

GOD!
Message 9
Psalm 139:1-12

INTRO: I want to insert something this morning before I begin the message. I do not want to defile this message but I believe the Lord has asked me to give you this information. Last week, before the message I warned you about the book 'The Shack'. I felt bad later about how briefly I dealt with it asking you to not make me read it. This morning I put into your bulletin a bit of a review from the Berean Call Newsletter. By the way, I want to recommend this newsletter to you. If you go to www.thebereancall.org you can get it on line or order it.

Now I want to read a paragraph out of this book. In the book, God is a big black woman, and the Holy Spirit is a little Asian woman, and Jesus is a clumsy human, according to this paragraph. Now I am giving this moment to this in this message for the benefit of those who will be listening to these messages on CD or internet. Let me say this, I seriously question the Christianity of anyone who reads this book and then hands it out to others, and so called Christians are doing it by the droves! Here is the quote:
"Mack was shocked at the scene in front of him. It appeared that Jesus had dropped a large bowl of some sort of batter or sauce on the floor, and it was everywhere. It must have landed close to Papa because the front portion of her skirt and feet were covered in the gooey mess. All three were laughing so hard that Mack didn't think they were breathing. Sarayu said something about humans being clumsy and all three started roaring again. Finally Jesus brushed past Mack and returned a minute later with a large basin of water and a towel. Sarayu had already started wiping the goop from the floor and cupboards, but Jesus went straight to Papa and, kneeling at her feet began to wipe off the front of her clothes. He worked down to her feet and gently lifted one foot at a time, which he directed into the basin where he cleaned and massaged it. 'Oooh that feels sooo good', exclaimed Papa as she continued her task at the counter."

I read that for you so you can get in a moment enough information so you won't need to read anymore. And if you have read this book, go before God and ask His forgiveness for the thoughts you have allowed to be put into your head. This is horrendous blasphemy and Christians are buying it

up in a frenzy and recommending it to non-Christians in hopes of interesting them in Christianity! God help us! (Prayer for God to take those thoughts away from us.)

Well, to our subject now, which is the attribute of God's omnipresence. There are three well known omni words in the English language that describe God. The dictionary I use lists 57 English words starting with omni. Omni is of Latin origin and means 'all'. These three great theological terms; omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent describe the 'allness' of God. This morning we will be considering that God is 'omnipresent'. It simply means He is 'all present'.

Earlier we had Psalm 139:1-12 read for us. It is perhaps the greatest omnipresent passage in the Bible. And the Psalmist said, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I go from Your PRESENCE? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold You are there." You see, if there were any borders for God, He would not be omnipresent. We understand that if we went to heaven God would be there. But do we understand if we go to hell, He is there too? You say, "You mean God is burning in hell?" Of course not, He is the One who is the cause of the burning! LEM has said he believes what will make hell, hell, is that it will be the unmitigated presence of God!

5. Omnipresent

So, to our subject of God's omnipresence. This subject has to do with the question of where God is. Let us explore that for a moment in light of God's attribute of omnipresence. The universe, for what we know of it, is immensely large. Let me give you a little example. Some stars we see, I am told, are actually galaxies. Now a galaxy is a cluster of stars. It may contain zillions of stars. Some of those lights we see in the heavens are not really stars, they are galaxies. For example, if you were in one of those galaxies and you looked back at earth, you would see a star, but you could never see the earth. What you would see is a galaxy man has named the milky way. Now, if that galaxy were far enough away, this milky way would look like one star. Yet it is made up of millions of stars and it is 100,000 light years across.

A light year is the distance light travels in a year. Light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. So you multiply 186,000 miles times 60 and that is a light minute. That would be 11 million, 160 thousand miles. To see how far light travels in 1 hour, you multiply 11 million, 160 thousand times 60. That is 669 million and 600 thousand miles. To find how far light travels in a day, you multiply that times 24. In one day, light would travel 16 billion, 70 million, and 400 thousand miles.

Now to find how far light travels in one month you multiply that by that by roughly 31. That is 498 billion, 182 million and 400 thousand miles. From there we can find how far it travels in one year by multiplying that by 12, which is, according to my calculations, 59 trillion, 781 billion, 888 million miles. Now I didn't figure the leap year into that so that is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a day each year. Now the milky way in which earth is, is 100,000 light years across. So you multiply 59 trillion, 781 billion, 888 million miles times 100,000!

