

Glimpsing God's Radiance
By Rick Ezell

"I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them" (John 17:26 NIV).

It is that last phrase in verse 26 I want to underscore: ". . . and I may be in them." Obviously Jesus wasn't referring to some out of body experience where his body takes over our body, like one would see in a movie. He is talking about something deeper and more powerful. As we get to know God, we have the added benefit of the indwelling presence of God's Spirit residing in us.

Do you realize that you can experience God's grace without experiencing God's presence? You can have an understanding that Jesus died for your sins, and not ever have an intimate relationship with him? You can know facts and figures, dates and times, and still not really know the One who loved you first. What a shame to be saved and not really enter into the joy of knowing Christ. Sadly, people do it all the time. Our churches are full of people who know who God is but don't really know him and have never experienced his presence.

A. W. Tozer said: "The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God, and the church is famishing for want of his presence. The instant cure of most of our religious ills would be to enter the Presence in spiritual experience, to become suddenly aware that we are in God and that God is in us. This would lift us out of our pitiful narrowness and cause our hearts to be enlarged. This would burn away the impurities from our lives as the bugs and fungi were burned away by the fire that dwelt in the bush."

The indwelling presence is the perpetual assurance of God's attendance and company in our lives. It is the promise that he makes to us as he prays for us in John 17.

Like a parent, he wraps his enveloping arms around us, especially if the night is the darkest and we are the most sacred. He not only goes before us; he goes with us.

When the ambulance comes, he is with us.

When we are wheeled into the ICU, he is with us.

When we are left to face the empty house, he is with us.

When the boss hands us the pink slip, he is with us.

When the check won't last the month, he is with us.

When we pray we don't have to convince God to show up, he is already present. We just need to recognize his indwelling presence and then wait for his revealed presence.

Someone once described prayer as like a little girl playing at the feet of her grandma. She doesn't have to say anything or do anything to please her grandma (who is quite content just watching her play). And the most beautiful moment is when the child starts to grow tired. She just crawls into grandma's lap to be rocked, to hear a lullaby, to feel a kiss on the forehead and the warm embrace of love.

Isn't that what we truly desire in prayer—to be the presence of the One who loves us unconditionally?

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