

January 26, 2020

God With Us

Does it _____ whether God is with us? Today, we're exploring the _____ of having God with us. The Bible is like a _____ that allows a person to see himself as God sees him. If you wish to look into your _____, read and meditate on the Scriptures. They will sometimes _____ you, and they will sometimes show your _____ and weaknesses. They will surely tell you what God sees, thinks, feels, and says. We're wise to pay close _____ to what God says, if we wish to have His blessing.

An angel of the Lord told Joseph, when he considered Mary's condition, "'She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will _____ His people from their sins.' Now all this took place to _____ what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his _____ IMMANUEL,' which translated means, 'with us'" (Matthew 1:21-23). We can certainly see God with us in the life of Jesus who _____ what God is like.

Jesus promised, "I am with you _____, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Paul often closed his epistles with a phrase similar to "the Lord be with you." He told the Romans, "Now the God of _____ be with you all" (Romans 15:33). Later he said, "The _____ of our Lord Jesus be with you" (Romans 16:20). He told the Corinthians, "the God of _____ and peace be with you" (2 Corinthians 13:11). Such greetings speak of God's favor and blessing for those who love and obey Him. Do you love and obey Him? Is God's favor with you?

Our reading today is probably the best known Psalm of David. It shows his close relationship with God. Psalm 23. A beautiful and wonderful psalm.

Jesus came into this _____ as Immanuel, "God with us." It matters whether God is with us. Having a relationship with God is the _____ important relationship of all. When God is with us, we have His _____ and blessing. If God is absent in our lives, we're spiritually _____ and without hope. For this reason, I want God in my heart and in my life. I want to cling to Him and like Jesus I always want to do the things that are _____ to Him (John 8:29). So, what happens when God is with us? What difference does it make? We might consider the _____ of Noah. In the days of Noah, the Lord "saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only _____ continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His _____." God determined to blot out man, "but Noah found favor in the _____ of the Lord" (Genesis 6:6,8). Noah and his family, eight persons, were _____; but the rest of the people on earth perished in the flood.

Even though Joseph's older brothers _____ him and sold him into slavery, God took care of him. Genesis 39:2-3 says, "The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to _____ in his hand." Stephen

said about Joseph, “God was with him, and _____ him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt” (Acts 7:9-10).

In later years, God was with the _____ after Israel had taken the land of Canaan. Judges 2:18 says, “When the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to _____ by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them.”

David was a man after God’s own _____. Though he suffered through many _____, “David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him” (1 Samuel 18:14). Second Samuel 5:10 says, “David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him.” When God is with us, He blesses us and _____ us through our struggles and challenges.

King Hezekiah “did right in the _____ of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done.” Hezekiah “clung to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments.” As a result, “And the LORD was with him; wherever he went he prospered. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city” (2 Kings 18:7-8). God blessed Hezekiah because he clung to the Lord and kept His commandments.

The Lord God said to Israel, “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). When we cling to God, He clings to us. James 4:7-8 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

When God is with us that doesn’t mean that we’ll never suffer or be tempted. We all face trials, heartaches, and difficulties. Anyone who has read the stories of Joseph, David, or Hezekiah knows that their lives were not always easy. What God being “with us” does mean is that we are never alone in our temptations, our struggles, and our suffering. We look to God for our strength, our comfort, and our hope.

What happens when people _____ God and no longer have His blessing? I can think of a few illustrations. Do you remember Samson and Delilah? Samson’s _____ came from God. As long as he _____ God’s ways, God was with him. Delilah wanted to know the _____ of Samson’s strength. Read the story in Judges 16:16-20. When his hair came off, Samson’s _____ with the Lord ceased. He could no longer _____ the Philistines. Thankfully, Samson’s hair grew back, and when Samson _____, God restored his strength.

Scripture gives us more than one picture of God’s view of Solomon. When Solomon became king, 2 Chronicles 1:1 says, “Now Solomon the son of David established himself securely over his _____, and the LORD his God was with him and exalted him greatly.”

But, Solomon’s many wives led him _____. First Kings 11:6-9 says, “Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD _____, as David his father had done. Then Solomon _____ a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.

Thus also he did for all his foreign _____, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. Now the LORD was _____ with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.” He no longer _____ God, because he loved his foreign wives.

The people of Judah, who were God’s people, in later years _____ from God and followed Baal and other Canaanite gods. They believed they could practice idolatry and immorality and still be _____ with God. Jeremiah 2:12-13 says, “‘Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate,’ declares the LORD. For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water.” They left the God who _____ them for worthless gods who were only man-made pieces of stone and wood. “‘Shall I not punish these people?’ declares the LORD, ‘On a nation such as this Shall I not avenge Myself? An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their own authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?’” (Jeremiah 5:29-31).

We too must ask the question, if we have forsaken the Lord what will we do at the end of it when God _____ us responsible. They chose sin over righteousness and they hardened their _____ against God. We must be careful to keep our hearts _____ to God. Jeremiah 6:15 says of Jerusalem, “‘Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all; They did not even know how to _____. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time that I _____ them, They shall be cast down,’ says the LORD.” I see, even in our own _____, some who are never ashamed of immorality and don’t know how to blush over their sins. This, my friend, is great weakness of heart and mind.

Hebrews 3:12-13 warns, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that _____ away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of _____.” The idea that Christians who turn from God cannot lose their souls is a _____. God urges us to stay _____ to Him and to continue worshiping with the church. Hebrews 10:25 says, “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

Some have decided to forsake assembling with the _____ altogether, to forsake the Lord. Hebrews 10:26-31 says, “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a _____ for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without _____ on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will _____ who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the _____ of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will _____.’ And again, ‘The LORD will _____ his people. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’”

God has a track record of _____ those who forsake him and lose all respect for what is good and right. We must not, as Jerusalem did in the days of Jeremiah, listen to the wrong people and take the _____ of God for granted. The Jews hardened their hearts and refused to _____, so, God punished them. God will punish us too if we _____ our hearts and refuse to repent. God is the God of grace, but He is also a _____ and just God who punishes sin.

My friend, will you _____ the blessing of God so that you can live a worldly life without God? Would you gain the world but lose your _____? Will you stray from the _____? James 5:19-20 says, “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will _____ his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” Won’t you return to God if you’re away from Him?

Most people know John 3:16, but do you know John 3:18? It says, “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been _____ already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” You can’t expect God to be with you and bless you, if you do not believe and _____ the Lord. According to Ephesians 2:12, people outside of Christ are “separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no _____ and without _____ in the world.” It matters whether you are with God and whether God is with you.

The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will _____ My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you _____ is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me” (John 14:23-24). Those whom God loves and with whom He makes His home, His abode, are those who love Him and keep His commandments. Do you?

If you have the Lord with you in this life, you can _____ with the Lord in the life to come. Paul said, “Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by _____, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). If you wish to be at home with the Lord in _____, then let the Lord make his home with you in this life.

To begin a relationship with the Lord, you must first place your faith and trust in Him. Believing in Jesus Christ is more than acknowledging His existence; it means you believe Him and in Him. You believe His words and His promises. You want to serve Him. You turn away from sinful things and you begin living for the Lord—that’s repentance! With your love, your faith, and penitent heart, then you can confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, just like the Bible teaches in Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16 and Romans 6:3-7.