

The Glory of His Presence!

Overview

Psalms 139. I was known for years as the preacher who never used notes, and this morning I think I'm going to renew that promise, or that I made myself all kinds of wonderful notes, and I can't find them. So now we're going to have to depend upon the Holy Spirit.

Amen? This is going to be rich. Okay. Psalm 139. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and you've known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting, my uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there's not a word in my tongue, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and has laid thy hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It's high. I cannot attain unto it. Where can I go from thy Spirit, or where will I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, you're there. If I make my bed in hell, you're there. If I take the wings of the morning and I dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall your hand lead me. Your right hand shall hold me. And if I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yes, the darkness cannot hide you, but the night shines as the day.

The darkness and the light are both alike to you. For you have possessed my reins, and you have covered me in my mother's womb. So, since I did not bring my notes to the platform, I'm going to find myself quoting Scripture without telling you exactly what chapter and what verse, and you're going to forgive me for that. Oh, thank you. Okay. I got one amen for those of you who are listening in on the internet.

That person is the president of my fan club, and at this point, they're my only member. There's number two, amen. That one was sassy.

So, here we have in Psalm 139 really a clear picture of the omnipresence of God. You know these words. The Lord God is omnipotent, all-powerful. The Lord God is omniscient. He knows all things. But the Lord God is omnipresent.

He's everywhere, everywhere omnipresent, and that is what is laid out here in this Psalm, where he said, where can I go and flee from your presence? Not that he wanted to, but he's saying, even if I wanted to escape, I could not, because no matter where I go, you're there. But the interesting thing is, he's there, but he's invisible. He's there, but he's invisible.

We don't see him. But isn't it intriguing that throughout the Old Testament, God keeps showing up and manifesting himself in unique ways. Remember that Moses approached a burning bush because it was a bush that burned, but was not consumed. It wasn't turning into char. It wasn't going away, just burning and burning and burning, and so he turned aside. And the Lord spoke to him out of the bush and said, take off your shoes.

This is holy ground. Moses didn't understand. He had never perceived. It had never occurred to him that the one who's invisible that's everywhere would show up in a very specific location. So the one who was invisible suddenly became localized in a burning bush. So somebody who loves the planet would say, see, I told you, God is in everything, and that's called pantheism.

God is in the wood of this pulpit. God is in the light bulb. God's in your eyelashes. God was in my hair, but I lost my hair, so part of God's gone. That's pantheism. That's silliness. God is not in everything, but he is present everywhere, and yet he's invisible. But for that moment, God showed up in a burning bush. On another occasion, we read in Genesis chapter 12 that Abram, who was a polytheist—now, a polytheist is one who has all kinds of religions under the belt, so all kinds of things—but he really was an infidel.

He didn't know who he was. He was going to cash in on every religion, hoping that one of them was right, until God showed up and spoke to him. Now, we don't have any indication of how that went by. We do know that the visitation by the Lord, where the Lord manifested himself in some fashion, was so powerful and life-changing, it was a hinging moment in his life. What did Abram see? We have no idea. What kind of a voice did he hear? We haven't got the slightest notion.

But something happened when God showed up that shook him to his very core, to the point where he had to say to his wife, Sarah, we've got to get out of here. God is going to lead us, and he wants us out of here. Now, why did the Lord want him out of there? Because the Lord seemed to know that Abraham, although he could become strong in his faith, he'd never make it where he was.

He needed to get out from this idolatry. He needed to get away from all of these little tin gods so that God could get his attention. What did he see? At the very most, we could think that he may have seen a personage that maybe was transparent, or it might have been an angel. Now, this is interesting that the Lord showed up in a number of ways. At times, a pillar of fire. That was something that they experienced out in the wilderness, the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

For 40 years, a pillar of fire showed up every night. That was the presence of God. And that pillar of fire represented the holiness of God. He's a consuming fire. But in the daytime, the Lord showed up as a cloud. And as long as they saw the cloud, they knew that God was there.

So the invisible God became somewhat visible in cloud form or in fire form. But on another occasion, Gideon, who was the leader of the army of the children of the Lord, was confronted by what the Word of God describes as the angel of the Lord. So he actually saw a personage, but it was an angel.

Abraham experienced something also down in the plains of Mamre where three individuals showed up. And the Word of God says in the record that one of them was identified as the Lord. I want to bring something to your attention.

