

## **PRINCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST SERIES**

### **THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

Matthew 1, these words of prophecy is spoken to Mary. Verse 21-23, *“She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, (the word Jesus means God is my salvation) for He will save His people from their sins. So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us.’”*

If there is one key principle that we could point to in Jesus life, it is His desire to always be God with His people. We know that He left His glory above in heaven. Phil.2 tells us in the Greek it call that the *kerusso* of Christ, the emptying of Himself. *Kerusso* is the preaching but here it's a Greek word in Phil.2 that talks about Him. He emptied Himself of all His Godhead and He come down as a man. While He was a man in order to be God with us He need the presence of God in His life. He had to learn how to enter into God's presence, maintain God's presence and flow in God's presence. To Jesus the presence of God was of great important in His life. It's the key principle in His life. He practices the presence of God in His life. One day in the God's presence is better than one thousand days. The presence of God is what He came to bring. If we were to be able to travel through time and be with Jesus where He was, when He walked the shores of Galilee, there's something about His life that is something about His word. There's something about His action. There's something about Him that is different. He had the presence of God in His life.

So this morning we look at the presence of God in Jesus life and how the presence is precious to Him. As we consider that, lets consider how once upon a time the presence of God was with man. When God created us, He created us to be holy temple to be filled with His presence. Adam and Eve was created to know God and to enjoy God's presence. When God created all of the creation, and every animal He said, it was good. But when created man, He said, it was very good because that is where He can place His presence. When Adam and Eve had fellowship with God, they could see God when God comes. They could talk with God; like the old hymn says, My God and I, we walk the field together. God and I talking in the garden. Just like Adam and Eve before they fell. Now we know that the fall of man was the result of sin and we know that after sin came death, sickness and suffering came into man's history. Before that it was not present. But of all the things that Adam lost, it was not his health that was most precious. It was not his wealth that was most precious. It was not even the garden that he lost. Of all the things that Adam lost, I believe the most precious possession he ever lost was the presence of God.

In Genesis 3: 8 *“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God.”*

They were no more looking for the presence of God. They were no more comfortable in that presence. Something of their nature changed so that they could not stand that presence and they ran away from the presence. They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. That caused God to look for Adam because Adam had never ran away from His presence before. The sad story is that God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden and placed a flaming sword. From that time onwards man was hungry for the presence of God. How God loves to be with man but there is no way God can come to man because of his nature. God brought forth a way which man could have His presence. The presence of God and man were meant to be one but suddenly in Genesis 3 you could hear the cry and the agony that was in God's heart. When He said, Adam! Where art thou? God knew where he was but it was a cry of anguish. If God could cry, I wonder if there were tears drops that formed when God had to send man and

woman out of the garden because now God could not have fellowship with us. He cannot come to us and man can't go to God. There was a separation but there is one way in which God allows His presence to come. We were made to be temples of God. We were made for God's only pleasure and to be vessels to contain His glory. God brought forth the blood covenant. In every animal that was killed, that has its blood shed upon the ground, points forward to the day when the Lamb of God will come and shed His blood once and for all. All the animals' blood that had been shed; thousands upon thousands of them pointing to the day when once and for all the blood of the Son of God and the Son of man will be shed for us. Through the Blood Covenant God can put His presence among His people. Every time you see God's presence comes, immediately there must be blood because without that blood His presence cannot come.

In Exodus, we know the story of Abraham. How God dealt with Abraham and began to talk about people whom He prepared. I want you to see this longing in God's heart and the panorama of the history of mankind from God's prospective. In the book of Exodus, when God met with His people as they come out of the land of Egypt, God called them aside in order to speak with them.

In chapter 19 of the book of Exodus verse 3 onwards, *"And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings and brought you to Myself."*

God wanted them for Himself. God wants to hold His people in His presence. Verse 5, *"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*

What are priests? Priests are those who can come into God's presence. God says, every single one of you, I want to bring into My presence and I want My presence to come to you. We are told about the blood that was shed in chapter 20,

when the people saw flashing clouds and thunder. You see them coming into God's presence was one thing but God longs and wants to dwell among His people. That is what He made man for - to be pillars in His temple. Sadly the Israelites did not fulfill God's plan. When Moses went up later to receive the Ten Commandments from God, a great number of them went astray and worshiped the golden calf. When Moses came down judgment came and only one tribe could be priest. God brought them out of Egypt. He sent the ten plagues. Parted the Red Sea. Sent them with manna; let them drink water from the rock. He said, I want you to be Mine, that My presence can come to you and you could come to My presence. I want every single one of you to be priest. On the very day when all of them could be priests and a holy nation, only one tribe, the Levi, could be priest. The other tribes, because they worshiped the calf, were disqualified from the priesthood.

