Bethel In Focus

#91 | 11/27/26

Pastor's Pen

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. Psalm 139:7-10

Dear Bethel Church Family and friends,

Hello everyone. Happy Thanksgiving! I pray you are well and the grace and peace of Christ fills your heart and mind. What a good God we love and serve! Saints, do you share my temptation to get too emotionally invested in the events of the day? Sadly, the world we live in is a mess. But instead of concentrating on what the Scriptures call these light and momentary afflictions, I want to return to our true foundation as we continue investigating this amazing being we call Yahweh, Almighty God. For only as we learn about Him can we think rationally about the matters we face in the world and find the peace to rest comfortably in His sovereign plan.

During this month, as we look ahead to Thanksgiving and Christmas, I want to spend our time together studying God's omnipresence. This word simply indicates that God is not limited by space; He is present everywhere. In practical terms, this means God has no physical size or spatial dimensions. In fact, thinking about God in terms of size or space doesn't help us understand Him. He fully exists outside of space. Maybe it will help us understand better if we think about it like this… before God created anything else, including space itself, He still existed in the fullness of the Trinity, didn't He? Just remembering this crucial detail helps us better understand that the Creator exists in relation to space far differently than we creatures do and in a way that's hard for us as limited humans even to begin to grasp.

And please don't forget, when discussing this characteristic of God, we need to make sure that we don't think that because He is present everywhere, the Lord is equivalent to or identified with any part of His creation. Nothing could be further from the truth. This understanding is called pantheism and is antagonistic to biblical Christianity. The biblical perspective is that while God is everywhere present, He is absolutely separate, altogether distinct from His creation. What we realize when we study the Scriptures in detail is that God is present in different ways, in different places, in the created world.

What does that mean? Sometimes, it means God is present to punish. We see this when He sits in judgment on sinful people (Amos 9:1-4). So yes, as Psalm 139 makes clear, God will be present in hell for all of eternity as His enemies receive justice. Other times, God can be present in His creation merely to sustain it, keeping the universe operating smoothly as He intends. Paul affirms this in his letter to the Colossians, noting that Jesus *"is before all things, and in Him all things hold together"* (Colossians 1:17). Finally, and most commonly in Scripture, we see God present in His created world to bless. As New Testament Christians, we don't have a particular place that God has chosen to bless with His presence like the Temple or Tabernacle in ancient Israel. We are, however, uniquely blessed with His presence through the Holy Spirit, the seal of our faith we have been given in Christ. As the Apostle wrote to the Church in Rome, *"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness"* (Romans 8:9-10).

So let me encourage you today, dear saints. Since God is present with us in a very special way as His beloved children, we have the gift of life-real life in all its fullness now, and life eternally in His glorious presence in Heaven. So, even in the midst of troubled times, we can all rejoice in His good promise to us, can't we?

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Chris

this week

Sunday's sermon: *Christmas Through Joseph's Eyes* — Matthew 1:18-25

events

Circle #1	Circle #3	Men's Bible Study
12/1 at 11:00 am	12/1 at 6:00 pm	12/2 at 6:00 am

volunteer schedule

Infant Nursery	Toddler Nursery	Worship Training
Stacie Brackett and Kyla Ferguson	Debra Kozak and Beth Stowe	Amanda Brummett and Becky Adams