I remember a preacher said this thing to me some years ago, and until he explained it, it shook me. He said, everything that you read in this book is not necessarily true. And I thought, whoa, whoa, whoa, where are you going with that? There are many things in this book where the person says something, they're presuming something that is not true and is going to show up later to be untrue. So it's what they said. The record is there, the record is true, but the gravity point of what was said was not true. So Abraham assumed that this third person was God himself.

But in fact, we don't know what kind of form this person had, but this is actually called a theophany, a theophany. So the fact that Abraham saw this person, one of three men who came to him, and by the way, it says that Sarah prepared lunch for them, and they sat down, they had a meal together, and it says that Abraham believed that that third man was none other than God himself. Well, he was confronted with a presence, but he could not, if he had said, this is, I met him, I met him, and they'd say, well, what color were his eyes? You see, now we're getting way off.

The Lord is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. We must not humanize God and try and picture him as a person with arms, and like in one place it says, he covers you with his feathers, so you see, you can go way off there. So those are words to help us understand and perceive how majestic he is, and how unique he is, so to the point where it's hard for us to describe him.

The Word of God describes God in so very many ways. So Abraham met this person, but could we say that he actually saw God's face? There are scriptures in the New Testament that says, no man could see the face of God. No man has ever seen his face. Even though it might be recorded, I think I saw his face. I'll tell you who thought they saw his face was that the Lord showed up and spoke to Samson's mother and father, and later on she's telling all of her friends, I met with God. Oh, I was there face to face.

No one has ever seen his face. So the Lord came to us in the form of fire. He came to us in the form of a cloud. He came to the people in the form of a fire, but those elements were not his very personage. They were indications or a manifestation of his presence. Why did God not allow anyone to see his face? It's interesting that Moses said to the Lord on Mount Sinai, show me your glory. Show me your glory. And God said, I will not allow you to see my face. So there you have it.

Show me your glory. And the Lord says, I can't show you my face. So God's glory and his face, there's a connection there. And we won't try, some theologian, some academic could probably unfold that for us. I'm not going to try this morning. But Moses said, let me see you. And God said, I can't let you, I can't let that happen. But the Lord said, I'll come near you. And when I walked by, he said, I'll cover you with my hand.

Why? Because if you know what it would be like if you went, I don't even know if the sun's going to shine today, but if you went out there and you looked at it long enough, I believe you'd go blind. That's the sun, how many millions of miles away, but the brightness of the sun can really do harm to us. How much more the brightness of the glory of God, I'm not comparing them to the sun, but no person could experience God's presence in its fullness and actually survive it.

So why did the Lord hide himself from Israel? Here were the people trying to serve God, they'd never seen him. Everybody else, all the other tribes, they had their gods. They had clay gods, they had tin gods, they had stone gods.

Some worship the sun, some worship the moon. So they could say, well, I'll show you my God, why don't you show me yours? Moses could have said, well, check out this burning bush. You see, there's such a chasm, such a chasm there.

And so the Hebrew masters, the teachers of the Jewish people, I looked this up. I wanted to know when did those Jewish teachers start using a certain term? Now I'm familiar with this term, having been raised in a church, not unlike this one. I used to hear the word, and we used to sing songs with this word included in them, in the songs, and it was shekinah.

How many have heard of that word, shekinah? How many have heard of that word coupled with another word, shekinah glory? Yeah. So you look up in the Word of God for the word shekinah, you won't find it. It's not in the Word.

Where did it come from? From the masters of the Jewish religion, and it happened in the first century. And why did that happen? Because as early back as over 2,000 years ago, there was great concern among the leadership of the Jewish religion that the people would be somehow become far too common with God, and to start relegating him down to his eyes, his nose, his face, humanity. You know that the Jewish people cannot say God's name even. Did you know that? You and I know it as Jehovah. They would know it in Jewish, in Hebrew, Yahuwah. But they will not say that. They find other words because they are afraid to say God's name. They hold God in far greater majesty. Their sense of the godliness, their sense of his righteousness, of his majesty, of his power, far beyond.

It just turns us into something ever so small. They're afraid to speak his name. And the scribes at the time of Jesus who were translating rewriting, not rewriting, but writing out the word of God, did you know that the scribes, after they completed every word as they were transcribing the word of God, they had to wash their hands, purify themselves before they would write the next word. Their concept of God is so majestic and so powerful, and so should it be. I just about lose it when I hear somebody refer, and I hear Christians talking, well, I've just been talking to the man upstairs. I'm thinking, what kind of upstairs you talk? That is so pathetic that that reduces God into an apartment somewhere up there.

