In verse 24 *But King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will buy it for the full price; I will not take for the Lord what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings which cost me nothing.* I don't even want a discount. I want to make sure that it costs me something to worship God. When I worship God I want God to know that this is how much I love Him. I don't want a discounted worship. I want God to know that when it comes to Him I am willing to pay a full price. It must cost me something to worship God. He knew the secret of touching the heart of God.

Turn over to the New Testament and I will show you some areas, which bring great incense and worship to God. Philip. 4:15-19 *And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; for even in Thessalonica you sent me help once and again. Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the fruit which increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more; I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent me, a fragrant offering a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.*

God began to show me what it means by Hebrews 11:6 He says that kind of faith

that they exercise cost them something. Faith that doesn't cost you anything doesn't require faith. It costs them some sacrifice and worship and love for God. When we look at this offering of the Philippians we don't get the full picture yet. We see the aroma and the things that please God.

Let me give you another picture, another angle of the same group of people called the Philippians. And why there is such powerful incense that goes to God. Turn to II Cor. 8. Remember that the Macedonians are the same group of people as the Philippians. II Cor. 8:1-2 *We want you to know, brethren, about the grace of God which has been shown in the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty.* Do you know that for the Philippians to give it hurts? They don't have much. They were not a very rich people. And of all people they were the people who constantly gave to the apostle Paul. And Paul says it was a sweet incense to God. You know why? It was a sacrifice of love in worship to God.

Cho Yonggi who has a congregation of 800,000, was sharing how he built his large church building. The church went into some difficulties. They didn't have enough finances and everything was so tight. They have given their house and they have moved into the uncompleted apartment next to the church. Then something happened in his church as he held on persistently to God. One Sunday after the service one very poor woman went to the front and she said, "Pastor I know what is in your heart to do something for God." And she gave her little bowl and a chopstick as an offering to God. Cho Yonggi knows she was a very poor woman. He said, "What are you going to eat with?" And the lady said, "I can eat out of cardboard." Then one businessman who was sitting there saw it. He said, "I give five hundred dollars (or five thousand, I can't remember the exact amount,) for that bowl. Because of that one incident all the church people began to start giving sacrificially to the Lord. That one little woman brought a breakthrough to the church. I am sure that woman is going to receive a very great reward in heaven. No matter how small you are if you learn how to sacrifice a sacrifice of worship you can do something great in God.

I was once talking with a pastor about his building plan. As we were talking about sacrifice of praise and worship, I said some of the greatest givers are not very rich

people. Then I remembered 2 times in my life when I cried when I was given an offering. One was when I first started in the ministry and that was in 1981. We were just starting off and we didn't have much. And there was a lady whom I know she was not too well off. And she came one day to one of our little home fellowships and she gave an envelope. And she said the Lord told me to give this. I opened it and inside I found one thousand dollars. At that time I have never received an offering as big as that. I knew she didn't have much. She didn't know it but that night I went to the Lord and I cried. I said God there are so many people in the world that you could use. Why of all people you choose a little woman who loves you and gives so sacrificially. Even when I was shared that incident with another pastor I still cried.

Just a few weeks ago something like that happened again. I was standing at the back and I was shaking hands with people. One of the sisters came to me and said, "Pastor I want you to know how much you have changed my life and I ask God what can I do and God told me to do this." And she handed me a little envelope. And I know she didn't have much. When I went back I opened the envelope and I found a thousand dollars. I said, "Lord I know this sister to a certain extent although I don't know her that well. I know her income she don't have much. For her to save a thousand dollars takes some time. I knew what a sacrifice that was to her." You can feel how touching it is when people sacrifice because of their love. The Lord spoke to me and said, "Son do you know what it means to Me when those who love Me sacrifice because they love Me."