There's another time and I wondered whether God cried if He could. If the angels could weep, the many ten thousands angels who were assigned to help them in their priestly work, suddenly had no more ministry for them in that area. Of all the twelve tribes only one could be priest. God only had to deal with one. That was not what God really wanted. He could have a sample of what He wanted and yet He went on with His plan because even if He could find one individual from the ten thousands, if He could just find one, heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool, where shall I dwell but on him who has a humble and contrite spirit. If He can find one, just one, He will still come. He will bypass the ten thousands because He wants His presence to be with man and man to be with His presence.

The Israelites has to prepare all kinds of special instruments and furniture as part of Moses Tabernacle for one purpose. For one year they were in the wilderness building according to the pattern of the tabernacle that Moses had seen. I want you to know that what Moses built was a shadow of what was up there. Moses had a glimpse of it during his forty days and forty nights in the mountain with God. They built it according to the pattern that Moses saw. There is only one reason for building the tabernacle. Not because each of those little parts were lovely to behold. Not just because each part had a representative of a truth although that was a truth. Each part had a representative of the truth, an important truth to God. But that tabernacle with the brazen altar, the laver in the outer court, the lampstand, table of showbread, the altar of incense in the inner court and the ark in the most holy place. All these furniture with the entire special scheme that they had to dye

and all the ropes and all the nails, all were specially made right to the smallest nail it had to be the way God wanted it. They were made for one purpose. One year of hard labor for one purpose, that purpose is Emmanuel God with us. That God could bring His glory down to this planet and place it in the tabernacle that He asked the Israelites to build.

Exodus 40 we read about how Moses finally put all the pieces of furniture together and when all the pieces of furniture were placed in order and Moses had anointed them with oil and blood, I could hear the heaven move. I mean Exodus 40 was what he wanted to do. When he created Adam and Eve that Adam and Eve lost. All heaven was excited that day. Finally once again the glory could come and Emmanuel could take place.

*Verse 34-35, "Then the crowd covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the crowd rested above it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."*

We are told about that special presence in the Ark of Covenant, between the wings of the cherubim above the mercy seat, there lays the presence of God. We thought that we human would learn a lesson but no, after Moses died, after Joshua died, when they saw what the presence of God did. Understand that the presence of God was everything. If the presence of God is there, there is health. If the presence of God is there, there is wealth. When you look at Isaiah 61, it says arise and shine or Your light has come and the glory of God is risen upon you. You look lower down it talks about favor. It talks about multiplication. It talks about wealth. All these will come because the glory of God is upon you. Without the glory of God the tabernacle of Moses was nothing. It was the presence of God. The presence and it's because of the presence that when they took the Ark of Covenant and marched round Jericho walls, it came trembling down on the seventh day. They marched according to God's specification. It's because of that same presence of God that they could cross the Jordan River on dry ground at the time when it was at its highest. The presence of God was with His people. When Joshua died, on and on and on again, people kept their religion, people kept their creed. They had a form of religion and a form of worship. Although there were some idolatry that came in but they lost the presence. They had a form of godliness. The priests

were still functioning but they don't have the presence of God. And one of the lowest points of Israel was when the glory of God left them.

In I Samuel 4, Eli was a priest. They had a high priest. They had priesthood. They had a form of religion. They had a creed. They had a scroll. They had the writing of Moses and they even had the tabernacle there. They had the ark. They had the brazen altar. They had the lampstand. They had the table of showbread but they don't understand or appreciate the presence of God. All they thought was the religion. They thought lets use the ark for victory. But unless you live in God's presence, you cannot demonstrate His presence. They had failed to live with God and now they expect God to live among them. In chapter 4, the saddest moment in Israel, when the Israelites took the ark of the Lord into the battlefield, when normally it would have brought them victory but on that day in verse 11, *"the ark of God was captured."* They lost the ark. They lost the glory. The ark was taken into a foreign land. When Eli heard it he fell down and died.

