

WE WANT TO SEE JESUS

Summary

Dennis's sermon highlights the importance of seeking God's presence and how it influences others through obedience and authenticity, supported by biblical examples and personal stories. The sermon stresses the significance of inclusivity in welcoming all to encounter the Lord, mirroring God's heart for reconciliation. As Easter approaches, listeners are encouraged to renew their commitment to seeking God and spreading His love to those around them for a life-changing encounter with the Lord.

Icebreaker Question:

What's the funniest or most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to you during a church service?

Question 1: How does our pursuit of God's presence become a powerful witness to those around us?

Dennis mentioned that others may witness the joy, peace, and transformation in our lives as we genuinely seek God's presence.

Can you think of an example from your own life where someone was impacted by the change in you when you sought God's presence?



My Time has Arrived

Title: Seeking the Presence of God: Drawing Others to Encounter the Lord

For many, "seeing is believing" is one of the axioms or truths people hold. Part of my life has been supporting visually impaired people, which has led me into a world of wondrous discovery.

One of my closest friends, sadly now at rest, was Andrew, a blind photographer. Yes, you heard that correctly, a blinkie paparazzi! I run a weekly sermon and study guide called "breaking-open-the-word.org", and on page two of this sermon, you will see a picture of a very naughty (now King) Charles ignoring the sign "Do not pat working dog". I guess, as King, one does as one does!

In knowing Andrew, who is in the background of that photo, I appreciated that faith is never taken for granted for people with visual disabilities. Despite the lack of visual acuity, the level of trust and insight never ceased to amaze me. I drove him one day from Eltham to Sandringham. I took a detour off Burke Road. He went absolutely off his tree. This is NOT the way to Sandringham. I let him stew for the trip.



Question 2: What are some ways we can prioritise God's will above our own desires?

Dennis talks about living lives of obedience and humility, following Christ's example.

What is something in your life that you have found difficult to surrender to God's will, and how can you work towards making that change?

Question 3: In what ways can we create a welcoming and inclusive community for those seeking to encounter God?

The preacher used the example of Simeon, who welcomed the infant Jesus into his arms, to show that we should embrace all who seek God, regardless of their background.

What actions can you take within your own church or community to help it become more inclusive and welcoming?

Question 4: How does the story of Simeon from Luke 2 inspire us to patiently wait and trust for God's promises?

Simeon was promised that he would see the Messiah before dying, and he waited with expectation until he saw the infant Jesus in the temple.

Once we arrived, he bagged me for not following the direct route. The person we encountered asked why I did that. I said there was an accident ahead, and all traffic was detouring. Not another word from Andrew after that!

But to the point of my story, in enabling his independence, his faith in others around him was strong and usually rarely challenged. Andrew had a few faults, including supporting the one True Blue footy team. One night at Docklands, a young man ran through his white cane. Andrew screamed at the lad to come back. Looking unsure, Andrew greeted him with the following, "So, how am I supposed to umpire the second half?"

Let us delve into the significance of seeking the presence of God in our lives and how it draws others to encounter the Lord.

In Hebrews, we are reminded of Christ's humility and obedience to the will of the Father. He learned obedience through suffering and became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. This passage underscores the depth of Christ's sacrifice and his profound love for humanity. It emphasises the importance of obedience and surrender to God's will in our own lives.

Similarly, in John's Gospel, Greeks come to Philip with a simple request: "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." This desire to encounter Jesus is not limited to the Jewish people but extends to the Gentiles. It reflects a universal longing for the presence of God among all people, regardless of their background or ethnicity.

This longing echoes the experience of Simeon in Luke 2, who eagerly awaited the arrival of the Messiah. Simeon, a righteous and devout man, was promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before seeing the Lord's Christ. When he finally beheld the infant Jesus in the temple, he exclaimed, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation" (Luke 2:29-30).

Simeon's example reminds us that the desire to encounter God's presence is not confined to a particular group but extends to all who seek Him with sincerity and faith.

So, what does it mean for us today? How does our desire to honestly know the presence of God in our lives help us to draw others to encounter the Lord?



What is a promise from God that you are waiting for, and how can Simeon's story encourage you to trust in God's timing?

Question 5: What steps can we take to renew our commitment to seeking God's presence during the upcoming Easter season?

Rev'd Dennis encouraged listeners to focus on the renewal of their baptismal promises as a way to strengthen their pursuit of God's presence.

What specific action can you take to renew your commitment to seeking God this Easter season and how will it help you grow closer to Him?

Prayer Points

- Ask God to help us apply the sermon's message of seeking God's presence in our lives throughout the coming week.
- Pray for opportunities to be a witness to others through the joy, peace, and transformation they see in our lives.
- Ask for humility and obedience to prioritise God's will above our own desires, reflecting the character of Christ.
- Pray for a welcoming and inclusive community, embracing all who seek God, regardless of their background or past.

Firstly, our sincere pursuit of God's presence is a powerful witness to those around us. When others see God's joy, peace, and transformation in our lives, they are drawn to inquire about the source of our hope. Just as the Greeks sought Jesus through Philip, people today are searching for meaning and purpose in their lives, and our testimony can point them towards the One who satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart.

Secondly, our commitment to seeking God's presence compels us to live lives of obedience and humility, just as Christ did. When we prioritise God's will above our own desires, we demonstrate the authenticity of our faith and reflect Christ's character to the world. This authentic witness can break down barriers and invite others into a life-transforming relationship with God.

Lastly, our genuine pursuit of God's presence creates a welcoming and inclusive community, inviting all to encounter the Lord. Just as Simeon welcomed the infant Jesus into his arms with open arms, we are called to embrace all who seek God, regardless of their background or past. In doing so, we reflect God's heart for reconciliation and unity.

Many people can see Jesus at work in the community. Others can see through faith and love how this impacts their lives and the lives around them. Jesus had particularly harsh words for the spiritually blind, and rightly so. But for us, in our own Lenten journey, this is the Time when we are called to address our distorted views of spiritual life and prepare to begin again on that glorious Easter morning.

As we approach Easter and the renewal of our baptismal promises, let us renew our commitment to seeking God's presence in our lives. Let us take this last remaining Day of Lent to make a difference in how we can change our lives and those of others we may encounter.

May our genuine desire to know Him draw others into a life-changing encounter with the Lord, and may we continue to reflect His love and grace to the world around us.

Amen.