And did you know that Kenneth Copeland claims that God lives on one of his own planets? What kind of stupidity are we falling for? God doesn't live on some planet. He created the universe. The universe is his stepstool. And so the Jewish leaders determined that to help the people not become overly familiar with the Lord God, when they even wanted to respond to the Lord's presence, the Lord's presence, they came up with this word Shekinah. And I won't go into the original Hebrew, that won't impress you anyhow, but it's quite unique how they came up with that word. And it literally means the manifest presence.

So this is a good way for the people of the Jewish group that they would even come into a synagogue maybe yesterday, that's their holy day, and somebody would say to them as they're weighing on the way out, you know, when the holy scriptures were being read to us, I felt the Shekinah. I sensed the Shekinah. What their meaning is that they were touched by even the reading of his holy word.

They felt the nearness of God with the reading of the word. Now why would they cherish that? Because they have a history of experiencing the presence. That's their history. I've gone through this before. Abraham had met with God, and he had to convince Sarah, I met with an invisible God. I met with the God of the universe. And then he told his son Isaac, and God did visit with Isaac, and Isaac had a personal experience. These were our patriot. These are the fellows from which Christianity flowed, and Islam.

The Islamic people are the sons and daughters of Abraham. And the day will come when they will fall on their faces before God and say, I called you by the wrong name, and I acknowledge they will acknowledge Jesus. Not now, but they will.

They are the sons and daughters of Abraham, and they will wake up onto that someday. But in that day, here was Abraham, then he convinced Isaac, and Isaac experienced God for himself. And then didn't Jacob also have an experience with God? And isn't it interesting that it says that that night when Jacob sent his family on to meet with his brother, who he believed that they might have a war with him, Esau, he sent his family to see if they would survive, to see if they'd survive.

And he spent the night alone in another town in another location, and it says there he wrestled with God the entire night. It says that he wrestled with a man. So there's two words in there that is in that story. He wrestled with a man. The man was God. But in fact, that was his assumption. He was wrestling with a personage that had muscle, had sinew, and he couldn't overcome this one that he was wrestling with. And so we have this other terminology. God shows up as wind, he shows up as fire, he shows up as a cloud, he shows up as a burning bush, and sometimes he shows up as what's called, you'll find this frequently, the angel of the Lord.

And if you and I were to experience the angel of the Lord, get it out of your head that he has a halo and wings. Get that out of your head, okay? That's terabim seraphim. But all of the angels, there's no way to determine that they all have wings.

But Jacob that night wrestled with a spiritual being that he recognized was not of this planet, and he assumed it was God himself, because this person was there representing God. This was the spokesman for the Lord God. But that night, Jacob received a new name.

From now on, you'll be called Israel. That's how old that word is. You'll now be called Israel, which means he who wrestles with God. Now, did he wrestle with God? He did. You know, I can spend a night with the Lord wrestling with him, and somebody says, what did he look like? No, wrestling in your spirit. It's happened to me many, many times, and surely it's happened to you.

In fact, I venture to say that the hour that you gave your life to Christ, it was a wrestling match that you lost, thank God. You had a wrestling match. I told you last Sunday, I won't repeat the story, I'd scare you to death. Was it two Sundays ago, I talked about a man that came forward back in the 1970s to our altar. He looked like somebody right out of Hollywood, and he said some pretty rough words to me after that time, but he was just expressing himself according to his past, right? But I can tell you that he was at that altar. The service proper probably ended around 9.30 or 10 o'clock at night.

Our services went on in those days, and I'm still sitting with him at the altar at midnight. If you'd have said to me, what's happening to that man, I probably would have said, he's wrestling with God. Then you might have said, he's wrestling with God. Why is he wrestling with God? Because he needs to lose, he needs to surrender, he needs to abandon all and say, I surrender all, I surrender all, I surrender all. So wrestling with God is not an indication that you saw him, or you can't go by your feeling. Don't go by your feelings, you go by faith.

If you go by your feeling, never say to somebody who gives their life to Christ, there now, do you feel better? Salvation is not a feeling, it's a transformation. It begins with justification, where God, by your confession of faith in him, justifies you, and you're ready for heaven. But then sanctification goes on. And I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, that that moment of justification is like walking down the aisle in a wedding ceremony. April and I went to a wedding yesterday. Don't get me carried away on that.

