

I SET THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME

Psalms 16:8

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In Psa 16:11 we are reminded that in the presence of God there is fullness of joy and true happiness...
- B. All Christians would agree; but there are times we find ourselves not as close to God as we would like; spiritually weak, filled with depression and anxiety
- C. In such times, what can we do in order to become close to God again? The answer is found in Psa 16:8
- D. Look at ways we can draw closer to God, or to "set the Lord before you"

DISCUSSION:

I. SET LORD BEFORE YOU THROUGH GOD'S CREATION

- A. Let nature help you draw close to God...
 - 1. Creation speaks to us of God's glory and knowledge Psa 19:1-2; eternal power and deity Rom 1:20
 - 2. As we contemplate God's creation; understand His power and person we become closer, like increasing understanding between friends enhances friendship, as in any relationship (e.g., marriages)
- B. Others used natural settings in drawing closer to God
 - 1. Isaac went into the fields to meditate Gen 24:63
 - 2. Jesus went to mountains to pray Matt 14:23
- C. First verse "Alone At Eve" by Will W. Slater (# 210)
- D. Creation alone not enough!

II. SET LORD BEFORE YOU THROUGH REVELATION

- A. Limited in what we can learn from God through nature
 - 1. See His power, divinity, glory, and knowledge; but Learn nothing of His will and purpose for us
 - 2. Only by Divine revelation God's will fully known
 - a. Revealed through Spirit to apostles 1Cor 2:9-12
 - b. For our benefit and understanding Eph 3:3-5
- B. Others depended on Word to remain close to God...
 - 1. David to stay close Psa 119:92-93,105,147-148
 - 2. Jesus to ward off Tempter Matt 4:4,7,10
- C. Let God's Word help you draw near to Him who is the source of peace and strength
- D. Second verse "Alone At Eve" by Will W. Slater (# 210)
- E. Don't stop with listening to God through His Word.

III. SET LORD BEFORE YOU THROUGH PRAYER

- A. Close relationship a two-way street - God revealed through creation & revelation - us to Him, by prayer
 - 1. Express concerns - receive blessings Phil 4:6-7

- 2. Draw boldly to God, obtain mercy and grace to help Heb 4:14-16

B. Others found prayer means to receive help from God

- 1. David: confessing sin brings forgiveness Psa 32:3-6

- 2. Jesus: prayer strength in trial Matt 26:36-44

C. Draw near to God's throne through prayer, let Him know of your deepest needs

- D. Third verse "Alone At Eve" by Will W. Slater (# 210)

E. Prayer alone is not enough

IV. SET LORD BEFORE YOU THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

A. Strength comes from assembling together...

- 1. Just as there is strength in numbers Eccl 4:9-12
- 2. In view of danger of falling away, we need to exhort one another daily Heb 3:12-13; admonish one another through frequent assemblies Heb 10:24-25
- 3. Like coals in fire keeping each other hot, assembling keeps the "spark" alive in our relationship with God

B. Early church found strength by assembling together...

- 1. Peter & John released after arrest Acts 4:23-31
- 2. When Peter was imprisoned Acts 12:12

C. Our assemblies can be a foretaste of God's presence

- 1. Drawn near God through song, prayer, and His Word
- 2. Enjoy fellowship of God & servants Rev 7:9-17

D. Chorus "Alone At Eve" by Will W. Slater (# 210)

CONCLUSION:

- A. Do you desire to draw closer to God?
- B. Then "set the Lord before you" through:
 - 1. Contemplating God's creation
 - 2. Meditating on God's word
 - 3. Spending time in prayer
 - 4. Having fellowship with other Christians
- C. Do this, and we can draw closer to God, singing with David: "In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psa 16:11)

(by Mark A. Copeland - revised by jlh)