

STANDING BEFORE THE LORD

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand,... (1 Kings 17:1 NKJV)

Elijah the Tishbite: The Tishbite means that he was from the city Tishbe in Gilead. Also, this is the first appearance of Elijah in Scripture.

Notice what Elijah says to king Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand,..." This speaks highly of the prophet because standing before the Lord is a very good place to be indeed.

That ordinary men would stand before Him was not only God's will for Elijah and the ancient prophets, but His will for you and me today as well.

What does it mean to stand before the Lord? Standing before the Lord means to stand in His presence. It is a level in God where God's presence does not visit you but dwells with you – resides with you and in you.

Standing in God's Presence is the place of Boldness

²⁹ Ahab son of Omri began to rule over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria twenty-two years. ³⁰ But Ahab did what was evil in the Lord's sight, even more than any of the kings before him. ³¹ And as though it were not enough to live like Jeroboam, he married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and he began to worship Baal. ³² First he built a temple and an altar for Baal in Samaria. ³³ Then he set up an Asherah pole. He did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel before him. (1 Kings 16:29-33 NLT)

What Elijah was about to do was fairly death-defying considering that scripture describes Ahab as the most wicked King of Israel. However, Elijah was not afraid to speak boldly to King Ahab because he was receiving God's boldness as he stood before Him. When you live close to God, you can stare at death in the face and not blink.

My friends, by nature you may be a very timid and shy person but as you take your stand daily in God's presence, a supernatural boldness will come upon you. The Bible tells us, "The righteous are bold as a lion." (Proverbs 28:1)

Acts 4:13 tells us, "Now when they (the rulers of the people and the elders of Israel) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

I firmly believe that the sure cure for every kind of fear and oppression that is tormenting mankind today is standing before the Lord – in His presence.

Standing in God's Presence is the place of Revelation

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." (1 Kings 17:1)

As Elijah stood before the Lord, he learnt something that he perhaps would have otherwise not known – that there would be a drought in the land for three years and six months. (James 5:17) Where did such an idea come from? Surely not from his own head; it came from the heart of God.

Apostle Paul was another man who literally stood before the Lord. No wonder he walked in such an abundance of revelation knowledge. Take a look at how he speaks in Galatians 1:12 "For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."

There are some things that you can receive from the hands of man and there are things that you can learn – which is good. However, there are certain things that you can only receive through revelation. This revelation knowledge comes only to those who stand before the Lord daily dwelling in His presence.

Standing in God's Presence is the place of direction

² Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ³ "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. (1 Kings 17:2-3)

After knowing that there would be a drought in the land for three years and six months, Elijah received direction on what he should do about it. Elijah received clear cut directions from the Lord based on his position of standing before the Lord. This is how every true prophet operates.

Have you heard people come to you and say, "I just don't know what to do, I am confused. I think I am going around in circles." These are people who have not felt it necessary to stand before the Lord in His presence daily.

Let me assure you, if you are a person who makes His priority to stand before the Lord daily in His presence, you will know where to go and what to do.

Standing in God's Presence is the place of provision

⁴ "And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." ⁵ So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. ⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. (1Kings 17:4-6)

This is typical of the way God speaks. He is very specific and detailed and leaves nothing to chance. Always remember this: with His instruction always comes a means of provision for His servant. A man of God said it in this manner, "If God ordered the Biryani then He will pay for it." This simply means, if God instructs you do something then He will also provide for it.

Notice that God had commanded the ravens to feed Elijah 'there', nowhere else. I like that. God is very specific, and when we obey Him, He supplies our needs. However, if we fail to be 'there', in the specific place God has revealed to us, then we will never even see the ravens, let alone receiving from them.

Now listen very carefully. In order to have your daily needs met and for you to prosper, you must be at your 'there'. Secondly, your 'there' is not where you decide it is. Your 'there' must come out of the heart of God, not from within yourself. So you will only know your 'there' when you are standing before Him daily in His presence. This is the place of His provision.

Standing in God's Presence is the place of productivity

"You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!" Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you." (2Chronicles 20:17)

Many think that standing before the Lord is a place of inactivity, non-productivity and are bothered by this. Hence they plunge themselves into various acts – doing things for the Lord. One such character in the Bible was Martha who was deeply bothered by the fact that Mary her sister, seemed to be so inactive, so un-productive just taking her position in the presence of the Lord while she was sweating it out. She is so perturbed by this that she actually complains about this to the Lord Himself who gently reprimands her. (Luke 10:38-42)

Inactivity generally does not seem compatible with being the Lord's servants. However, how many of us could say that a great tree is unproductive just because it stands and continues to stand? I certainly don't think anyone of us would say that. In fact a tree that is properly rooted and grounded produces so much fruit in its lifetime and reproduces itself so many times over that is difficult for the mind to grasp.

The secret is that a tree does a lot while just seemingly standing there. For one thing, it lifts hundreds of gallons of water a day to every part of it – and that's just one functions. It does a lot more than that. All this while it just keeps standing there.

2 Chronicles 20:17 tells us that God told Jehoshaphat and his people to stand still and position himself. This simply means that God wanted Jehoshaphat and his people to continue standing in His presence trusting His promise and fight the battle not in their strength but His.

For most of us (including myself) standing before the Lord is sometimes difficult. We would be rather be 'doing' something. After all, what will we tell our friends and the people around us we have accomplished? We the body of Christ still need to get take our positions as sons and friends rather than just being servants of the Lord.

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15)

Servants are often too busy to sit by the Masters side. They do not get close enough to hear his heart beat. They always operate from a distance. It is the sons who sit with the Master at the table and discuss intimate matters. It is the friend who leans on His bosom and listens to the heart beat of the Master.

Do you want to see progress in your life, your ministry etc? Then learn to stand before the Lord. This habit of standing before the Lord was so effective for Elijah that it carried him through every stage of life unscathed. Then, when he had left the scene, Elisha whom he had mentored, demonstrated that he too had learned the secret of his mentors power and wisdom.

And Elisha said, "As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, (2Kings 3:14, 5:16)

Elisha went on to do twice as many miracles than Elijah had done in his lifetime. People of God, never underestimate the power of standing before the Lord. I believe those who will learn to stand before the Lord and continue to do so will be nation shakers.