In verse 18, *"When he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, due to be delivered; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth, for her labor pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the woman who stood by her said to her, 'Do not fear, for you have borne a son.' But she did not answer, nor did she regard it. Then she named the child Ichabod, saying, 'The glory has departed from Israel! Because the ark of God had been captured.'"* God's glory left Israel once again.

What a sad moment. People just don't appreciate the presence of God. If you don't appreciate the presence of God you can lose it. If you don't treasure the most precious possession, you can lose it. Finally it was God who had to defend His own presence and He has to protect His own ark. In Samuel's time the ark came back to the Israelites. The people again had the semblance of the presence of God, a small manifestation of Emmanuel God with us. God still patiently work among His people because He desired His presence to be among His people and He raised a man who knew God's presence and who understand the value of God's presence.

His name was David. Of all the judges before him and of all the kings before him, he was the only one who understood. It's not by might, not by power but by the Spirit of God. You can't have the Spirit of God without the presence of God. He was the one who understood. That is not the weapons of war, the arm of flesh or human intellect that works. He was a small boy. He had conquered Goliath. He knew it is important to have God with him. When God made him king, one of the first things that he did was, he said lets put the presence of God where it should be. The center of our lives. He brought the ark into the capital city and there was a huge celebration because the presence of God was recognized and not just put aside. It was the prime thing in their lives. Together with his son they finally brought Israel back to what God wants it. At least to a certain extend.

God gave David the plan of the temple. Although he didn't have a hand in building it, he had a plan. What was God after? The same thing that He was after in Genesis. The same thing that He was after in Exodus in the tabernacle of Moses. He was trying to bring His presence to man. After Solomon took seven years of hard work to build the temple and finally the day came that Solomon dedicated the temple to God. We read about it in II Chron.5, how as the musicians sang and worshiped God. The presence of God came once again. Heaven must be rejoicing when the presence of God came back into the temple. How God had longed for that moment. Once again it was like the Garden of Eden. Once again it was like Exodus chapter 40 when the presence of God came. Because of that presence they had health. They had wealth and they rejoiced. But over and over again people don't appreciate Emmanuel, God with us. It's as if we don't want to have God with us. We want God to be a compartment in our life but not as Lord and ruler and King. God only had a small room in the attic. We have the main hall and all the best room. He sought to dwell among His people on and on again. If He could find any good thing, He will stir them up to restore the temple.

You notice throughout the time of the kings, every time the temple was restored, the people were blessed. You can't see the connection but every time the temple was restored, the people were triumphant over the enemy. The people had health and the people had wealth. No matter how poor the nation was, when the next king took over because sometimes the king was bad and sometimes the king was good. In the northern kingdom all the kings were bad. In the southern kingdom sometimes it was good, sometimes it was bad and sometimes a good king

takes over from a bad king who had bankrupted the nation and turned the nation into sin and idolatry and into crime and impoverished the whole nation. The new king started with nothing but God. Whenever a king came and restored the temple. Restored the worship of God. Restored the glory of God and the presence of God, Isaiah 61 took place. Arise and shine for Your light has come. And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. It says and the Gentiles will come to your life. All the wealth of the Gentiles will come to you. When the glory of God is upon you, health and wealth are there. But one day people began to do things that God could not tolerate anymore. Heaven had a decision to make. King after king, God strove to work among His people, to make Emmanuel God with us true. One day among the last prophets who prophesy in that land, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, finally God said, I am taking My glory back. I could see the same Father, the same God, who had to send Adam and Eve out because they could not stand His presence. That same loving God now stood in the book of Ezekiel and He says, I want to take back My glory because the people don't appreciate My presence. The people don't understand that I want to be with them but they don't want to be with Me.

*In the book of Ezekiel 10: 1 "Ezekiel looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne. Then he spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, 'Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. And he went in as I watched. Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and paused over the threshold of the temple."*

It was like the prodigal son's father who probably gave everything he wanted to the prodigal son when the prodigal son wanted everything. If only the prodigal son knew that being with the father would be everything. He wanted wealth. He wanted fame. I could see the prodigal son's father gave the son one last hug, knowing that if his son doesn't come to his senses he may never see his son again. Yet his son doesn't appreciate the presence of the father and goes out seeking the things of this life. Until one day the son realize that to be with the father was everything. He had lost everything yet the father wants him back. I am sure when the son was going away from the house, for a moment the father may have called him, like all loving father words, my son, my son, won't you please change your

mind for the last time. Don't think that the father didn't persuade the son. Don't tell me that the prodigal son's father didn't cry. He did.

