

Sense of His Presence

#0579

Study given by W. D. Frazee—December 14, 1962

In our class in coming events we have been studying the first and second angel's messages. We are getting ready to study the third angel's message. But tonight I want to share with you some further meditations on the first and second angel's messages, particularly as they relate to our individual Christian experience.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" Revelation 14:6-8.

What is the word with which the first angel opens his announcement? Fear God. It is obvious that in order to fear God we must sense His presence. It is the sense of the presence of God, the realization of the nearness of our Lord, that I want you to meditate on.

Jacob, sad, weary, and lonely, paused at Bethel on his trip fleeing from his brother's wrath. He tarried there all night. During the night the Lord came near and gave him a vision. He saw a ladder, the top reaching to heaven. Thank God, it reached to the earth too. It reached right where Jacob was. The angels of God were ascending and descending upon it. The voice of God spoke to him in a message of comfort and encouragement.

The record says that as Jacob woke he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." He lacked the sense of the presence of God. But with the thought of the nearness of God's presence came a proper fear. He said, "How dreadful is this place!" Genesis 28:16. The Revised Standard version gives a translation which gives the thought a little better. "How awesome is this place." And what was it that caused Jacob to fear God? The sense of God's presence.

Joseph, tempted down there in Egypt, cried out against sin saying, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God." It was the sense of God's presence that enabled Joseph to fear God, and fear Him so realistically that he dared not do wrong.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe" Proverbs 29:25.

You can take your choice. Unless you have the fear of God you will have the fear of man. How often has the fear of man caused people to make sad mistakes.

King Saul excused Agag for bringing some of the best sheep and oxen. In his apology to Samuel he said he feared the people and obeyed their voice.

The fear of man means an eclipse to the sense of the presence of God. The man who is awed by man has already lost the fear of God. He is afraid of what people can do. It is fitting and appropriate that the first word of the angel's message for this hour is fear God. As we are brought into close contact with the beast and his image we shall need to know as no other generation in the past has known the fear of God rather than the fear of man. We need to know the sense of God's presence so we can sing, "The Lord of Host is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge" Psalm 46:7.

In order to do that we must sense the presence of God. We must sense His presence in order to give glory to Him. And as the fear of man eclipses the sense of the presence of God, so giving glory to man eclipses the sense of the presence of God. We are not to fear man on one hand, neither are we to give glory to man on the other. We are to fear God and give glory to Him.

"Therefore let no man glory in men" 1 Corinthians 3:21.

Not glory in other men, and not glory in ourselves. Jeremiah puts it:

"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" Jeremiah 9:23-24.

The thing is to glory in God and our knowledge. To know that God is with us and know He is our friend and our Father.

This is the message for this hour, for the hour of His judgment is come. If there is anything that ought to bring to us the sense of the presence of God, it is the announcement of the present judgment.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Everybody is going to appear before the judgment seat. We have our choice. We can either appear now by faith, or appear later in person. I am so glad Jesus has sent us word in time that, if we will, we may go in by faith, sending our sins beforehand to judgment and having them blotted out through the blood of His

atonement. That is the experience our Savior invites us to share. And oh, what a privilege that is.

If we fail to do that and allow those concepts to be ill defined, and pass along largely concerned with the temporal affairs of life, we shall not pass the judgment. Our cases will go by default, and we shall have to appear personally when the great white throne appears above the jasper city, and all who have ever lived on earth meet the great judge. Then we must all appear and meet life's records. Then everyone will sense that He is God.

To go in with Jesus means to understand His work, and to follow Him by faith. So God intends that while our feet walk the ways of this earth, our heart shall be at home with Jesus in the most holy place, entering in with Him into that work of judgment. Truly, this calls for an increased and lively sense of the presence of God.

"And worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." That takes in everything. It calls us to sense God's presence in all the work of His creation. It calls us to behold the earth and the sea, and the fountains of waters, and see in them the work of our Father's hands, and to worship Him in appreciation of His love and power revealed in all the works of creation.

"The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day" *The Desire of Ages*, page 281.

Every day, and especially on the Sabbath day, we can be listening to that voice that was heard in Eden. Where do we hear it? In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea.

This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ear
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the sphere.

