

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: What was I thinking?

Week 2: God is more Present.

What do you think about God? Are we alone? Is there other life present among us?

We can get sucked into a hoax. Last week ... God is more powerful than we think. But know this, God is also more present. He's not distant.

Number one, **God is more present than we think**. We are not alone. Even when you do not look for God, even when you do not lean into the presence of God, He is fully present. You have never been alone, because God is everywhere present. **But we can pretend we are by ourselves. You can pretend you're by yourself. And I can deny His presence. I can refuse to acknowledge it. But all the while, you know He's there.**

It breaks God's heart if we don't acknowledge His presence. This thing with God is relational. And people do that with God all the time. In fact, the majority of this world looks away from God and pretends He's not even there. But all the while you're looking, you see Him. You know He's present. God is there. God is everywhere present.

When you go to sleep, when you wake up, when you go to work, when you go to school, when you're at lunch, when you watch TV, God's there. Whatever you're doing, God's there.

How long are people going to pretend there is no God? Because they can see Him as clearly as you can see person behind me.

King David wrote the truth about the presence of God. **PSALM 139:7-8, 11-12, 15; PSALM 11:4**. The truth about the presence of God is He is always among us. And so there we are with the core thought that Asa would tell us. God is present, but you can pretend He's not.

Over time, Asa eventually pretended that God was not present. Remember from last week's teaching, Asa faced a huge army and God demonstrated that he was more Powerful. But along with that, what God was proving is that He was more present. The very prayer of Asa was heard. God was engaged. God was right there in Asa's view the whole time. And God showed up, because God was present.

2 Chronicles 15:1-2. After they came back from the Cushites being crushed through the power of God. If you'll turn around, you'll see God is fully present. **Vs 3-4**.

Verse 7- 8. Asa heard this and took courage. **The presence of God gave him courage.**

That was Asa's experience, but 20 years later? Another army showed up. Asa was powerless and he pretended that God was not present. He didn't pray. He didn't turn to acknowledge God.

And even when the Prophet makes it obvious, when Hanani said, hey, God's been watching the whole thing. Asa, God's standing in your camera shot the whole time. And even when the truth was put in Asa's face, Asa said "No, God's not present".

That sounds like what kids do, doesn't it? In the face of evidence, Asa said "No, God's not present." We can pretend that something isn't true when it's entirely true, and it's right there in front of us. For the last 6 years of Asa's life he pretended God was not present, and he never prayed again. He pretended that nobody was behind me. If Asa could show up he would tell us: **You can pretend something's not true in life, but in death you will know the whole truth.** In death, I realized I've just been pretending.

We're not on our own. We're not alone. God is present. In fact, I think Asa would tell us, "Instead of that being a moment where I pretended that I had no sprinkles on my face, this could have been the turn-around in my life. I should have celebrated God's presence, that God is more present than I think, and because of that He'll be with me. It is no hoax. God is more present than you think. What if you could know that God is more present than you have ever imagined or think. He's in every camera shot of every moment of your life. But if you will not look for Him, you will not see him or find him. And if you knew that God was more present than you think, how would you live?"

God invites us to "lean in" to His presence. It would transform us—transform our A,B,C's

1) Transform your ANXIETY. I have found the weight of things that I cannot control, manage—finances, jobs, family, kids, future ... can Take Me Out.

You ever been caught up in the distraction of worry? If God can take care of that bird, and if you knew that you were worth more than that bird, if you knew how present God was with you, you wouldn't worry. That's what Jesus was teaching in **Matthew 6:25-26, 32.** God's paying attention to birds because He made them, His creation. He's fully present. He's paying attention to you. The pagans meaning the people who don't believe in God have to worry because it's all on them

Philippians 4:5-7. Paul wants the Church to know the Lord is near. He's fully present, so be anxious for nothing. "But in everything" let your request be made known to God. Why? Because He's fully present. Just turn around. He's in the camera shot of every moment of your life, when you worry, when you're anxious, just turn around. Engage him with thanksgiving and the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus.

What it means is: **He will post guard by His Spirit over your heart so that you will not be discouraged. He will post guard over your mind so that you will not be confused. And He will give you a peace that is God's peace in the midst of what you cannot control. God is fully present with you in every moment, so that you can be fully present in every moment of your life.** If you knew God was fully present, He would transform your anxiety.

2) if you knew God was fully present, He would transform your behavior. Michael Phelps said, "I was a train wreck. I was like a time bomb waiting to go off. I had no self-esteem, no self-worth." He wrote, "There's times where I didn't want to be here. It was not good. I felt lost." Phelps hit rock bottom after getting arrested. He isolated himself in his bedroom in Baltimore and considered suicide. Phelps was thinking, "This is the end of my life. How many times will I mess up? Maybe the world is better off without me." A Christian friend encouraged him to enter into a rehab facility and gave him, "The Purpose Driven Life." And Phelps read it. In an interview with ESPN the magazine, Phelps explained that, "This Christian book turned me into believing there is a power greater than myself and there is a purpose for me on this planet. ... I figured out it's not an accident." He gets his soul & life centered. And he ends up with more medals than anyone in the history of the Olympics, all because he discovered that God is more present than we ever imagined or thought.

3) When you know the presence of God, that He is fully present in your life, it will transform your anxiety, it'll transform your behavior, and it'll transform your courage. 2 Chronicles 15:8. As soon as Asa realized that God was fully present, he gained courage to go after new things and took new territory. He had a breakthrough. The moment he knew God was with him, he realized that the thing he was aspiring to do and had to press through, he had the courage to go do. And God was with Asa, and God is with you if you will turn and acknowledge that God is present and lean into His presence. It will transform your life.

Will you seek Him? Will you begin to talk with God because He's with you in every moment? Talk to Him. Turn around and engage God. Which of the ABC 's need to be transformed in your life? Anxiety? Behavior? Courage?

God is more Present that we think.