I only went part way through grade 8, so you will want to check my calculations. Also, I did not get very far in school, so I have not heard whether there is a number past a trillion so I made one. That will be kazillion. So the milky way is 597 kazillion, 818, trillion, 880 billion miles in diameter. And the milky way is one tiny speck of the known universe. Man has not yet seen the edge of the universe. And in every one of those kazillions upon kazillions of miles, at every galaxy at every star in every galaxy, there is God! He is 'all present'!

Now they tell me our bodies contain about 30 trillion cells. God is right there at every cell. Multiply that times all the people in the world, all the animals in the world, all the insects in the world and everything else you can think of with cells, and God is there. And do you know how complex every cell is? Not too many years ago scientists discovered the cell and they called it the simple cell. Do you know that every single

cell is as complicated as the city of Tokyo? And it may be that we do not yet know how complex it is.

If you may think I am exaggerating, Listen to Matthew 10:28-31 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

Now I wonder if this is the God you know? Some time ago I heard of a young person who said, "Excommunication is not right. My Jesus would not excommunicate anybody." If this young person really meant that, then this young person who claimed to be a Christian is not a Christian. This young person believes in another Jesus, not the real Jesus of the Bible because the Jesus of the Bible calls for excommunication in certain cases. Is the God you serve, the omnipresent God?

Now I want us to briefly look at the omnipresence of God as an encouragement to prayer. When we pray, we do not have to wait for the sound waves to reach past the last stars and enter the throne room of God. When we pray, instantaneously God hears us because He is right there. I still remember the first time I flew in a jet airplane. I remember looking down and seeing all those houses and wondering how God could keep track of all that. I can say from that year, 1972, when my mind staggered and almost stumbled at that thought, I have grown a lot spiritually. Just thinking back helps me realize that. Understanding the God of the Bible helps to alleviate a lot of unbelief.

I was praying for North K. the other day and for those who are in prison there right now. I had just finished studying on this subject and thought, wow, the Lord is right there present with each one of those prisoners. I do not know

any of those prisoners, but God knows them all and He is right there. I can ask Him to do things for them, and as I speak, He is there and can accomplish what I ask right then.

Let me deal with another matter as regards the omnipresence of God. In Matthew 18:19-20 Jesus said, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." So Jesus has said that under the condition that even as few as two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst of them. So, here is the question: If He is everywhere present, how can He say He will be there only if they are gathered in His name?

Let me ask yet another question: Many times when we pray we say, "Lord, I come before You..." Or, "Lord, I come into Your presence..." How can we come into His presence if He is everywhere present? Are we even right to pray like that? Well, I think it is OK to pray like that. So let me explain.

Leo Garrett in volume I of his systematic theology writes about that and calls God's presence as the extensive or general presence of God. For example, we heard earlier from Psalm 139 that if we make our bed in hell, God is there. God is omnipresent and so He is present in hell as well. Garrett would call that his extensive or general presence.

But he speaks of God's intensive or special presence. Let me try to illustrate. We may be close to someone in proximity, that is extensively. But at the same time we may be far from them intensively, or in a special way. We say of certain people that they are close to another person. That is intensive presence. This holds true between God and man as well. James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." That speaks of His intensive presence.

When the Lord says that where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is with them, that is His special presence. You see, He is there with His pleasure. He is there with His power. He might well be with another group of godless people, but He is there in His anger, or His justice.

Sometimes, because of the special presence of God, sinners are convicted and they fall down and repent. I have read of such things. Listen to Isaiah 64:1-5, "Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence-- As fire burns brushwood, As fire causes water to boil--To make Your name known to Your adversaries, *That* the nations may tremble at Your presence! When You did awesome things *for which* we did not look, You came down, The mountains shook at Your presence. For since the beginning of the world *Men* have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him. You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, *Who* remembers You in Your ways. You are indeed angry, for we have sinned--In these ways we continue; And we need to be saved."

Now you see, it is not that Isaiah did not realize that God is everywhere present. It is that he realized how far man was from the intensive presence of God. I want to tell you that if God would visit this service this morning with His special presence, we might well all fall down before Him. When we say things like, "If God is far away, who moved" it is God's intensive presence we are talking about, not His omnipresence.

Now you understand that though we may be far from God's special presence, He still knows all about our present condition. James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded." You see we are talking about the special presence of God.

Tozer writes of a Rabbi he heard speaking on a radio program. He had been put in jail and the jailor took interest in this rabbi. And the jailor said, "Rabbi, I've got a theological question I'd like to ask you, out of your own Bible. Do you believe God knows everything?" And the Rabbi said, "Oh certainly." "Well, how is it then that God said, 'Adam where art thou?' If God knew where he was, why did He ask him?" "Well, son," the rabbi said, "that's not hard. God said, 'Adam, where art thou?' not because He didn't know where Adam was, but because Adam didn't know where he was. The question was asked of Adam. Adam was lost, not God."

