

ULC Sermon Study Resource
As We Wait // Waiting God's Presence
Pastor Gabe
December 18, 2022

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What is the thing you are looking forward to the most during the Christmas season?

Readings: Isaiah 7:10-17

Outline:

- I. Resisting the Presence
 - a. Out of his desire to save and to deliver his people, God gives scandalous grace. If you are feeling as though God wouldn't want you after the mistakes you've made, know that God has grace for you. He still wants to be connected with you.
 - b. God's grace is so great that He is not deterred by our false piety. He will make His presence known.
Q: *In what ways in our lives do we fail to recognize our need for God?*
- II. The Presence
 - a. Ultimately, when we talk about the presence of God, this is most fully seen in Jesus Christ. He is Immanuel, God with us. He came to be with us, to make his presence known throughout the world.
 - b. Because of the incarnation, because God became a man, he is present with you. He is not far from you. He bears with you in all things.
 - c. We see this at Christmas. God's presence dwelt among us.
Q: *How does God's human form allow us to feel more present with Him?*
- III. Receiving the Presence
 - a. After his death and resurrection, Jesus ascends into Heaven and sends forth his Spirit that his presence might be with us always.
 - b. When we are baptized, we're united to his presence. When we gather around the communion table and receive the very body and blood of Jesus, He is present. When we pray, He is present.
 - c. Your destiny is to live in the presence of God. You were made for the presence of God. And through his death on the cross for your forgiveness, Jesus has made a way for you to live in that presence now.
Q: *How can we better orient ourselves to be more aware of God's presence?*

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How do each of us, specifically, struggle with issues of false piety? How can we overcome this?
- 2) Why is it more difficult to be a Christian now that it is no longer socially advantageous?
- 3) How does the guilt of sin get in the way of feeling the presence of God?
- 4) Where are places in our lives where we fail to see the presence of God?
- 5) How does the birth of Jesus allow us to be better connected to the presence of God?

Suggestions for further study:

- Deuteronomy 31:8 **Q: *How can we draw comfort knowing that God is with us in all things?***
- Joshua 1:9 **Q: *How can the awareness of God's presence allow us to be rid of our fears and anxieties?***

Closing Prayer:

Father God, we thank you that you are not a God that is far removed from us and that you choose to draw near to us. We see this most clearly in the sending of your son Jesus to be God with us. His death and resurrection has allowed us to enter in your presence for eternity. Teach us to lean into that presence and to seek you out. Amen.