

Series: Speak Thou the Things That Become Sound Doctrine

WHITHER SHALL I FLEE FROM THY PRESENCE PSALMS 139:7-12

Text: Psalms 139:7

Psalm 139:7

*⁷ Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or **whither shall I flee from thy presence?***

Introduction:

Last week we laid a foundation for our doctrinal study of God.

There is no way that we can exhaust all that there is to know about God because we don't have the ability to comprehend all that God is.

Quote:

If God was small enough for us to understand, He wouldn't be big enough for us to worship.

Illustration:

Early American Indians had a unique practice to train their young braves.

On the night of the young brave's 13th birthday, on his threshold of manhood, after learning hunting, and fishing, and scouting skills, he was put to one final test.

He was put into a dark, dense forest, and was expected to spend the entire night alone.

Up until that point he had never been separated from his family and tribe where there was a lot of security for him.

But on this night, he was blindfolded and taken several miles away.

After taking off the blindfold, there he was in this thick woods.

And after what would seem like eternity, finally dawn would break, and the first rays of sunlight would break through the dense forest.

And he would look around, and to his utter astonishment he would see down the path an outline of a man standing there holding a bow and arrow.

It was his father! He had been there all night, watching over his son, protecting him even though he couldn't see him.

Read Text: Psalms 139:7-12

Psalm 139:7-12

⁷ Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ⁸ If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; ¹⁰ Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. ¹¹ If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. ¹² Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

This is what is referred to the omnipresence of God.

God is everywhere present all the time.

God is not a substance spread out in a thin layer all over the earth. All of God is everywhere at the same time.

There is no point in the universe where God is not.

He is not limited by time or space.

He is not confined to any one location.

That is a difficult concept for us to comprehend because we are finite creatures.

It is impossible for us to be in two place at the same time.

You may have wished that you could be in two places at the same time be we can't.

God is infinite.

He does not dwell within time and space so he can be completely with and give His undivided attention to every person on the earth at the same time.

Illustration:

When Henry Norris Russell, Princeton astronomer, had concluded a lecture on the Milky Way, a woman came to him and asked: "If our world is so little, and the universe is so great, can we believe that God pays any attention to us?" Dr. Russell replied, "That depends, madam, entirely on how big a God you believe in."

Saying that God is omnipresent doesn't mean that God is IN everything.

Don't confuse the creator with His creation.

The belief that God is IN everything is pantheism.

Pantheism is the denial of God's personality and expresses a tendency to identify God and nature.

We will consider four things about God's presence today.

Note

Sermon Content:

1. THE DEPTH AND GOD'S PRESENCE (VS. 8) – GOD IS WITH US SPIRITUALLY

Psalm 139:8

⁸ *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: **if I make my bed in hell**, behold, thou art there.*

The psalmist understood the depths of God's presence.

David said if he made his bed in hell that God would even be there.

Now David isn't saying that God is in hell.

While we remain alive there is no way of visiting Heaven or Hell, though some feel as if what they are going through may be comparable to Hell.

Illustration: Luke 16

I don't want to minimize what someone may be going through, but understand the worst circumstance or situation is in way comparable to the horrors of Hell.

All of us have good days and bad days, and God is always with His children.

Illustrations:

- God was with the three Hebrew young men in the fiery furnace.
- God was with Daniel while he was in the lion's den.
- God was with Elijah as a still small voice while Elijah was hiding in a cave.
- God was with Jonah in the fish's belly while he was trying to run from the presence of God.

Note the words of Psalms 25:16

Psalm 25:16

¹⁶ Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

No doubt most if not all of us here today have felt the same way at times.

There may be someone in this room that is lonely right now.

Some of the loneliest times in my life is when I was surrounded by people.

It is interesting that we live in a world where there were never before more people in the world yet there are more lonely people.

With all our 'social networking' capabilities today loneliness is still on the rise.

There are many different kinds of loneliness.

There is the loneliness that comes from:

- A New Setting

You move to a new place (our country) or for the young you switch schools and you have a hard time learning the culture and making friends. You miss your home.

- A Sickness

The doctor comes with unsettling words about a sickness which often results in a loneliness.

- A Separation

When a spouse or a love one passes away the results is often loneliness.

- Our Situations

Maybe you are single and think that marriage would help but there are a lot of lonely married people as well.

Maybe you are struggling financially, but there are a lot of people with great wealth who struggle with loneliness as well.

- Success

Life at the top can be a very lonely place.

There are many different kinds of loneliness. There will be times when you are lonely in life.