In the previous message I said I would speak again about this verse: "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the **living God**. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among *them*. I will be their God, And they shall be My people (2 Cor. 6:16).'" It is incredible that God makes His home in us! This is His special presence in at least some sense. But it is amazing that we can be Christians, God dwells in us, and yet we can be far from Him. In our community, we are desperately in need of a special visitation from God!

It may be this morning, that we are here as Christians and God dwells in us and we are far from God. There may be here present attitudes and questionings and reasoning's among us that are far from God. It is not that God has moved. We have. Oh that God would rend the heavens and come down this morning with His special presence! You see, both the Isaiah passage if we had read on, and the James passage indicate to us what makes us near or far from God, though He is omnipresent. It is sin.

When God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and lead them to the land God would show them, Moses was afraid. Let us read Exodus 33:12-15 (read). The word translated 'presence' is literally 'face'. In that word face is the idea of the special presence of God.

When God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach, Scripture says this, "But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD." Again, the word presence is 'face', the special presence of the Lord. And when Jonah had fled, he was far from God as chapter 2 indicates. And when he was far from God, he cried out to God, and there his heart was revived, and he said, "I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

Maybe somehow we think we can get away with things. We, humans, like our privacy. Some time ago I saw a video which if I remember right was called, "No Place to Hide". It had to do with modern technology and how man can keep track of man. And it seems today, there is no place to hide. Man keeps track of man in an almost fearful way. But with God, it has always been like that. There is no place to hide from Him. But though we cannot hide from God, yet in experience we may be far from Him.

Consider Isaiah 66:1-2 in light of what we have seen. Here is what it says, "'Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool..." Now when you or I sit anywhere, we are present both where our head and where our feet are. So if God sits on the heavens and the earth is His footstool, He is present everywhere. So this is an expression of omnipresence.

Then it says, "Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist," says the Lord." When Solomon had built the temple he said this in his prayer of dedication, "Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this temple which I have built!" I wonder, have you seen the ancient acropolis in Athens? Have you seen the Taj Mahal? When I saw the acropolis in Athens, I marveled.

You would too. What incredible rock work! But man has never built anything that impressed God, not even a computer! Why? Because He made all the stuff we make these things from!

But the Almighty God, the Living God; the omnipresent God is impressed with a certain kind of person, even though He made that person too! I want you to see it in our passage, "But on this one will I look..." Though God has no respect for what man can build and He cannot be boxed in, there is a place He finds rest, a place He dwells, a place He calls home. The passage says, "But on this one I will look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."

In the context, Israel was in bad shape. Verse three says that anyone who killed a bull, to sacrifice to God, was in the sight of God like a person who had killed a man, a murderer. Why? They were doing their religious thing in the house of God, but their hearts were far from God. Anyone who offered a lamb, was as bad as if he broke a dog's neck to sacrifice this to God. Anyone who offered a grain offering was as bad as one who offered swine's blood. Now you cannot get a worse picture. That's what it is like when we come to church and put on a nice face but during the week we live in unrighteousness. Maybe during the week I'm into various kinds of ungodliness and on Sunday I put on a nice face and act as a nice Christian. Verse 3, the last part says it like this: During the week they do all kinds of unrighteousness, they have chosen their own ways and their soul delights in their abominations. On Sunday they sit piously in church.

And God says, "They are as murderers; they are as if they put a porn magazine in the offering box, as if they vomited into the offering box. But, but, those who have come with a broken spirit and a contrite heart; those who tremble at my Word, that is where I will dwell. I will find my rest in that person!"

So the NT says, "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the **living God**. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among *them*. I will be their God, And they shall be My people'" (2 Cor. 6:16). You see, like water always runs into the low places, so God fills the lowly. So let me make several quotes from Andrew Murray, "Let us, at the very commencement of our meditations, admit that there is nothing so natural to man, nothing so insidious and hidden from our sight as pride" (pg. 5). And again, "The truth is this: Unless pride dies in you, nothing in heaven can live in you. Under the banner of the truth, give yourself up to the meek and humble spirit of the holy Jesus" (5). Murray says we can learn numerous things from the disciples about humility. "First, How much there may be of earnest and active religion while humility is still sadly wanting... Second. How impotent all external teaching and all personal effort are to conquer pride or give the meek and lowly heart...Third. It is only by the indwelling of Christ in His divine humility that we become truly humble... Let us consider deeply how far the disciples were advanced while this grace was still so terribly lacking..."

