

Do You Really Desire God?

II Chronicles 15: 1-15

The text today deals with the reign of Asa, king of Judah. The nation of Israel was divided into two separate kingdoms following the reign of Solomon, Israel the Northern kingdom and Judah to the south. Asa became king twenty years after the division. He was a king who, for the most part, sought the ways of God, [14:2 – And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God:](#)

He led Judah in two reforms taking away the altars of false worship and leading the people to follow the Lord. The prophet Azariah brought word from the Lord and motivated Asa to seek the Lord and renew the covenant with Him.

These verses deal with the lives of God's people thousands of years ago, but they are rich in application for our lives. In them Azariah reveals the need to obtain and possess the presence of God. The same principles that applied to the nation of Judah remain relevant and essential in our lives today. As we look at this text today I want to ask you this question: [Do you really desire God?](#) If so, we must do as Azariah revealed to Asa. Let's take a few moments to consider the presence of the Lord.

I. The Standard of God's Presence (1-4) – I want to begin by examining the foundation or the fundamentals of God's presence. God has not changed and the same fundamentals remain today. These verses reveal that:

A. His Presence is Attainable (2) – [Azariah tells Asa that the Lord is with those who are with Him and is found of those who seek Him.](#) Few may have enjoyed the presence of God, but it wasn't the Lord who was lacking. His presence was available to all who desired Him.

- It is possible to enjoy and possess a closeness to God in the day in which we live. He is near to those who desire Him and is found of those who seek Him. He is not a God who is far off and distant, but One who is near to all who desire to have fellowship with Him. [Acts 17:27 – That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: Jam.4:8 – Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.](#) You can have as much of God as you desire in your life!

B. His Presence is Conditional (2-3) – Azariah also reveals that those who forsake God will be forsaken of Him. Israel had been a long season without the presence of God simply because they no longer sought Him or desired His ways.

- Those who desire the Lord's presence can have it, but we must meet the Lord's conditions. If we are to enjoy His presence we must live a life that honors Him, one free of sin and reproach. If you are determined to live as you please and go your own way, you can certainly do that, just don't expect God to go with you.
- I am aware that the saved are indwelt by the Spirit of God, but we can get to the place in our lives where we no longer feel the presence of God. It is a lonely place when we get away from God and no longer have the blessing of His presence in our lives.

C. His Presence is Reliable (4) – When the people realized their need and sought the Lord, he was always faithful to be found of them. Judah could rest assured that the Lord would be near to those who were near to Him.

- I rejoice that [my Lord is an ever present help in my time of need](#). I have never had a need that He couldn't supply. I have never faced a trial where I sought His help and guidance that He was not there for me.
- God wants to have an active part in each of our lives. He takes no pleasure in our pain and misery. God wants to walk with us and guide our steps. We need not fear that God will keep His presence from those who seek Him.
- How many times have you found Him in the midst of your storm? Has there ever been a situation where God abandoned you? If we will turn to Him, He will be there for us!

I. The Standard of God's Presence (1-4)

II. The Setting of God's Presence (10-14) – Azariah wanted Judah to know that God could be found of those who sought Him, but he also wanted them to know what was expected to obtain His presence. Let me say that we serve a holy God. We serve the Lord God Almighty. He is the Creator of all things; He is the Redeemer of our souls. If we are to come before the Lord and enjoy His presence, we must come in the proper manner. Azariah reveals the setting for God's presence. It involves:

A. An Attitude of Seeking (10) – The people of Judah gathered themselves in Jerusalem to seek the Lord. They had experienced a sense of renewal and the people desired the presence of God. I know this is a deep theological truth, but those who desire the presence of God must seek Him. If you want the Lord's presence in your life, you must come before Him and seek Him!

- This wasn't just a casual gathering. They hadn't come with the attitude of: Lord we're all here; You can pour out your blessings now. They had come with a heart of reverence, seeking the Lord. Having the presence of God in our lives requires dedication and effort. You won't have it by simply showing up for the 11:00 worship service. It won't be found by a 30 second prayer at bedtime, or reading a short Psalm each day to feed your soul.

- If you want God's presence in your life, you must diligently seek Him with your whole heart, with all that is within you. You must determine that you want God's presence in your life more than anything else. Many don't have God's presence because they don't seek it! Do you want His presence? [Is.55:6 – Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:](#)

B. An Attitude of Sacrifice (11) – The people of Judah spared no expense; they brought an abundant sacrifice unto the Lord. The gift of salvation is free to all who will receive it, but having the presence of God will cost you something. I am in no way implying that we can buy the presence of God or His blessing with money, but there must be a sacrifice. We must be willing to give of ourselves to have more of His presence in our lives.

