

DESPERATE FOR GOD TO MOVE

We're kicking off the fall with the launch of a new sermon series we're calling "Desperate for God to Move." Together, we will look throughout the Bible and consider what it looks like to be desperate for God to move when you're afraid, when you're abandoned when you're betrayed, when you need healing, or when you find yourself exhausted. Today, we're going to discuss what it means to be "Desperate for the Presence of God" by centering this first study on our theme verse for the entire series, Isaiah 64:1: "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence."

Key Passage: Isaiah 64:1

Discussion Questions:

1. What does being "desperate for God to move" mean for your life and our church?

Being "desperate for God to move" involves a deep yearning and urgency for God's intervention and presence in your personal life and the church. It reflects a recognition of our dependence on God for guidance, transformation, and the fulfillment of His will. Desperation for God is marked by intense prayer, seeking God earnestly, and prioritizing His presence above all else.

2. How can our church maintain a God-centered focus amid various programs and activities?

The church can maintain a God-centered focus by ensuring that all programs and activities are designed to glorify God and seek His will. This involves teaching, worship, and fellowship, consistently directing attention toward God. Regularly reminding one another of the importance of focusing on God and ensuring the church is aligned with biblical principles helps maintain this focus.

3. In what ways can our personal holiness and passionate worship attract the presence of God?

Personal holiness, which involves living a life set apart for God, free from sin, and dedicated to His purposes, creates an environment conducive to God's presence. Passionate worship, where believers express fervent and sincere adoration for God, also invites His presence. Together, they show a deep desire for God, which attracts the manifest presence of God, where He makes His presence felt in a powerful way.

4. What practical steps can we take to seek God's presence more earnestly?

Practical steps include engaging in regular prayer and Bible study, confessing sins and striving for personal holiness, participating in worship with sincerity and passion, and creating a lifestyle that prioritizes God above all else. Additionally, prioritizing fellowship with other believers who are also pursuing God's presence can help encourage and sustain this pursuit.

5. How do we differentiate between God's omnipresence and manifest presence? Why is God's manifest presence unique?

God's omnipresence means that He is always present everywhere. Still, His manifest presence is when He makes His presence known tangibly and powerfully. The manifest presence is significant because it represents God's active engagement with His people, bringing about transformation, peace, and a deep sense of His reality. It's the manifest presence of God that the church should earnestly seek.

6. What is the importance of focusing on God rather than just fulfilling people's felt needs?

We must prioritize focusing on God because while meeting people's felt needs is essential, true and lasting transformation occurs only through a God-centered approach. The ultimate need of every person is to encounter God, and only He can bring the deep healing and change that people seek. Therefore, the church's ministry should be centered on God, ensuring that everything it does leads people to Him. Let's make sure the answers we give to people are vertical answers; they're God answers that affect everything else horizontal in our lives.

7. How can we ensure that our efforts to reach people are aligned with inviting God's presence?

We can align our outreach efforts with inviting God's presence by ensuring that every event, program, or activity is steeped in prayer, seeking God's guidance and blessing. The church should focus on creating environments where God is honored, and people are encouraged to encounter Him. This includes emphasizing personal holiness, vibrant worship, and a clear presentation of the gospel, all of which invite God's presence into the church's outreach.

8. What lessons can be drawn from Haggai regarding rebuilding temple and focusing on God's work?

The lessons from Haggai include the importance of prioritizing God's work over personal interests and understanding that God's presence and blessing are tied to the dedication of His people to His purposes. The rebuilding of the temple represented a call to refocus on God and His worship, reminding the people that their true prosperity and peace come from being aligned with God's will.

9. How can the church collectively create an environment where God's presence is welcomed and experienced?

The church body can create such an environment by fostering a culture of prayer, holiness, and sincere worship. This involves encouraging one another to live lives that reflect God's character, seeking God's guidance in all decisions, and prioritizing His presence in all gatherings. Additionally, we can emphasize unity, support one another in our spiritual journeys, and create opportunities for people to encounter God through worship, Bible studies, and other spiritual activities.

10. What about this lesson challenged you the most? What was your biggest takeaway?