

The God That Visits

An old African story tries to explain why God withdrew into the heavens. The Old Woman was pounding her fufu. Each time she hit the Old Man in the head with the blunt end of her pounding stick. The Old Man, tired of being beaten, escaped into the skies above; always keeping His distance. Not bad for an old story. However, it does not contain any biblical truth. God occupies heaven, but also fills the earth. He is everywhere. He loves to be close to His people; lives with us; and in us.

Another old woman (this one in God's Word) felt that God had withdrawn from her. But one day she heard a rumor that provided her hope, that God had returned and turned His favor toward His people. "Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread" (Ruth 1:6).

We serve the God that visits.

Jesus visits churches. He desires to do a work for—and among—His people. It was a sad day when the Miracle Worker did not perform any notable miracles in His hometown. The people there were familiar with him as a child growing up, that they missed His divine visit. These distressing words are recorded. "But he passing through the midst of them went his way" (Luke 4:30).

How can we be sure that we do not miss the visitation of Jesus in our church and in lives?

EXPECTING GOD

We come to church *expecting* God to move in our lives. The Psalmist David had an attitude of expectation.

"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" (Psalms 122:1, NIV). This is one of David's songs of ascent (which simply means that the children of God sang it on their way to church).

MAGNIFYING GOD

We come to church *magnifying* God. We—through praise and worship—acknowledge God is bigger than all our problems and situations. We focus on

God. God comes into the forefront. Problems are pushed to the background. God helps us with those things that trouble us and burden us down.

“O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought (inquired of) the Lord and required Him [of necessity and on the authority of His Word], and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. [Psalms 73:25; Matthew 7:7.] They looked to Him and were radiant; their faces shall never blush for shame or be confused. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles” (Psalms 34:3-6, AMP).

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Psalms 100:4).

“But You are holy, O You Who dwell in [the holy place where] the praises... [are offered]” (Psalms 22:3, AMP).

PREPARING FOR GOD

We come to church *preparing* for God to move. We prepare our hearts through pre-prayer; praying for God to open our hardened hearts and make us sensitive to what He wants to do in the church service. We also prepare for God to move by opening our ears to carefully listen to what God is saying to the church through the preacher of His Word. God wants to speak in every service. He can only be heard if we are ready to listen.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit” (Psalms 51:10-12).

“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 2:7; 11; 17; 29; 3:6; 13; 22). It is amazing those words were restated seven times in two chapters. It’s like the Spirit is shouting, “Listen up, everyone!”

The *Amplified Bible* puts it this way: “He who is able to hear, let him listen to and give heed to what the Spirit says to the assemblies (churches)” (Revelation 2:7).

OBEYING GOD

We come to church *obeying* God's Word. A step toward church is a step in the right direction. Once we hear the Word preached we need to be willing to obey the Word, apply it to our lives, and allow it to change or transform us.

"Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you" (Revelation 3:3, NIV).

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

"We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did" (1 John 2:3-6, NIV).

SERVING GOD

We leave church *serving* God. There is a world that needs to see Christianity in action and to hear an effective witness.

"For it will come to pass in that day, says the Lord of hosts, that I will break [the oppressor's] yoke from your neck, and I will burst your bonds; and strangers will no more make slaves of [the people of Israel]. But they will serve the Lord their God and David's [descendant] their King, Whom I will raise up for them. [Jeremiah 23:5.] "(Jeremiah 30:8-9, AMP).

Jesus visits churches. He also visits homes.

"And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a

son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:2-6, 9-10).

It is a comfort to know that we can take Jesus home with us. He desires to do more than visit us. He wants to reside or live inside. This is accomplished through the baptism of the Holy Spirit: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he [will eat] with Me" (Revelation 3:20, *AMP*). One painting portrays Jesus knocking on a door. There is no handle on the outside; only the inside. Jesus will not force Himself in for a visit. We must open the door and welcome Him in.

Do not miss the visitation of Jesus: "The time of your visitation [that is, when God was visiting you, the time in which God showed Himself gracious toward you and offered you salvation through Christ]" (Luke 19:44, *AMP*).