
VISION FORWARD



A PEOPLE OF HIS PRESENCE

There is power in a group of people gathering together around a cause. There is power in excellence and beauty. There is power in communication. There is power in music.

But this power is no substitute for God's power. All these things combined are no substitute for God's presence. It is God who transforms our lives, delivers, heals, forgives, and sets us on a new course in life.

God can invest a gathering and the momentum it creates with His presence. He can draw people to Himself through beauty. He can move people through music and communication that is excellent.

But while all these things are worthy of our pursuit, none of these things should be as valuable to us as God dwelling in our midst.

Moses recognized this as Israel's leader. The signs and demonstrations of God's power were indeed incredible. But what made the people of Israel distinct was the fact that God went with them. That they were a people of His presence.

So Moses interceded, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" (Exodus 33:15-16)

God answered, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” (Exo. 33:17)

At the point of making this prayer, Israel has broken covenant with God. They have built for themselves an idol and turned from God by worshipping it. But because of Moses’ intercession God will not cut Israel off. His continued presence is a sign of His keeping covenant with them.

We look forward from Moses to Jesus. In Jesus we have a better mediator, intercessor, and Savior. Through Jesus we receive an eternal covenant and the everlasting grace of God.

After Jesus has died and risen from the dead, He promises His disciples, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20) I Myself will go with you, Jesus means. How? He will send us the Holy Spirit. “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever” (John 14:16).

Like Israel, the disciples and the early church were to be a people of God’s presence.

Elim Grace, we also are disciples and the church of Jesus Christ. We are to be a people of God’s presence. We are no different than Israel and the early church were. We need the presence and power of God in our midst, to go with us, to change us, to lead us, to empower us, to go with us.

God has not promised us that we will be the greatest, that we will be the most excellent, that we will have the best music or the best communicators. But He has promised us His presence. And this by His grace, not our merit.

So, if we are to be a people of His presence, **we must be a people of His worship**. We’re not to worship other gods or idols, but to fall at the feet of Jesus in adoration and obedience. We worship and praise Him with joy and thanksgiving. He dwells in the praises of His people.

If we are to be a people of his presence, **we must be a people of His Word**. His Word is living and active to penetrate our hearts. In His

Word we listen to God speak and we are shaped by His words of life. While all truth is God’s truth, God’s truth reflected everywhere is crystalized in Jesus. And Jesus is revealed to us in and by God's Word.

If we are to be a people of God’s presence, **we must be a people of His own making**. He is the One who forgives us our sins and washes our stains as white as snow. He is the One who makes us new and conforms us into His image. He is the One who satisfies our deepest needs and desires. He is the One who is our sufficiency, our strength, and our joy. He is the One who finds us, saves us, and brings us into the kingdom of God, a new and everlasting abundant life. He is the One to Whom we surrender all. He is the One without Whom we can do nothing, but with Whom all things become possible.

I want to remind us that while there are good things, things of excellence and beauty worth pursuing, there is nothing more necessary or valuable to us as the people of God than the presence of God. To that end I urge us to ask Him to show us His glory, to seek His power, to pursue His presence. May those far from God declare in wonder, “Surely God is really among you,” (1 Corinthians 14:25) and may those near to Him exclaim, “Surely God is in this place.” (Genesis 28:16)

MARCH PRAYER TARGETS

Grab your phone, set a 2 minute timer, and pray daily:

- 1) For the presence and power of God to fill our services — that there we would be a tangible sense of God being present, that there would be awe and wonder before Him.
- 2) For those being bullied in school, at work, at home, and online — that God would protect them and deliver them from this. That they would not lose hope in the dark, but see the light of the love of Jesus for them. That they would turn to the right people for help.
- 3) For favor as The Desens House prepares to go before the City next month — for wisdom as we prepare to go before the city.