We had the most precious time. A lady that we've known for years, for years, from Vancouver, and we were invited to her wedding. I was so tickled, and we had to go by the crowd after, and finally I walked up, and when she saw me, she shrieked, ah, Pastor Dave! She gave me this wonderful hug. I felt like King Farouk. But that wedding began yesterday at that altar. Beautiful ceremony. But the pastor was so very careful as he was questioning them. He didn't just do a regular ceremony. He took this to the nth degree.

He even asked the congregation, do you promise to do thus and so to support them? He said, this is just the beginning. This is a walk. Coming to the altar, yes, you're married, but how is your marriage going to go from there going forward? And he asked you, do you promise to stand with them and encourage them and mentor them? Do you promise to stand with them? He said, if you will, say I do.

A couple of hundred people said I do. A couple of hundred adults and about 40 or 50 wriggling little crying children. It was quite a deal. You had to listen hard to hear the preacher. It was a family affair. But you see, justification, then sanctification.

Sanctification is working out where you came from. And what's that process of sanctification all about? It's a wrestling match, Nick. Because you see, the enemy doesn't want you to change. He doesn't want you to get a toupee. He wants you to look just, he thinks you're perfect just the way you are. It's a wrestling match, giving up the old nature as the apostle Paul tells us in the book of Romans.

We've got to reckon ourselves defeated. Paul says, I got to reckon myself to be dead. So it's always a wrestling match. I wrestled with God. What did that feel like? You can't tell what it feels like. I got to move on in my message without notes. We could go till three o'clock. Actually, no more notes from now on. This is good. I love this. Okay, so, yeah, so, okay, okay. All right, you're going to miss your lunch. I know where you're going for lunch. You better be careful. So, the tabernacle.

God said, Moses, go and tell the people I care about them. And he said, tell them about you. I don't even know your name. These are the chosen people of God, and they did not know his name. So, the Lord said, this is what I want you to say, da-da, da-da, da-da. And tell Pharaoh, I want you to let my people go so that I can have a relationship with them.

That's the gospel according to Dave. He said tell them, tell Pharaoh, these people need to make, in one case he says, I want them to worship me. And several chapters later in the book of Exodus, he said, they need to sacrifice unto me. Because in giving the sacrifice, that was the wrestle. The sacrifice was the death of an animal. Their sin, their disappointments, their failures transferred onto that creature, and that creature took the place of each person who was giving their lives back to the Lord.

God said, they need to come out in the wilderness and experience me. Experience me. So, when they got set free, remember, and I know I'm being repetitious. I'm just trying to sew it all together. When they got out into the wilderness, the Lord said to Moses, come up in the mountain. I want to talk to you. And when the people heard God's voice, it scared the living daylights out of them. Why did God have to shelter Moses from his presence? Why did God have to hide out? Why was God showing up in a burning bush or through an angelic person? Because even the sound of his voice, I said, the sound is going to kill us. Please, Moses, you have a talk with God, and then you come and report to us.

The Lord overruled all of that and said, I'm going to do one better. I actually want to come and live among you. I want to be, watch this word, I want to be tabernacled with you. Tabernacle. I want to be tented with you. I want to dwell with you. I want you to experience my presence. They go from the synagogue and they say, did you feel his Shekinah, his presence? There are many, many people are going to church today. They don't care what the sermon sounds like. They don't care whether we sing that song that we've sung 20 times in the last six months. All they want is they want to experience the Shekinah, the Jewish word for all the glory of your presence. We, your temple, we give you reverence.

So arise to your rest and be blessed by our praise as we glory in your embrace as your presence now fills this place. That song was written by a friend of mine from California. His name Steven. He came and he performed that song, led our whole congregation in Toronto when it was first being born. How many recognize that song? As terrible as I sang it, all the glory of your presence, all the glory of your presence. David said, take anything you want away from me, but dear God, don't take away your presence.

I'll die. But how many of us are content to move along? When's the last time when you said almost with tears, dear God, I sensed his presence? Say, David, what are you getting at? You deserve when you come in this house every Sunday, you deserve to experience the Shekinah in this place. You deserve that. And if that doesn't happen frequently, we are letting you down. Well, pastors, what does that say about all the other churches? I feel sorry for them. I feel sorry for congregations who come and they go to church, you know, it starts sharp at 11 and ends very dull at 12.

