

# THE INDISPENSABLE ELEMENT

## Introduction

Two weeks ago, I spoke about our mission at HVWC:

*To usher in the Kingdom of God through the complete transformation of this region as evidenced by the sustained elimination of systemic poverty in all its forms - relational, physical, emotional, and motivational.*

Evidence that we are fulfilling this mission would include things like massive decreases in domestic violence, divorce, mental illness, addiction, suicide, unemployment, and underemployment. It would include people in this region embracing hope instead of fear and love instead of hate. It would mean that this region would look a lot more like heaven.

We will accomplish this mission by discipling, that is equipping and mentoring, every person who comes through those doors and who is willing to accept the call of God on their lives and who are fully committed to Jesus. These people, which include you and me, will be the influencers and catalysts in whatever mountains of culture they are called to serve – whether government, religion, family, education, business, media or arts and entertainment.

I also spoke about what it would take, on our part, to get there. It will require both individual and corporate faith and courage. We will need to see beyond the obstacles and the determination to not be bullied by fear. We will need to believe, to persist and to persevere. We will need to not give up nor give in and we will need each other. Every person present that Sunday came forward and committed themselves to that call.

However, before we can move forward with walking out and implementing this mission, there is something else that is essential for this journey. No, wait, it is not just essential; it is *indispensable*. For without it we are dead in the water, we have lost before we have started, and we have missed the point. Without it there can be no lasting Kingdom impact; there can be no Kingdom transformation. Without it, we are helpless and hopeless. Without it, we might as well give up.

What is this indispensable element? It is His Presence.

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### **Did Jesus and those who walked with God consider His Presence indispensable?**

Let's turn to the story of the Israelites in the book of Exodus, chapter 33. At this point in the story the Israelites had been delivered from the Egyptians but have yet to enter the Promised Land. Moses has just come down from Mount Sinai with the two stone tablets. He had found the Israelites worshipping the golden calf that Aaron had made for them and, because of this sin, God said this to Moses about entering the Promised Land:

Exodus 33:3 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. *But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.*"

Moses sets up a tent, called the tent of meeting, far outside the camp. It was a place where Moses would meet with the Lord on behalf of the people. Moses would enter the tent and a pillar of cloud would come down on the entrance and the Lord would then speak to Moses.

Exodus 33:11a (NIV)

The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.

Apparently, Moses realized something about how indispensable God's Presence is through these regular meetings because He has this conversation with God:

Exodus 33:13-16 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> Moses said to the Lord, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' <sup>13</sup> If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

<sup>14</sup> The Lord replied, "*My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.*"

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses said to him, "*If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.* <sup>16</sup> How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? *What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?*"

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In the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit resides in us when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Thus, in one sense His Presence is always with us. But what did Jesus say about His Presence? Let's look at John chapter 15.

John 15:3-7 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

<sup>5</sup> "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; *apart from me you can do nothing*. <sup>6</sup> If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

So even though we have the Holy Spirit residing within us, we experience His Presence through our intentional choices to stay connected to Him.

### **How can I cultivate experiencing (more of) His Presence?**

There are several ways in which we can do this, but I am going to focus on one of the primary ways.

Why does the Psalmist say this?

Psalm 119:37a (NIV)

Turn my eyes away from worthless things.

Because you become what you fix your eyes on. You become what you spend time with. You become what captures your heart. You become what you behold.

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When the eyes and affections of our heart are fixed upon the problems in this world; when we are enchanted with what the Enemy is doing, we resurrect and revert back to our old, dead nature and we experience less of His Presence.

However, when the eyes and the affections of our heart are on fixed on Him, we experience more of His Presence and we become like Him.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

In terms of focus, we need to gaze at Jesus and glance at the Enemy. There is a chorus to an old hymn that speaks to the fruit of doing this:

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”

So, how do we set the eyes and affections of our heart on Him?

James 4:8a (NIV)

Come (draw) near to God and he will come near to you.

We draw near through the means He has provided for us to do so – through time in His Word, in prayer, in worship and in times of quiet solitude. We draw near by being conscious of and interacting with Him throughout our day.

We also draw near in alignment with our design. How has God made you to connect with Him in ways that are unique to you? If you are not sure, ask Him “Lord how have you created me to experience your Presence?”.

A few weeks ago, I came to a point of frustration in my own personal prayer time. I have well over 100 books on prayer, both print and digital, and yet my personal prayer time did not have the life and authority that I yearned for. So, I went to the only option left and said, “Lord teach me to pray”. And just like the disciples, He showed how to pray in a new way. I was very clearly led to pray according to my unique identity in Christ. His Presence was there and there was power in that prayer because His Presence and His power are connected. To experience more of His power, we need to experience more of His Presence.

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Since then, I have continued to draw near in other unique ways, and it feels like I have moved into a new dimension of my walk with Him. I am experiencing more of the Father's heart, greater discerning of His voice and greater realization of His power. It's just the beginning, but the fruit is so tangible. You cannot be in the Presence of God and come away unchanged; there will always be fruit.

### **Closing Challenge & Invitation**

God has given us a big mission; a mission that we cannot accomplish on our own. Intuitively we know that. Yes, we will need vision, we will need strategies and we will need objectives. We will need leadership, we will need to disciple others, and we will need each other. We will need resources, we will need opportunities, and we will need divine appointments. We will need faith, we will need courage, and we will need love. We will need wisdom, we will need power and we will need authority. We will need all these things and more.

But the one thing that we **MUST** have, the one thing that supersedes them all, the one thing that is *indispensable*, is His Presence. For without His Presence there is no power - actions are just works, words are just talk, worship is just a song and the Bible is just a book.

I believe that these uncertain, volatile and chaotic times require a people who can demonstrate more of the Father's heart, discern His voice more clearly and move in a greater anointing of His power and authority. A people whom others can look at, talk to, spend time with and *know* that God's Presence is in/with you.

*So, will you draw near to Him? Will you prioritize the one indispensable element of His Presence?*