Then later he writes, "The humble man feels no jealousy or envy" (36). That is in a bad sense of course. Then listen to this quote: "Let all teachers of holiness, whether in the pulpit or on the platform, and all seekers after holiness, whether in the closet or the convention, take warning. There is no pride so dangerous, because none so subtle and insidious, as the pride of holiness. It is not that a man ever says or even things, 'Stand by; I am holier than thou.' No, indeed the thought would be regarded with abhorrence. But there grows up, all unconsciously, a hidden habit of soul, which feels complacency its attainments, and cannot help seeing how far it is in advance of others" (45).

Again he writes, "Is it any wonder that the Christian life is so often feeble and fruitless, when the very root of the Christ life (i.e.

humility) is neglected or unknown? Is it any wonder that the joy of salvation is so little felt, when that in which Christ found it and brings it, is so little sought? Until a humility which will rest in nothing less than the end and death of self; which give up all honor of men as Jesus did, to seek the honor that comes from God alone; which absolutely makes and counts itself nothing, that God may be all that the Lord alone may be exalted, until such a humility be what we seek in Christ above our chief joy, and welcome at any price, there is little hope of a religion that will conquer the world" (10).

And how is true humility revealed? It is revealed in how we deal with each other. Murray writes, "The humble man looks upon the feeblest and unworthiest child of God, and honors him and prefers him in honor as the son of a king. The spirit of Him who washed the disciples' feet, makes it a joy for us to be indeed the least, to be servants of one another. The humble man feels no jealousy or envy. He can praise God when others are preferred and blessed before him. He can bear to hear others praised and himself forgotten, because in God's presence he has learned to say with Paul, 'I am nothing.' He has received the spirit of Jesus, who pleased not Himself, and sought not His own honor, as the spirit of his life."

Andrew Murray says that every Christian passes through these two stages in his pursuit of humility. In the first, he fears and flees and seeks deliverance from all that can humble him. The great apostle had a thorn in the flesh from which he sought deliverance. So do we from all those things that humble us. Out of this thorn God brought him to say these words, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." The fivefold price is spelled out for us here: infirmities; persecutions; needs; reproaches; distresses. How would you like to pray like this: *Lord, if You deem it necessary to root some pride out of my life, please allow into my life some infirmities or some persecutions or*

some needs or reproaches or distresses into my life. I do not like mediocre Christianity, and I love humility and I am willing to pay any price for this. Please answer my requests as You see fit.

Now you may say, "I do not want these kinds of things in my life. Is there no other way to humility? Is there no easier way?" Let me quote from Murray again, "To every Christian the command comes from the throne of God Himself: humble yourself. The earnest attempt to listen and obey will be rewarded, yes, rewarded with the painful discovery of two things. The one, what depth of pride, that is of unwillingness to count oneself and to be counted nothing, to submit absolutely to God, there was that one never knew. The other, what utter impotence there is in all our efforts and in all our prayers, too, for God's help, to destroy the hideous monster." In other words, all our efforts and prayers are helpless unless we humble ourselves by our actual actions.

So listen to this one last verse, Isaiah 57:15, "For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

CONCL: So let us bring this message on God's omnipresence to a conclusion. The sum total of our topic is simply this: God is everywhere! There is no place He is not. We saw the value that God's omnipresence has in prayer. Week by week I pray for the persecuted believers in India, Eritria, Maldives and North Korea. And when I pray for those jailed in containers with little food and no washroom facilities, I rest in this that as I pray, He is both where I am and where each one of those believers is. Each week I pray for every member of my family. Each week I pray for every member in this church plus others. Each week I pray for our young people. And each time I pray, God is where I am and where each one of those people is. What an encouragement to pray.

But we saw that His presence may be extensive or intensive. It may be general or special. We said that we pray sometimes, "Lord, I come into Your presence..." or, "Lord, I come before You..." We are acknowledging that we have an interest in His special presence and being in that presence. You see, God may dwell in us but we may still be far from Him. So Isaiah told us what kind of person God is close to, and it is one who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at His Word.

I wonder, did Almighty God speak to you this morning in a special way on some specific matter? Did He say, "I can't rest too comfortably in that heart?" Did you sense some distance from God because of some thing? Now I want to ask you to do something this morning. If God came close this morning and spoke to you in a special way about something, I want to give you opportunity to acknowledge that need as we close in prayer. Please do not stand because somebody will think you think there is nothing wrong with you. Do not stand for any human reasons. A good many of you may be right in tune with God and you rejoice to hear a message like this, and things are OK with you. Please do not stand. Pray that God will in these moments deliver anyone who is in need of deliverance from anything that keeps them from a close relationship with God.