Is God speaking to us through nature? Is He at work every day in nature? Is it His power that is making all these things happen? Ah, yes. And worship Him that made. This contact with God in nature is vital to successful Christian living.

"All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. . . . We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God." *Ministry of Healing*, page 58.

So the first angel invites us to fear God and sense His presence, to give glory to Him. In this hour of judgment He invites us to have a living sense of His presence

and worship Him as Creator; sensing His presence in the beauty of the natural world about us—communion with Him through the works of His hands.

If you were the Devil what would you do about it? Would you not contrive some plan to lead men to lose the sense of the presence of God? By exalting men before their eyes, and hiding from them as much as possible the works of God? That is exactly what the Devil has done, and he didn't wait very long to start it. The very first man who was ever born in this world became the agent of Satan to lead men away from the program we have been studying, and lead them into a different way of life altogether. His name was Cain.

"And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch" Genesis 4:16-17.

He built the first city. Crime and vice has been associated ever since. But the great purpose of it is to lead men to forget God, to lose the sense of His presence.

Years later, after the flood, God said to His people as they left the ark to spread over the earth, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. But some of Noah's descendants, led by the enemy as Cain was, said, "No, we are not going to be scattered abroad. We are going to centralize."

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" Genesis 11:4.

This is the second use of the word city in the Bible. Notice it was not for God's glory they did it. "Let us build us a city and a tower." "Let us make us a name." Were they thinking of giving glory to God? No. They were thinking of exalting men. So like Cain, seeking to defy God and forget Him, they turned to the building of a great city.

God defeated their purpose to make everything in this world centered in that city. The angels knocked off the top of the tower. God confounded their language. They were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. Therefore the name of it was Babel (verse 9). The margin says confusion.

This was the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom (Genesis 10:10). The great opponent in that generation as Cain had been hundreds of years before. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel. The margin says Babylon. Here is the beginning of Babylon. Back there in the early ages after the deluge Satan planted his banner on the Euphrates and said, "Here we will make our headquarters." And although God confounded the language, and knocked off the top of the tower, they went ahead. Century after century the valley of the Euphrates was the headquarters for the enemies of the people of God.

Years later God called Abraham, His servant, out of Ur of the Chaldees. Ur was the center of civilization. Many of the things we boast of in the modern cities of today they had back there. But God called Abraham out of Babylon. Why? Because God wanted him to enter into the experience that can only be found in those who sense the presence of God.

We might trace the history of Babylon down through the ages. We might trace its spiritual influence in Egypt, Greece, Rome, and through the papacy down through to our time. But the second angel's message tells us something about Babylon. That Babylon back there on the waters of the Euphrates sat ruling the nations. That Babylon has exerted its influence down through the ages. That Babylon is still with us in religious and political and social and educational and other influences. The second angel says, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

As that message is repeated, God says to His children in Babylon to do what? "Come out of her My people." (Revelation 18:1-4)

The echo of that is in the oft repeated words of the messenger of the Lord to the remnant church, out of the cities. Come out of her my people.

I recognize that it takes more than driving an automobile out of some great city to get out of Babylon. We have today very simple ways of taking Babylon along with us as we make the trip from the city to the country. The enemy has seen to that.

One thing that Abraham and Enoch didn't have to contend with was television or radio. Some of these modern inventions make it very easy to get the vice and crime and filth and iniquity of the cities even in a mountain home, if you want it.

Thank God, friends, you don't have to have it. Oh, no. You can hear the murmur of the pines. You can see the beauty of the dawn and the sunset. You can hear the voice of God instead of the tinkle and bang and crash of the programs of Babylon.

The second angel is closely linked with the first angel. The second angel tells us what we need to come out of in order that we may enter into what the first angel invites us to enter into—the sense of the presence of God.

When Abraham was called out of Babylon he lived in tabernacles (Hebrews 11:9). He was called from the conveniences and culture of an advanced civilization to a very primitive life of the pilgrim. Why? Separation from the influences of earth in order that he might enter into the sense of the presence of God. Did Abraham sense God's presence? Thank God, every place he stopped he set up an altar and called on the name of the Lord.

Notice that everywhere he lived he sought to be surrounded with the influences that would lead his mind, and the minds of those with him, to heavenly things.