Here is the presence of God, for one last moment, one last look, one last time. Hoping the people may understand but they did not. He had to call back that presence into heaven in verse 4, *"Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and paused over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory. And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even in the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks."* O, God was grieved. Finally God reluctantly left the temple.

Verse 17-19, *"When the cherubim stood still, the wheels stood still, and when one was lifted up, the other lifted itself up, for the spirit of the living creature was in them. Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels were beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them."*

God's glory reluctantly and slowly left the temple. We saw the coming of the glory in II Chron, 5. My friends, there should never be a going away of the glory. We see in Ezekiel 10 the very opposite of II Chron.5 when the glory departed.

Finally God said I need to show man how to keep My glory because every time I send My glory they don't understand My presence. I need to show them and tell them that My glory is to abide in their lives forever. Not just for a moment. Not just for a time but permanently. God had a conference and the second person of the Godhead his name is the Word. He decided to come. He took upon Himself the name of Jesus so that if any man thirst; in that thirsty cry that raged through the generations. The cry for God. The cry from the spirit of man for the presence of God. For man was created for His presence. If any man thirst they can come to the Son of God Emmanuel and they can drink of the living water and they will thirst no more.

Jesus spoke to the woman at the well and said, if you drink from this water, you will thirst again, but the water that I can give to you, if you ask for a drink and He will give you living water, water full of life and you will never thirst again. That woman had been seeking religion. She said, the Jews worship in Jerusalem and we Samaritans worship on this mountain. Where did you get this living water? She knew religion. But Jesus came to bring God with us. His precious presence the second person of the Godhead.

Finally God sent His Son and it prophesied that His name is to be called Emmanuel God with us. To show us the way to live in that presence and all the miracles, all the signs and wonders were glorious. I want you to know one thing. The miracles were there because the presence of God was there and all the works of Jesus which the bible only recorded a few for our edification. Book of John tells us if everything that Jesus did was recorded, the whole world couldn't contain. This same Lord Jesus Christ said, when He talked with the disciples, He said that the Father would send them the Holy Spirit to be with them. In the book of John, the same Jesus He did not come to live and die to live without God's presence. He came with the expressed purpose so that once and for all in the church of Jesus Christ, a nation above all nation, a holy nation, a holy people, a holy priesthood to God were permanently and forever receive His presence.

He says in John 14: 17-20, *"the Spirit of truth from the Father whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be with you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. And that day, "The day when My presence come permanently on your life. "You will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

He tells us in the gospel of John 14: 11 *"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."* Verse 10, *"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to*

*you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works."*

He says I am able to do all those things because of the Father, the presence of the Father, the glory of God in My life. And the same glory He wants to share with us. In the book of Ephesians chapter 1,2 and 3 right at the end of it, it says that He is building the church as a holy temple, a holy habitation of God that God's presence can come and live among us. He failed with Adam and Eve. He failed with Moses' generation. He failed with David' generation. Will He fail in our generation? God forbid, there are many times He looks like He is failing but God forbid because as long as there is one little spark somewhere with God's presence, one little child of God somewhere who has a contrite spirit, it only takes a spark and that fire will again burn the way it should burn. God is hungry and so desirous of His presence come into our lives. That when in the book of Revelation His presence finally come upon our lives, there was great rejoicing and it was announced in the heaven, behold the tabernacle of God is with man and He will dwell with them. We are part way in that story. We are in this move of God when God wants to bring His transforming presence into our lives so that the glory of God that has begun in our lives as a little spark and a little flame can grow bigger and bigger until Isaiah 61 takes place. The glory of God that began in your spirit as a peace when the presence of God came will begin to grow and grow until finally it's upon us.

The glory of God shall be seen upon His church once again. But for this glory to come upon our lives to be upon our lives, we need to know and appreciate His glory like Jesus live inside His glory. I can tell you that even though Jesus Christ left His glory in heaven to live as a man on this earth, from the day He was born until the day He died on the cross, He always treasured that presence. Not for a single moment did He go without that presence. There will be many times He would be tired physically from the ministry but yet at night you will find Him climbing the mountain. Why, because He desires the presence of God. There were many times when He gets up early in the morning and if you think that He didn't get tired, look at John 4, you will understand why was He sitting at the well, because He was tired from the long journey. He was thirsty. He was hungry but when the disciples brought food back, He said, I had meat, which you do not know of. His meat was to do the Father's will and to be in the Father's presence because one day in the presence of God is better than one thousand days. He lived in that

presence so much. Everyday; for thirty years even as He lived as a carpenter.

