

## Teaching for 7-30-08

### The Price of Presence

The manifest presence of God, God in the midst of His people, is a theme that runs throughout Scripture. The reason is simple—it is the very heart of God. It has always been the desire of God to be with His people. It was Jehovah's purpose for the tabernacle: *...where I will meet with you* (Exodus 30: 6). It is the intention of God for the renewed city of Jerusalem: *And the name of the city from that time on will be: The Lord Is There* (Ezekiel 48:35). It is the fulfillment of all of God's history with man: *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God* (Revelation 21:3). Yet, this manifest presence of God is not automatic. There is a price to have His presence with us.

### Death is Required

In the book of Exodus, the tabernacle was an intricate picture of God's purposes with His people. It was to be the place where God's presence dwelt. It was a picture of the Lord Jesus as Emmanuel, God with us, and among many other things, it was a picture of the relationship between God and His people. From the very beginning of God's interaction with Moses, it was clear that God had requirements in order for Him to dwell in the midst of His people. Exodus 24:4-8 confirms this with sacrifice and blood. When entering the tabernacle, the first piece of furniture was the brazen altar, a place for the shedding of blood. The principal picture here is the shed blood and the death of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Peter 1: 18-19). Through the shedding of blood, the payment for sin is made and entrance becomes possible into the presence of God. But the brazen altar spoke not only of the death of the lamb for sin, but the death to self. Romans 12:1-2 speaks of a daily dying to self as an act of spiritual worship. The presence of God in the midst of His people requires payment for sin and the death to self.

### Preparation and Consecration

God's presence in the midst of His people also requires consecration and preparation. If we truly want God's manifest presence in our midst, then we will be willing to prepare ourselves and set ourselves apart for Him. Before the presence of God came upon the tabernacle in manifest glory, preparation was needed. God's instructions had to be followed meticulously and the tabernacle prepared (Exodus 39:32, 42). In addition, the people and the tabernacle both needed to be consecrated, set apart, to God (Exodus 19:10, 40:9-11). Working does not "bring" the presence of God, but work is required to prepare for His entrance. Holiness, unity, repentance, humility and desperate prayer are all part of the price that is required for us to experience God's manifest presence. These principles have been seen in revivals of the past and are true in the transforming revivals that are happening today around the world.

## **Example in Brazil**

PTM Executive Director, Steve Loopstra, witnessed this truth in a recent trip to Brazil. At several locations, God's presence was overwhelmingly real and manifest. In each case there was sacrifice and preparation that made possible this "divine glory." In each case, there were those who sacrificially spent time in desperate, agonizing prayer seeking God. This was not token time given as it happened to be convenient. Rather it was time that was sacrificed at great personal expense. On one Prayer Mountain, people were interceding for their city twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. One pastor actually stayed on the mountain for 80 consecutive days and nights depending solely on the Lord for all His provisions. Humility was evident in the lives of these believers. No one "owned" or took "credit" for how God was so manifestly present. Obedience was also clearly seen as a powerful part of the preparation and consecration for God's presence. The measure of God's work in our lives is related to our dependency on Him and our immediate, radical obedience to His voice.

## **The Hard Questions**

God is no respecter of persons, culture or location. The principles are the same for us as they are in the more than 500 locations where presence-based transforming revival is happening today. The question is, are we hungry enough? Are we willing to die to our preferences, our plans, and our programs? Are we ready to prepare ourselves and our cities, and consecrate ourselves with no other agenda than to seek the presence of God? Are we willing to wait upon Him for the plans and the resources? Would we be willing to sacrifice a family vacation or a church program to fast and pray for His presence? Even if we are willing to do what is necessary to usher in the presence of God, are we willing to do it until He comes, regardless of how long it takes? These are hard questions, but as we live our lives, we demonstrate how desperate we really are.