

Pastor's Sharing – Longing for His Presence

Rev. Almon Li (Hills Christian Alliance Church – 3/8/2014)

This year the Church has been focusing on reviving our worship to God. I have studied some books on worship and found a very important point which we may have always overlooked, that is, feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit when we worship.

King David, who was delighted most by God, said in Psalm 63:1, “O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” At that time, David was thirsty in his soul. Therefore, he sought God earnestly in order to see Him, knowing that only God could satisfy his soul.

Today we should have this kind of manner i.e. seeking God earnestly, when we come to His temple to worship Him.

Rev. Wayne Cordeiro, an American pastor, shared his own experience in this aspect. On a certain Sunday, his church had to hold the worship outdoor as the venue they hired was under renovation. They eagerly prayed for a good weather so that their worship could be held smoothly. However there was a rainstorm in that morning. When the congregation was singing hymns, Rev. Wayne queried God inwardly, “Why don't you listen to our prayer?” God said to him, “What you cared most is the weather, not my presence.” Having heard this whispering voice from God, Rev. Wayne suddenly realized that it was useless to have a good weather for worship in which God was not present. Worship with God's presence will renew our life, even if there is a storm with heavy rain.



I fully echo Rev. Wayne's sharing because we have always made a similar kind of mistakes. We care the performance of the worship (for example, whether the hymns are good, whether the music and sound system are matching) more than God's presence. We should bear in mind that the worship accepted by God is the one by people who seek to see God.

You might question, “God is spirit, filling heaven and earth. Why should we seek Him as He must be present in the place where we worship?” Also Matthew 18:20 says, “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” However, when we say that we should long for God's presence, there are three special meanings:

1. Not only should we know rationally that God is with us, we should also experience His presence cognitively. James 4:8 says, “Come near to God and He will come near to you.” It is doubtless that God will come near to us; but we can only experience this when we come near to Him.

2. If we are longing for God, we will naturally be willing to have a Spirit-controlled life with the fruits of the Spirit, namely, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
3. If we say that we are longing for God and would like to live in His presence, we will naturally live a holy life, because God is holy. Not only should we keep away from sins, but also live a life with God's character, i.e. love. In other words, if all of us long for God, we, as a community, will be full of love.

I hope that we do have a soul that longs for God. On each Sunday, we come to His temple earlier to have a quiet time before we seek to see Him. I pray that each of our Sunday services will be accepted by God. Amen.