People can't remember by Wednesday what the preacher preached on Sunday. They don't even remember. That's how impactful it was. What is it you love about your church? Well, I love Christmas, and I love Easter, and it's so nice to see Aunt Maude, and fellowship is good, and festivities are good. But David said, I don't care about any of that. I long for your presence.

I long for your presence. Key, there's a key. The Lord's presence came down in the tabernacle in the Holy of Holies. God actually dwelt there. God dwelt there. So, we might say, now wait a minute, how can the eternal God completely dwell there? No, you're taking him down into human form. How can God be dwelling there, and he's dwelling in the universe? How can he be? No, no, no. God is spirit. And this was a privilege that he afforded to the Jewish people, and that he's offering you.

When two or three gather together in my name, there am I in the midst. First Peter, you are a temple. It's also found in the book of Ephesians. I can't quote it for you. Sorry, my brain isn't that good. I should get somebody else to quote it for me. I bet he could. It says, don't you know that you're the temple of the Holy Spirit? In the tabernacle, they claimed that they experienced the presence of God. He didn't talk out loud. It would have scared them, but his presence was close. And when they saw the cloud in the day, whether or not something was happening in their tabernacle, when they saw the cloud, he's there. And that cloud was mobile, so that when it moved, they were to move.

And as long as they followed the cloud, they were going to be safe. No enemy could defeat them when they stayed close to the cloud. And when you stay close to the cloud, and what's the cloud for you? It's wrestling with God, my friend. It's wrestling with God, giving up the things that keep you away from God. It'll change the way you talk. It'll change the way you think. It'll change how you get benevolent. People say, I can't give 10% of my income to the Lord. When you live close to him, you want to give more. It will transform your life. You will think differently. And you know what? People will see it, and they will notice it.

It's glorious when you live in his presence. I learned this term years ago from an old preacher. And there was a book, and I was pointed out to it.

The book was by Andrew Murray, and it was called Practicing the Presence of God. Practicing. You mean it's like a recital? How do I practice? It means getting into a habit of letting the Lord touch you and experiencing his Shekinah glory. The Jewish people knew from those wilderness days about the presence. David knew about the presence. And then it was determined between David and his son Solomon, we got to move out of the tabernacle.

When they set up Jerusalem as the capital and David was the king, they were still using the tabernacle. You forget that. The tabernacle was still the place where they met with God. So David said, we should build a house for the Lord. You see, David had built himself a glorious palace, huge, massive, incredible. He said, here I am living in this glorious house, and look where God lives in that pathetic little moth-eaten tent.

That's how he saw it. And so the Lord okayed it, and so Solomon built a temple. And you know the story ever so well. And if I had my notes before you this morning, I would be able to rehearse for you, and I'm going to give it a go. On the day of the dedication, many, many animals were slaughtered. They say, historians tell us, that blood ran in the streets.

When the Ark of the Covenant was being taken up and the priests were carrying it, they were walking, their sandals were dripping with blood. They were walking in the paths of dead oxen, the blood from oxen and goat and sheep and all the rest. Why the mess? It was a reminder. He's a holy God. We should be dead. Be sure your sins will find you out.

We should be dead. But as they walked through the blood of those animals, they were thankful that God would accept the blood of those animals. And when they got to the tabernacle and there was to be a special sacrifice given unto the Lord, the Ark of the Covenant was placed.

And the moment there was blood sprinkled upon the Ark of the Covenant, the power, the Shekinah glory of God started to extend in that temple. And somebody yelled, run for it! The priests ran for their lives. Why? Because you cannot be in his total glorious presence and survive. You are a pathetic little human being. You'll find that out when they say, you're having a heart attack, David, and we don't know if we can salvage you. I've been on the precipice.

I've been there. We are weaklings to think that we could survive the presence. So they ran for their lives. And it's a wonderful thing to read the prayer of Solomon. In his prayer, he first of all acknowledged that God is transcendent above all. Lord, we are not pompous. We're not proud. We're not arrogant. We're like mice to you. I acknowledge your transcendence, your power and your glory. Your person is greater than the universe. You're massive.