Some of you may say, how can I have the presence of God as an engineer? How can I have the presence of God as a carpenter? How can I have the presence of God in my work? Jesus for thirty years had the presence of God in His life even though He was only a carpenter. He came to show us how it was possible once again to live with God's presence. It is possible if we will long and desire for that presence like He did.

There was an increase of that presence in those three years of His ministry when the Holy Spirit came on Him. It was a greater presence and the Father declared when the Holy Spirit came on Him as a dove, "This is My son in whom I am well pleased." Everyday of His life He was pleasing God. He lived in that presence. I want you to know there was only one moment, just one moment in His life, when that presence had to go from His life because of what you and I did. Jesus is not afraid of physical suffering. He is not afraid of the nails going through His hands. Physical suffering is nothing to Him. When He struggle in Gethsemane and says, Father if it be possible take this cup from Me. It is because He knew the only way for the presence of God to come on our life is that He shed His blood and take the sins, our sins upon the cross. When He exchange our sins for His righteousness. That was only a moment of time. As He hung on the cross and died for a moment of time the presence of God left Jesus. That was when He cried, My God, My God, why have thou forsaken Me because He could not live without that glory. He had never been without that glory. He had never been without that presence. He had lived with it all His life. He was forsaken so that you and I will not be forsaken. That one moment of time to Jesus was the greatest suffering in the world, that's to be without the presence of God.

My friends, what about you and I? Do you think being criticized is suffering? It's nothing compared with the losing of that presence because if you have the presence, you can take all criticism. Do you think all the hardship in your life is difficult? No, because if the presence of God is there it's not suffering. There is joy that fills your heart and a peace that fills your life. Do you think all the difficulties of this life are difficult? All the pains, the wounds are difficult? They are not when you have the presence of God. My friends, going without the

presence of God is the greatest suffering that man could ever have and the greatest suffering that God has to endure for man, because He knew man was made for God's presence to dwell in.

If you want that presence of God in your life to be restored, there is one key to focus on and that's on the mercy of God. No one can receive that presence of God by works. Remember the song they sang in II Chron.5 "Our Lord is good and His mercy endures forever." Remember what that seat was called between the cherubim. It was called the Mercy Seat. No one can enter that presence by works, by religion, by our achievement. But the presence of God is available when you throw yourself to the mercy of God. Like David though he had failed many times in numbering the Israelites, he threw himself at the mercy of God and God brought a greater presence into his life.

In Hebrew 4, the Mercy Seat is called the throne of grace. Do you know why? In the Old Testament, you read about how Noah found grace in the eyes of God by his walk and his righteousness. But in the New Testament, grace has already been given in Jesus Christ. While we were still sinners he died on the cross for us. While we were in enmity with God, enemies of God, He shed His blood for us. God took that first move and initiated fellowship with us. Now through the blood of His eternal Son we can have fellowship forever more. This is the grace of God. He says in Hebrew 4, come go into the throne of grace that you may obtain mercy and find grace in time of need the mercy of God. Which is why in Isaiah 61: 1 "*Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me?*" I will dwell on him who has a humble and contrite spirit who would tremble at My word. Who will come not by their works of righteousness but who will come by the blood of Jesus, by the mercy of God, in the grace of God given so freely.

The presence of God that was so hard to have and so hard to achieve is now so freely given to us. Will we take it for granted? May we take gratitude in this great grace of God, this great presence that is made available for us. Like Paul in II Cor.3, we are told that if the administration of the law be glorious, how much more glorious will the ministering of grace be. We have a grace greater than Moses

saw. We have a glory greater than Adam and Eve saw. We have a glory greater than David saw. We have the glory like never before. The mercy, God says, I will restore to you to show mercy of David and that's the presence of God. We have a greater glory than David ever had. We have the glory that Jesus had and it says the works that I do, you will do also and greater works. If the works of Jesus came from His glory, the greater works will come from a greater manifestation of glory like it had never been before. Something that reserved only after Jesus was raised from the dead, ascended on high and seated at the right hand of God. Then only God can release in John 17 the glory of God among His people like never before.

Will you take advantage of that glory? Will you take gratitude and respond to that presence of God in your life? The glory of God, how precious it is to your life. Is it suffering to be without glory? If it's not you have not known the glory and the presence of God like Jesus knew it.