There was a young man in his company who made a wrong choice. His name was Lot, Abraham's nephew. He pitched his tent toward Sodom so that when his wife and daughters got up and looked out the door they saw Sodom. Seeing it they moved into it to get all the advantages.

But Abraham maintained his simple, primitive, spiritual life under the oaks of Mamre and in other places throughout the Promised Land.

God has some children of Abraham today. I am sorry they are also children of Lot. Oh, that we may sense the presence of God.

Let's look at Moses. He was educated for many years in all the wisdom and learning of the Egyptians. As he came and went in grand palaces and gorgeous temples, even though he maintained his allegiance to God he did not have that living sense of God's presence God knew he must have. So, in God's providence he was separated from all that. Through a series of circumstances he was led out into the wilderness. How long did he stay there? Forty years. Why? To separate him from the works of man, and put him where he was surrounded entirely and completely with the works of God so that he might enter into fellowship with Him.

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible"
Hebrews 11:27.

I will read a comment on that:

"Amidst the solemn majesty of the mountain solitudes
Moses was alone with God" *Education*, page 63.

I want to tell you what one of my objectives is. I believe there are a number of us here tonight who need to spend more time alone with God. It is a wonderful thing to be together in meetings, and worship God together. It is a wonderful thing to share the family altar and the communion of brother and sister, parent and child. But every life needs a fellowship with God which is independent of and paramount to every other relationship. And I fear that there is danger that we might miss it.

So I am studying with you these messages of the angels, and God's dealings with these men of old, that we may see how vital it is that we sense the presence of God, and how impossible it is to do this in its fullness unless we have time alone with God. Time when God speaks to us through His Word and through His works when every other voice is hushed.

"Everywhere the Creator's name was written. Moses
seemed to stand in His presence and to be overshadowed
by His power" *Ibid*.

Did Moses enter into the presence of God? That is why when he went before Pharaoh he wasn't afraid. Forty years before he ran from Pharaoh, and he needed to run. But he didn't sense the presence of God as he did forty years later. Then he

didn't run. There was nothing to run from. He was on God's errand. He was God's man. God was with him. He endured as seeing Him who was invisible.

"Moses did not merely think of God, he saw Him. God was the constant vision before him. Never did he lose sight of His face" *Ibid*.

Isn't this beautiful? This is what I want to enter into. But you and I can't do it merely by having meetings, good as they are. Class work is important. Where did Moses get it? He was alone with God.

"Here Moses gained that which went with him throughout the years of his toilsome and care-burdened life—a sense of the personal presence of the Divine One" *Ibid*.

Oh, that's what I want for you and myself. Only this can take us through the time of test and crisis ahead.

John the Baptist was to prepare the way for Christ's coming the first time. Down here we are to prepare the way for His coming the second time. Speaking of John the Baptist:

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel" Luke 1:80.

Once a year for two weeks? How long did he spend in the desert? Until the day of his shewing unto Israel.

We are told in *Child Guidance*, page 22-23, that after the angel came to Zacharias and Elizabeth and told them they were to have a son they moved to a retired place in the country where their son would not be exposed to the temptations of city life. That's how important they thought it was. Were they too careful; too particular? No. Did little John need that separation from city influences? Yes. And notice he was separated not merely from Babylon or Egypt, but from the Babylonian and Egyptian influences among the professed people of God. He was separated from all of them.

Why? Not merely that he might be separated, but that he might have opportunity to hear God; that he might get acquainted with God. The beautiful picture from *The Desire of Ages* brings this out:

"John found in the wilderness his school and his sanctuary. Like Moses amid the mountains of Midian, he was shut in by God's presence, and surrounded by the evidences of His power. . . .

"Alone in the silent night he read God's promise to Abraham of a seed numberless as the stars" *The Desire of Ages*, page 102-103.

Could you be happy alone? The important thing in being alone isn't being a hundred miles from someone else. It is just necessary to be far enough away so you can hear God talk without the babble of human sounds, without any interruptions.

That is where John got that wonderful experience that made it possible for him to look King Herod in the eye and rebuke his sins; that made it possible for him to meet the scribes and Pharisees and unveil their hypocrisy; that made it possible to give God's positive, pointed message to a generation that needed to be called to repentance. We are told we are to have an experience like John.