- This goes hand in hand with seeking God. How can we expect God to move in our midst and bless us with His presence if we are not mindful of Him? How much have you given to the Lord this week? Have you made time for Him? Have you spent time in prayer; have you read and studied His Word? Are you willing to be used of God and fulfill the work that He has called you to do? Are you willing to attend and support the church that you are a member of? Are you willing to sacrifice those things you want and desire so that you might glorify Him and be a blessing to others? If we are to experience the presence and power of God, there must be an attitude of sacrifice. God must be the priority in our lives. We must be committed to Him above all else!

C. An Attitude of Submission (12, 15) – The attitude that Judah revealed was one of obligation and submission to the Lord. They had been reminded of the covenant that God had made with them and they desired to submit to the will of God. They submitted with their whole heart to God's demands for their lives. These are strong words, they had **sworn** themselves to keep His covenant; they made a solemn promise to God!

- Do you want the presence of God in your life? This isn't something that we can commit to on Sunday and have a different attitude on Monday. If we are to have the presence of God, we must submit to the Lord and live for Him each day. Have you lived for Him this past week? Are you willing to make that solemn vow today?

D. An Attitude of Sincerity (14) – This was not a somber occasion. They rejoiced that their eyes had been opened. They were glad that the Lord had spoken to them and offered spiritual renewal. They lifted up their voices and praised the Lord.

- We will never enjoy the presence of God with a casual, half-hearted attitude. Our service to Him cannot be viewed as a burden or difficulty. We must come before Him with a sincere heart, offering praise and thanksgiving for His wonderful blessings. God will meet with those who sincerely desire Him, but He will not attend to those who have no real desire.

- If you want God's presence, there must be a desire for Him. If you love Him, let Him know! If you are thankful for all that Christ has done for you, worship Him. [God inhabits the praise of His people](#). If you desire His presence, praise Him and I assure you that He will show up and meet with you!

I. The Standard of God's Presence (1-4)

II. The Setting of God's Presence (10-14)

III. The Security of God's Presence – You might ask why we need the presence of God. Will it really make that much of a difference? These verses reveal what happens when God's presence is absent in our lives and in that we find what His presence can do for us. It is a miserable existence to live without the presence of the Lord. God's hand on our lives can keep us from some difficult situations. Notice:

A. His Presence Prevents Corruption (5) – When God's people live without His presence there are always consequences. Without Him there is no peace and great vexations, or great turmoil, confusion, and trouble. Without God's presence to lead us, we soon go astray. If we are not living in light of God's holiness we are prone to wander in sin. There is no joy for the child of God living apart from His divine presence.

- The most miserable people I've ever met are those who are outside the will of God. We need His presence to keep us near to Him and on the right path!

- If you want to lose your joy and bring heartache to your life and those around you, simply get out of the will of God apart from His presence. We need His presence to guide our lives and prevent corruption.

B. His Presence Prevents Devastation (6) – This was a time of renewal and reform for Judah, but it would not last. Azariah warned that those who walked apart from God were destined for devastation. Do you enjoy the life that you have? Are you happy and thankful for your family and the blessings you enjoy? God has given all of that to you.

- Many homes have been destroyed and relationships ruined because people no longer desired the presence of God in their lives. I am convinced that the divorce rate would see a dramatic reduction if people desired the presence of God in their lives. Churches would not be torn apart and divided if their members sought the presence of God. If you desire to protect your home and this church and prevent their devastation, seek the presence of God.

C. His Presence Prevents Separation (13) – Judah had made a strong commitment. They would not tolerate any who would not seek the Lord. Man or woman, small or great would be put to death for turning away from God and serving idols. God had given His commandments and the people were expected to live by them.

- As I pondered this verse, I was reminded of the drawing of the Holy Ghost and the presence of God. I rejoice for the day that God's presence dealt with my heart and I saw my need of salvation. For those who deny His merciful presence and the pleading of the Spirit to come and be saved, eternal death will be the judgment.

- Thank God that I belong to Him and can feel His presence, but for those who deny His tender plea, eternal separation will be their lot. Jesus is the only way to be forgiven of sin and reconciled to God. If you have never trusted Christ as your personal Savior and the presence of God is dealing with your heart, don't turn Him away. God has revealed Himself to you so that you might be saved!

I am thankful for the presence of God in my life. I desire to have more of it than I ever have. What about you? Do you enjoy that sweet fellowship with the Lord or is there something standing in the way of you receiving the abundant presence of God. Maybe you have never felt that presence until now. If so God is pleading with you. Why not come to Him today?