You're glorious. We acknowledge that. But dear God, in all of your majesty, your glory, your power, would you be pleased to dwell in this temple? Would you be pleased to give up the tent and move in here among us? And God answered the And here's the prayer. God, let this be a house of prayer, where when we realize that we have sinned, we can come. Where do we go when our conscience is seared? We got to get right with God. Let this be the place where we can come and pray.

And therefore, let this be a place of forgiveness and restoration, the temple where your presence is. Lord, if we come to your presence and we beg for these things, we know we have a chance. Oh God, we pray that you will live among us, be tabernacled among us, that the Shekinah glory we would not become overly familiar with, but we would feel we're going to die if we lose the Shekinah glory.

And Ezekiel says, I'm glad you're worried about that, because Ezekiel steps back, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he said to all of Israel, I know how you feel about the temple. The temple is beautiful, majestic. The queen of Sheba, that was an Arab nation. I forget the name of it these days. It doesn't matter. She came a long ways just to see the temple. It was massive. It was the most glorious edifice of the time, overlaid with gold on the inside. Incredible! And Ezekiel said, I know how you prize it, and I know how you gloat over the fact that God inhabits this place.

But he said, I'm telling you, if you don't forsake your sins, the glory will depart. And on one occasion, he said, I had a vision. He said, I saw the cherubim. Now, the cherubim were gold-covered carvings that were massive. They're huge wings. So, the Ark of the Covenant is here. One cherubim was mounted on this side of the covenant, the Ark of the Covenant, a box overlaid with gold. Inside was the rod that budded and the tablets that Moses had brought. That was in the Ark of the Covenant.

So, there was this great angel with his wings this way. And on the other side, this is made of wood and then overlaid with gold, thick gold. When Ezekiel saw the vision, he saw those creatures, those cherubim, come alive. And without a doubt, with tears, he said, and I saw them move to the threshold of the temple. And he said, the Spirit of the Lord lifted. And the Jewish people have never experienced the Shekinah from that day.

To this day, the Jews crave the Shekinah glory. They crave to know His presence. Dear Lord, help me in these next couple of minutes. I've got to finish this. John chapter 1. Quote it for me, the first two or three verses. Go ahead and listen. Stop! The Word was made flesh. And it goes on, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Tabernacled among us. Listen, beloved. Hark, the herald angels sing in a few weeks. God bless you, that's good.

Do you know what you're singing? The angels appeared and said, He's here. The Ark of the Covenant is gone. The temple is going to be destroyed in 73 years, but He is tabernacled among you. He's come to live among you. He came unto His own, and they received Him not. They rejected the presence of God. They rejected me. And sad to say, there are churches not only in Canada, U.S., but all over Europe, who are denying the reality of the presence of God. They mock us.

I'm going to tell you a story to finish. Dear Lord, how do I do this? No, let me finish. It says in Ephesians, you now are the temple. So Jesus came. He was tabernacled among us. He lived among us. And then He was crucified. Then He rose, and the one who came to be tabernacled among us left us. But He said, as a father sent me, so send I you.

They weren't catching on yet, but it's the apostles who said, don't you know now you are the tabernacle? Don't you know you are the temple of the Lord? And watch this. It's two-sided, and I'll finish. I'm going to try and finish. Individually, when you gave your life to Christ, you became the temple. Okay? You got that part. Know you not you are the temple.

But when you read it in the book of Ephesians, the apostle says, and that you all, each one of you, these are my words, are many temples. And when you come together, you form the temple. This morning, as we came together, each one of us had Him within us. But there was something glorious, Nancy. When we came together, and when we sing, like when we sing, when we sing from our hearts, when we sing passionately, not because it's the song that was chosen, but because the song resonates from within. This is a marvelous thing that I love about the old hymns.

Here's what happens when I hear an old hymn. You see, I was raised with all of those wonderful old songs. I was there when I got the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I was there when people got saved. I remember, I remember, I remember. And those are just memories now, and I tend to forget a memory. But all of a sudden, a church starts to sing a song, and you know what? That song brings back a memory. And all of a sudden, there's a well from within me starts to rise up, and I get blessed. I don't get blessed with your new songs.

I get blessed by the memory, by the glory, by the majesty that God touched me back in the day. That's why I love the old stuff. Because I was raised with the knowledge and the presence, the Shekinah glory of God.

I was raised with it. So I had a call from the district. I hope they listen in. I don't care. I had a call this week. After five years of being your pastor, I finally got a phone call. And why did he call? Just checking up to make sure that he had my right mailing address. I said, do you know who I am? No. Have you ever heard of me? Well, I found your name on the list here. Okay. I could have blown his doors off. I started telling him what I've done.

