

Where His heart is...

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Purpose: Examine the truth that God's desire has always been to dwell with, fellowship with, and have a relationship with mankind. To understand that God's desire in creating Adam and Eve, leading the Israelites out of Egypt and having them build the Tabernacle, having Solomon build the first temple, sending Jesus to the cross, and His future purpose through the new heaven and new earth found in Revelation that God's purpose has been to be with His beloved creation.

Focal Scripture:

Genesis 3:9

Exodus 25:8

John 14:16

Revelation 21:3

"If there is a God, He is so powerful He doesn't care anything about me"... the heart wrenching lie that so many people have bought in to is such a sad, destructive lie that I cannot begin to imagine how empty those who think this must feel. Can you imagine "if I have a dad out there, I'm sure he doesn't want anything to do with me", not denying there is a dad (or creator) but denying that dad (or creator) wants anything to do with you based off his absence (or perceived absence in God's case). As you study through this lesson I pray the Lord would fill your heart with joy in knowing that not only does He exist, not only does He know your name, but He desires and always has to dwell with you, fellowship with you, teach you about Himself, comfort you, and give you all the wonderful blessings a Father would give His son.

To understand the truth that God has always intended to dwell with His people we need to start in the very beginning of the creation story in the book of Genesis, in the fall of Adam and Eve we will see God both wanted to dwell with us but could not because of our disobedience and His holiness. In Genesis chapter 3 we see a heartbreaking exchange: **And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? (Genesis 3:9 KJV)** – the Lord calls out to Adam immediately after the first man and the first woman fell to the tempter, they had disobeyed God and ate of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and thus sin entered in to the world. Before this Adam and Eve would have fellowship with God where He would physically come in to the Garden of Eden which He had created for them to walk with them: **And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8 KJV)** – in the very beginning we can already see God's purpose, one of fellowship, relationship, love, and peace. So if God's intention and desire was to dwell with mankind, where is He? Because of the sin of Adam and Eve God could no longer dwell with them the same way, sin cannot be in God's presence or it will be destroyed... God cast men out of His physical presence and in this we see a relationship that changes dramatically.

Fast forward a few thousand years and we see another powerful example of God's desire to be with His creation. Much time has passed since the fall of Adam and Eve. God has called Abraham to become a great nation through Isaac, Jacob, and the children of Israel. The descendants of Abraham

have been in Egypt for hundreds of years and have been enslaved for over 400 years. When the time had come God used Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and bondage towards the promised land. As God has since the beginning of creation He desired to be with His people, to make His presence known, and to bring His people hope, joy, and fellowship. **And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. (Exodus 25:8 ESV)** – as if having God lead them out of Egypt in a cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21) was not enough, God wanted to be with His people, in the “midst”. Though our sinfulness has separated us from a relationship with God like He had originally designed, we see that as a Father wants to be with His children, so God longs to be with us.

One serious question must be addressed for us to understand exactly how great God's desire for us to be with Him truly is: how can a sinful, unholy people be united with a perfect, holy God when sin cannot enter His presence? Atonement, payment, redemption, salvation. In order for us to be reconciled with God and to truly dwell and fellowship with Him God had to provide a way, the only way, Jesus. The Scripture reminds us that God's love for us is so great that He sent His only Son Jesus to die in our place to set us free (John 3:16). God's desire to be with us does not extend to our life with Him in heaven alone and we see that because of Christ, God dwells with-in each and every born again believer: **And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever (John 14:16 ESV)** – we see in this promise by Jesus that God would send the Holy Spirit to unite the believers forever to God, never to be without Him after being truly saved.

So many weary and hurting hearts are so quick to look at worldly pain and suffering and refuse to believe that there is a God that loves them. My son is one of the greatest blessings of my life and I love him dearly but if he refuses to accept my guidance and direction in his life, chances are he will face needless pain, sorrow, and grief. If this life was all there was I could understand the desperation and heartache, but this is not all there is. God's ultimate plan is to dwell with those who love Him and trust in Him, forever. God's greatest desire is to be reunited with His beloved creation: you and I. In Scripture we find one of the most beautiful promises of a future time: **And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (Revelation 21:3 ESV).** Forget that this place where true believers will dwell in the full presence and glory of God is free from death, pain, hunger, or sadness (Revelation 21:4), we will finally see the culmination and completion of God's masterful plan.

As a teenager I would pray to a God I did not know and I used to cry out “Father, please don't abandon me like my dad has”, heartbroken I prayed this prayer each night. I could have never known then what God has shown me now... I was never alone. My God has never forsaken or abandoned me (Matthew 28:20, Deuteronomy 31:6), and I never have to be alone or hopeless because God's desire is for me to be with Him, in His loving presence, forever. Weary heart you don't have to struggle in fear, regret, and shame... God's love for you is greater than anything you can imagine. He is not willing that you should perish or be cast out of His presence any longer but that you would come to Him by the blood of Jesus Christ: **The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9 ESV).**