God made the universe and declared it good, but the Bible says that there was one thing He found in it that was not good:

Genesis 2:18

¹⁸ *And the LORD God said, **It is not good that the man should be alone**; I will make him an help meet for him.*

What should we do when we grow lonely?

- We should recognize God's presence
- We should rest in God's promises

Remember the words of Hebrews 13:5:

Hebrews 13:5

*⁵ Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: **for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.***

We see the Depth of God's Presence.

Not also:

2. THE DISTANCE AND GOD'S PRESENCE (VSS. 9-10) – GOD IS WITH US PHYSICALLY

Psalm 139:9-10

*⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, and **dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;** ¹⁰ Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

Remember:

God is with us not just in every **SITUATION** but also in every **SETTING**.

No matter where we go in all creation we know that God goes with us.

There were times the nation of Israel forgot this truth. At times they felt that God was far off and had left them.

Remember the words of Psalms 137:1-4

Psalm 137:1-4

¹ By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. ² We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. ³ For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. ⁴ How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?

We often may feel the same way, but remember God is always with us even in a strange land or the scary places in our lives.

Illustration: Jonah

Jonah learned this lesson the hard way. He thought that he could run and hide from God, but even in the belly of the fish, God was with him.

Illustration: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

Daniel 3:19-25

¹⁹ Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. ²⁰ And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind

*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. ²¹ Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²² Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. ²⁴ **Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. ²⁵ He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.***

There is no Distance that we can travel that that God's Presence isn't there. There is no Depth we can sink to that God's Presence isn't there.

Note also:

3. THE DARKNESS AND GOD PRESENCE (VSS. 11-12) – GOD IS WITH US EMOTIONALLY

Psalm 139:11-12

¹¹ If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. ¹² Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

As I read these verses I'm reminded of what we read in Isaiah 43:

Isaiah 43:1-2

*¹ But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. ² **When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.***

Remember Moses had dark days.

He led the nation of Israel out Egypt toward the Promise Land, but the journey at times was difficult.

Note Exodus 33:12-18:

Exodus 33:12-18

¹² *And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.* ¹³ *Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.* ¹⁴ *And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.* ¹⁵ ***And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.*** ¹⁶ *For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.* ¹⁷ *And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.* ¹⁸ *And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*

God had told Moses, because of the golden calf that the children of Israel had demanded and Aaron had fashioned that He would no longer accompany them, but instead He would send an angel with them.

That so bother Moses that he basically said, “God if You don’t go with us then don’t take us there.”

We should be grateful for the presence of God and we should never want to take a step outside of His presence.

How can we enjoy the presence of God in our lives?

There must be:

- Determination
- Preparation
- Isolation
- Expectation
- Adoration
- Intercession
- Observation
- Transformation

Let me quickly say a few words lastly about:

4. THE DETAILS ABOUT GOD'S PRESENCE

The Omnipresence of God Brings Two Things:

- Conviction

As we ponder the omnipresence of God it can be convicting.

The fact that God is everywhere present at the same time can be a disturbing doctrine.

Some try to hide from God like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden after they disobeyed and sinned.

Are you trying to run from God? Like Jonah, is God calling you to do something right now that you want nothing to do with? Don't wait until God sends a storm into your life, or you end up with a great problem or in a great storm.

Remember Hebrews 4:13

Hebrews 4:13

¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Are there secret sins in your life?

Maybe you think that no one else will find out.

Perhaps you've arranged everything so that you can get away with things.

Maybe you're involved in an inappropriate relationship or some kind of illicit behavior.

Let me be honest, there is no way you can avoid the presence of God.

He sees what you're doing because He's with you no matter what you think you're getting away with.

Jeremiah 23:24

²⁴ Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

The reason God convicts is so that He can get our attention. He loves us too much to let us keep hiding or running from Him.

The second thing that the Omnipresence of God brings is:

- Comfort

Note the words we read in Isaiah 41:

Isaiah 41:10

¹⁰ Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Because God is always with us, we do not have to be dismayed. This practical doctrine brings us comfort in at least three ways:

- God Is Always Near His People

Hebrews 13:5

*⁵ Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.***

- God Is Especially Close When We Go Through Tough Times

Psalms 34:18

¹⁸ The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

- God Comes Even Closer When We Get Close To Him

James 4:8

⁸ **Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.**

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Close:

Maybe you are here today and you feel like God has abandoned you.

Maybe you are in a place of darkness, wondering why you're in the valley.

Remember the God of the Mountain is still God in the Valley, and when we find ourselves in the valley we learn that He truly is the Lilly of the Valley.

Maybe His presence has convicted your heart.

Come to Him and ask forgiveness, for He is Faithful and Just to cleanse from all unrighteousness.