Let's think of the experience of Jesus Himself as He came into this world and entered into our nature, our problems. How did He get His help? Where did He find the blessing? Put down these texts: Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16. They tell the story of His getting up early in the morning and going out into a solitary place and praying, withdrawing Himself into the wilderness and praying. He sensed His need to sense His Father's presence. He dared not let the pressure of the multitude sever His connection with the Father. As the multitudes thronged Him, He withdrew.

Christ entered into this experience as a child and as a youth. He didn't wait until He became a man, burdened with the responsibilities of evangelism. Notice this statement:

"His hours of happiness were found when alone with nature and with God" *The Desire of Ages*, page 90.

When the sons of Cain and the daughters of Babylon think of a good time they think of a hip-hip-hurrah crowd with plenty of noise and zip. But Jesus' hours of happiness were found when alone with nature and with God. He was alone, but not lonely. And the reason some young people are unhappy, discontented, and restless is because they are ever seeking to find in some other human being that satisfaction which can be found only in this experience.

"Whenever it was His privilege, He turned aside from the scene of His labor, to go into the fields, to meditate in the green valleys, to hold communion with God on the mountainside or amid the trees of the forest. The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer" *Ibid*.

Somebody might say, "Yes, I wish I had time to do that."

Remember that while Jesus was doing this He was also doing other things. He was helping to make the family living. He was helping to bear the burden and support of that family. Beside that He was getting His education. He was also carrying on a community missionary program. In addition, He was helping with the chores and burdens of running the house where he lived. He was doing all that and still took time to be alone with God. That was the secret of the success in the other phases of His life.

The burden of my heart is that no matter how good the classes we have are, no matter how inspiring the meetings we have are, and no matter how helpful the environment we have is, and no matter how Godly the teachers we have are, all that can fail unless you and I take the time to be alone with God.

Let's go to those days before the flood. Cain had started his city program. But instead of Able, Seth became the leader of God's people. Under Seth, the children of God lived a separate life from the descendants of Cain. But as time went on the inhabitants of Cain, multiplying, moved in close by the descendants of Seth. As a result some of the descendants of Seth got up and moved back into the hills and mountains where they could be separated from those influences. But as they began to mingle more and more, worldliness and pride led them into depths of sin until God had to destroy the earth by a flood.

In those years before the flood came Enoch appeared. He led in a movement back to places of retirement where he and those who followed his leadership could be alone with God. There is one sentence in the experience of Enoch I want you to notice:

"Distressed by the increasing wickedness of the ungodly, and fearing that their infidelity might lessen his reverence for God, Enoch avoided constant association with them and spent much time in solitude, giving himself to meditation and prayer" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 85.

What is solitude? It comes from the same word we get solo from. Solo is not a choir, not a quartet, not even a duet. It is one. Enoch found he needed to find time in solitude in meditation and prayer.

"Thus he waited before the Lord, seeking a clearer knowledge of His will, that he might perform it" *Ibid*.

That is what got him ready for translation. I introduce him last that we may meditate upon this type of this translated company. We are told that as was Enoch so must be their holiness of heart who are translated today at the coming of Jesus.

God wants every one of us to enter into these experiences. Babylon is fallen. Let's get out of it. Let's not only get out of it geographically, let's get Babylon out of our thinking. Let's not let anything rob us of the sense of the presence of God. And as we mingle with one another we will get a special blessing through sharing with one another.

It is nice to sit at the table, but somebody has to be in the kitchen before the table is spread. Somebody has to be out on the land working the soil to get what is put upon the table.

So in our fellowship, we need to bring forth from the treasure house things new and old. The place to get that treasure is alone with God.

I would like to urge each one of you to take an inventory of your experience and your program, and make this the first thing in your life. Being practical, if there is

somebody here who would say they would like to do this, but they don't know much about it, I would like to suggest that you do what some folks did back there in the days of Enoch. Find somebody who will lead you into this. The way most people learn to cook is finding someone who knows how to cook. The way most people learn to garden is by being with someone who is working in the garden. If you hear Jesus calling you into this experience, and you feel you need help, thank God there are men and women, some young and some old, that will be glad to share with you the secrets they have learned of how to enter into fellowship with God alone.

Give this the highest priority in your education. It is written in the prophets, All Thy children shall be taught of the Lord. Great shall be the peace of Thy children.

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W.D. Frazee Sermons
P.O. Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org