



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

ENERGIZED BY HIS PRESENCE

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 28:18-20 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Genesis 1:26 | Exodus 3:1-21
1 Samuel 17:45-47 | Joshua 1:5-9; 5:13-6:5 | Judges 6:11-13; 7:1-25 | 2 Kings 6:11-17 | Proverbs 15:29
Isaiah 6:1-8 | Jeremiah 1:9-10, 19 | Matthew 14:26-29; 26:50-51; 26:69-75 | Romans 8:9, 29 | Acts 9:3-5

► SUMMARY

When was the last time you sensed God's presence?

You may have experienced it at church, while witnessing to a friend, or when praying for a loved one. Or perhaps you were going through a difficult situation and had to rely solely on His strength. In moments like these, the Lord reveals His power in a unique way.

Why is an awareness of God's presence so important? For one thing, the church would not exist today without it. When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He told the disciples to go into all the world to preach the gospel. He finished with a very important promise: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Only by learning to rely on Him could that handful of believers fulfill the command to take the good news to the entire world. The awareness of God's presence energizes us for our work. With the Lord's guidance and power, we too can overcome adversity and advance the kingdom of God.

► SERMON POINTS

How can we describe the presence of God? The Bible teaches that the Creator is omnipresent, which means He's everywhere. But He is not present in all places in the same way. For instance, He is in the mountains because He created them. He's not the mountains or any other created thing. Nature reveals the Lord's power, wisdom, and creativity, but it has no power to govern the universe. God is always present in the life of a believer, and at

certain times, He will manifest Himself in a special way. All of a sudden, we are aware that He is with us. In Scripture, God's presence is usually connected with His desire to bless those who honor Him. Proverbs 15:29 says, "The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."

Can you and I adequately define the presence of the Lord? No. But let's describe it as God revealing Himself by His Spirit to our spirit for the purpose of encouraging, enabling, energizing, informing, or warning us.

What role does the Holy Spirit play?

When you received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and confessed Him as your Lord, the Holy Spirit came into your life (Rom. 8:9). He indwells you and me to empower us, teach us, and explain the Scriptures to us. It is the Spirit who enables us to become more like Christ in our attitudes and actions (Rom. 8:29). Without the Holy Spirit, we couldn't fellowship with the Father or experience His power working through us.

How did the Lord operate in the past?

- **The Father revealed His presence to Moses through the burning bush.** If Moses had heard only a voice, he probably would not have traveled to Egypt to demand that Pharaoh set the Israelites free (Ex. 3:1-21).
- **Joshua saw the Lord in the form of a warrior.** Joshua had the responsibility of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. God revealed to him how to win the

battle with supernatural strategy rather than by military tactics (Josh. 5:13-6:5).

■ **God appeared to Gideon to encourage him.**

Otherwise, the leader would not have had confidence to organize an attack against the Midianites, who were enemies of Israel (Judg. 6:11-13). God instructed Gideon to reduce his army to 300 men—and then gave them a miraculous victory (Judg. 7:1-25).

■ **Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne in heaven.**

Because he was aware of God's presence, the prophet was willing to take on a very difficult task—warning rebellious Israel of the coming judgment (Isa. 6:1-8).

■ **God met with Jeremiah.** The Lord promised that persecution would not defeat him (Jer. 1:9, 19). God's presence empowered Jeremiah to proclaim Judah's disobedience and call the nation to repentance.

■ **Peter was strengthened by the presence of Jesus.**

While with the Lord, the disciple walked on water and defended Him against Roman soldiers. But away from the Savior, Peter denied knowing Him (Matt. 26:69-75).

■ **Paul saw Jesus on his way to Damascus.** If the apostle hadn't known the presence of God, he would not have continued to preach the gospel in the face of beatings, imprisonment, and persecution (Acts 9:3-5).

How does the presence of God energize us?

■ **It motivates us to live godly lives.** In the presence of our holy Father—the awesome Creator of the universe—we are motivated to make righteous choices.

■ **His presence empowers us to overcome any challenge.** Humanly speaking, David didn't have a chance against Goliath, an experienced warrior (1 Sam. 17:45-47). But the shepherd boy was aware

of God's presence in his life—and he knew Jehovah would defend His name and give the victory to Israel.

■ **It reminds us of how He worked in the past.** The Lord told Joshua: "Be strong and of good courage; fear not . . . for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9). As we recall biblical examples of His faithfulness, we can have supernatural peace and confidence in every situation and circumstance.

■ **God's presence gives us His perspective.** When King Aram's army surrounded Elisha's home, the prophet's servant grew fearful. Then God revealed that angelic warriors surrounded them (2 Kings 6:11-17). The Lord's presence helps us see life from His viewpoint. You and I can trust God to fight—and win—our spiritual battles for us.

The world is significantly different than it was in biblical times. But our God never changes. He is still willing to speak to His people and empower us to obey Him. My friend, the Lord wants to satisfy you with His presence and use you in exciting ways. Don't miss one of life's greatest blessings—learning to live in the knowledge that He is always with you.

► RESPONSE

■ Have you ever sensed God working through you?

■ Do you want to experience the Lord's intimate, powerful presence? If so, I challenge you to pray: "Father, I want to know You in a new way. Show me any areas of my life that are not pleasing to You. I want to submit to Your perfect control of my life. Reveal Yourself to me in any way You choose."

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