In the gospel of Luke 7:36-38 One of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him, and He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that He was sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

This woman loved Jesus so much. When you see some people worship the Lord because they loved Him don't judge because you don't understand what is going on in their heart,. Sometimes you see somebody else worshipping in their own way

in their own heart. They are doing what they know best to worship God and it is from their heart, don't judge. As long as it is love for Jesus and it is not something unscriptural leave them alone. It may be touching to God.

Verse 39-46 The Pharisee who had invited Him saw this he spoke to himself saying this man if He were as prophet would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him for she is a sinner. And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it Teacher?" "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denari, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she has anointed My feet with ointment.

No ordinary person would do that. But something was going on in the heart of this woman. She knew that Jesus had forgiven her sins. Jesus touched her and she wants to tell Jesus that she loved Him. I don't think that she could have been a rich woman. She may have taken all her savings and bought one bottle of perfume. People don't understand but that was her way of loving the Lord. When she saw Jesus she loved Him so much, she kept kissing His feet and kept on crying. Washing His feet with her tears, using her hair. Do you know the people around Jesus were disgusted? But this woman loved Him. It was a sacrifice. We must be careful when we tread on somebody else's love relationship with Jesus.

In my church there is a man who love to dance and worship before God. One day the Lord began to speak to me and said, "Son I wish you could do that like him." I said, "Lord it is not my character. I am not jumpy like him." That Sunday I went back and God continued to talk to me and said, "You know my servant David did that too." I said, "Lord I will do it but let me first tell my congregation so that they understand." I told my congregation and said when you see that happening that is not my personality. However since God deals with my life, I as a pastor am willing to yield. I am willing to give up my self-consciousness I am willing to give up my

dignity I am willing to give up what people think of me and just let go. Just 3 weeks and the Lord began to do something that He has never done before. The Lord began to show a new presence that I never felt before in my private life. And the Lord said, "Son I want you to know that I love you for loving me that much." And something changed on my inside I could feel it. It is good to worship God in whatever way that cost you something. It is something precious to God.

Turn to the book of Numbers 16. Moses knew that the incense was precious to God. And one day trouble happened in the wilderness and the plague started among the people. People started dying like flies. Verse 41-45 *But on the morrow all the congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the Lord," And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting; and behold, the cloud cover it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting and the Lord said to Moses, "Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I consume them in a moment."*

And God's judgment started falling. Do you know that all prophecies of judgment can be conditional although the conditions may not be mentioned? When Jonah was told Nineveh should be destroyed, God never gave them a chance. But when Nineveh repented, amazingly the judgment was cancelled. God told Elijah to tell Ahab judgment is coming on him because he murdered Naboth and took over his vineyard. Ahab was such a wicked man but when he humbled himself the Lord said because he humbled himself it will not come in his days.

Here judgement was coming but Moses knew how to touch God's heart. God didn't tell him to do this. This was something not initiated by God. This was something that Moses understood the meaning and he applied it to the situation he was facing. He knew how special the incense is to God. And Moses of his own initiative when he saw the plague he knew everybody would die if he don't do anything. And Moses said to Aaron take a censer put fire in it from the altar and put incense on it. Take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them. The wrath has gone out from the Lord the plague has begun. Then Aaron took it as Moses had commanded. He ran into their midst. He has to run as quickly as possible because

every second people are dying. When God saw the incense He was touched.

Look at what happened in verse 48 *he stood between the dead and the living*. Everybody in front of him died but everybody behind who were covered behind the incense lived. That incense was special. I want you to know that the sacrifice of worship is special to God. And I know that as God deals in my life God will do in your life in different ways. I ask you a few questions tonight. When was the last time that it cost you something to show your love for God? I pray that it is not too far away. May we be sensitive in the times that we are living in that God is seeking for worshippers of God. And there may be different ways that we show our love for God. May I ask you tonight what does it cost you to love Jesus? Do you know that it cost Jesus His entire life in order to love us? Eph. 5:1-2 *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for fragrant offering, a sacrifice and us to God*. Many times Jesus gives all out of love for God - it was a sacrifice of love. Many times God said, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." Can God say that of your life?