I've preached your biggest conferences. I've raised the biggest missions offering. You don't even know who I am anymore. I don't care. I said, how long you been in there? Two years. Oh, I said, well, I've been here. I'm in my sixth year. Oh, how are things going? I told him. I said, things are going nicely. He said, what's the secret? I said, this might throw you off a little bit. But I said, we're the church in Ontario that leaves the lights on. The line went dead.

I said, we're not afraid of the light. And I said, you know how they made the whole nation put out your cigarettes everywhere? It's a non-smoking. I said, we're still a non-smoking church. So many of these churches fill the place with smoke. Why are they doing that? Why? Why are they doing that? Special lighting and special soap. You know what? They're trying to manufacture the Shekinah, and it doesn't work. It's plastic. It's junk. Now, let me tell you this.

I've told you before. It's worth telling you. And then I close. Honest, honest, honest, honest. So some people came forward in a service back in the 1970s. They stood here. There were 23 people lined up all across the front. It was an incredible thing. Giving their lives to Christ. One service, 23 people. A couple of days later, I had some cards given to me. Here's some people that got saved Sunday. I think you want to go and see these. It was a family of five adults, mom, dad, two beautiful ladies, and a son, all adults. I went to see them, had a wonderful visit with them. They said, we've never been in a church like this in our whole life. And then they said, you can solve a problem for us. I said, what would that be? They said, that beautiful aroma.

I said, aroma? Yeah. As we stood there, we suddenly started to smell this beautiful fragrance. And these girls were all into makeup and jewelry. And they were high steppers. They were models. And they did people's hair. So they know fragrances, whatever. This is my wording. They basically said, I've never smelled a smell quite like that smell smelled.

And they said, we want to know, how do you do it? I said, what? How do you get that fragrance to go through the entire building? And the husband speaks up and he says, I have told them I know. They put this little bottle of perfume downstairs near the fan that blows the air through. And he squeezes a little bulb.

They said, is that accurate? I said, I haven't any idea what you're talking about. You smell it, don't you? I said, I don't know what you're talking about. And the mother said, oh my goodness. She got tearful. Pastor David, were we smelling the fragrance of the presence of Jesus? I said, those are your words. I said, I'm going to say, I'm not going to say yes. I'm not going to say no. But I said, it's not beyond, it's not beyond the borders of reality. Do you know how often we would see 10 and 15 people at the altar? We were baptizing over 50 people per month.

And I was asked by the general superintendent, what's the secret, David? I said, the Shekinah presence, sir. The what? I said, the presence that fell in the temple when they dedicated it that day. I said, none of us were there. So I said, we can't even imagine it. I said, it was so powerful. The priests ran for cover. I said, it's not a fearful thing in our church. But I said, sir, when people arrive in our church, we're already singing. He said, what time does the singing start? I said, when the people arise, when they arrive.

The service started at seven. The place was full by a quarter after six. And what did the people do? They started singing. And I'd walk out at 20 minutes to seven. There'd be 400 people standing there with their hands up like this, their tears rolling down their cheeks. And there were people at the altar getting saved. What's the secret, Dave? I said, the secret is just walking with God. It's His presence. It's the Shekinah glory.

Does that resonate somehow? Oh, the glory of Your presence. We, Your people, we love Your residence. Heavenly Father, I thank You this morning. Lord, I thank You for all the churches that have the lights on. I thank You for the churches that have the lights off. I thank You for the preachers that are wild and woolly, and I thank You for the ones that are very quiet and majestic.

They're Your sheep, and You said, I have sheep in other pastures that You don't appreciate. And Lord God, we do appreciate it. Lord, some of those churches are doing far more than we could ever accomplish.

Huge church, wonderful, all over the world. It's incredible. Lord, I thank You.

But Lord, my heart and my soul, my whole focus is not on this building, but the people who arrive here on a consistent basis. Then when visitors come, it's our hope, our prayer, that they would experience the sense of Your presence. And that little ladies like Katrina would say, after a whole year of being absent because of employment, pulling her away, when she came in, she gave us such a massive hug and said, it's so good to be back.

Back where? Back where the presence of God dwells. That's where. Thank You, Jesus, for Your love for us.

Thank You, Lord. And the people would say.

Amen