

## Live Coram Deo

After being away for a week, my heart is full.

Last weekend while Pastor Garth was preaching on the sanctity of human life (**Photo** – Choose Love), Becky and I participated in the *March For Life*; in Washington, DC. 500k people advocating for cultural and legal *change*.

*Legal*, to change the *laws* regarding abortion, and *cultural* to change the *thinking*. To make it *un-thinkable*.

And by the way, if you *missed* Garth's message, please go to our website or app and listen to it. It's biblical, it's personal, and it's very well said.

This was one of the signs *we* carried, but **this (Photo)** was the favorite one we saw. "One Unplanned Pregnancy Saved Us All." At least unplanned from Mary's perspective. Isn't that good?

We also had the opportunity to meet and talk with some pro-life congressman: Jim Jordan (OH), Mike Lee (UT), Mark Meadows (NC), Mike Braun (IN).\*\*\*\*\*

And I took the opportunity to tell them I'm praying for their courage and boldness. Because I have been. On this *and* other issues.

I wanted them to know we're with them. And encouraged them to keep on.

Then, on Sunday, I had the privilege of preaching at Fairfax Bible Church just *outside* DC. It's a church we actually planted; 8 years ago; and it's going strong. With a sweet *spirit*, and Spirit-filled worship just like our church.

And finally, we went from there to a Senior Pastor and Wives retreat (**Photo**) in Florida for our Collective; the Great Commission Collective. It's the group of churches with whom we partner most closely, to plant *other* churches; and strengthen leaders.

And what a joy. We worshipped and fellowshiped with 200 others for 3 days. Encouraging one another, praying together, and eating.\*\*\*\*\*

A pretty special time. So my heart is full, and I want yours to be as well.

➤ That said, I'm eager to roll out our new theme and new study for the year. And give ourselves to the Lord all the more. To even *greater* love and good deeds. (**Intro**) So turn with me to [John 14](#).

A little over a year ago we changed the name of our church to include a Latin phrase – Coram Deo. Meaning "in the presence of God." Or more literally, "before God." Like standing before a king. You're "in his presence."

It's a concept found all *over* the Bible. In fact, it's one of the over-arching truths of our lives. And for Christians, it "captures the *essence*" of our lives. (R.C. Sproul) We *live* Coram Deo – in his presence. That's a fact. This is his world, and we're living in it.

What's *not* so true, is that we *live* like it. We don't. More often than not, we don't live as though we're in the presence of Almighty God. In the presence of perfect holiness. Amazing grace. Overwhelming power. Steadfast love. Abundant joy. We don't. Most of the time because we don't *think* about it. We're not *conscious* of his presence. He's out of sight, out of mind.

Which leads to the first *principle* I want to commend to you with this theme:

### Live conscious of God's presence (Jn 14:16-17)

To live Coram Deo, is to live *conscious* of his presence. Cognizant. Aware. Mindful. And we're going to spend the bulk of our time on this point, so don't fret if it takes awhile. There's much here.

In order to live in the presence of God like we should, we have to be *conscious* of his presence. Anything else is a denial of reality. Especially for believers.

The reality of our world is *not* that this is it – what we see, hear, taste, or touch. Nor is it me, myself, and I. Or at most a few others.

The reality, is that God is *with* us. **He's with us**. The first of 6 *reasons* to live conscious of his presence. And by the time we're done with this point . . .

There's going to be 12 supporting thoughts.

6 reasons, 3 ways – *how* to live conscious of his presence – and 3 benefits.

But first the reasons. Look at [John 14:15](#). Jesus is speaking, and says . . .

[15] "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. [16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you *another* Helper, to be *with you* forever.

Of all people, we should be conscious of God's presence because he's Immanuel – God *with* us. He's here. Right now. Moving in our midst.

Second, **he's in us**. He actually dwells in our soul. Look at [v16-17](#).

I will ask the Father, and he will give you *another* Helper, to be with you forever, [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

God's Spirit is actually *in* us. Which means we need only open the eyes of our *heart* to be conscious of him.

Third, **he's everywhere**. He's with us, he's in us, and he's all around us. Everywhere we go. Like King David said in Ps 139:7.

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your *presence*?

Rhetorical questions to say "nowhere." We're *always* Coram Deo. Inescapably.

[8] If I ascend to heaven [he said], you are *there!* If I make my bed in Sheol [a place of death or despair], you are *there!*

In other words, there's no place that he's not. Like the air we breathe. He's all around us. Unfortunately, we think of *him* about as much as we think of breathing.

Fourth, **he's personal**. When we believe in Jesus to forgive our sin, save our soul, and follow him as Lord, His presence is personal.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock [he said]. If anyone hears my voice and *opens* the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. (Rev 3:20)

That's personal. So personal it's hard to imagine being *unconscious* of his presence. And yet we are. Like ignoring your best friend right in front of you.

5th, **he's permanent**. We ought to live conscious of God's presence because it's permanent. *I will never leave you nor forsake you*, God said (Heb 13:5b). Ever.

And 6th, **he's powerful**. *Even the darkness is not dark to you* [the Psalmist said]; *the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.*" (Ps 139:12) That's power. And that's his presence. With us, in us, everywhere, personal, permanent, and powerful.

So whatever you do, don't ignore it. **(Summary)**

That would be like a classroom of students who ignore the entrance of a professor.

Or a room full of people who ignore the President.

Ignoring God's presence is a slap in the face and a denial of reality all in one.

Better to live *conscious* of it. Mindful of him.

➤ The question, is how. *How* do we live conscious of God's presence?

3 ways. Starting with this: **remind yourself often**. *Remind* yourself of his presence.

I had a friend in high school who reminded himself of things by drawing a string around

his finger. Know what I'm talking about it? That old adage?

"Can't remember something? Tie a string around your finger." Like *that's* good advice.

So instead, he *drew* one. And sometimes several; *several* fingers had "strings";

complete with bows. Kid you not. He went all out.

If I did that, I'd forget why I *drew* the string.

The point being, he did something tangible, that served as a constant reminder.

And while it may not be a string for you, I hope it's something. Do something.

Put a note on your computer. A sign on the wall. A verse on your phone.

Anything, to remind yourself often, of God's precious presence. That's the *first* "how."

The second, is **seek him continually**. Constantly. Non-stop. Morning, noon, and night.

**1 Chron 16:11** says – *Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!*

Not that we have to go looking for him, but that we have to make him the constant

companion of our thoughts. Talking and walking with him intentionally.\*\*\*\*\*

Third, **watch for his work**. Watch for his work in you, and watch for it in others.

His work in situations, and circumstances. Big *and* small. Near *and* far. Watch for it.

One of our theme verses early on, was **Habakkuk 1:5**. Where God says:

*"Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told.*

If you want to be conscious of God's presence, watch for God's work. **(Summary)**

➤ Now, at this point you might be thinking, "Come on, Pastor. What's the big deal? Isn't

God present whether I realize it or not? Think about him or not?" Yes. He is.

But your *response* to his presence makes all the difference in the world. Especially your life.

I watched a documentary on **Chernobyl** awhile back, and was struck by how *un-*

conscious they were about the influence of radiation.

Chernobyl was a power station in Russia, where a nuclear reactor exploded in 1986.

And when it did, the people in the nearby town of Pripjat . . .

Went out to a bridge to watch the fire. During which, the radioactive ash fell from the sky like snow. It was that bad.

But they were clueless. They had no idea the radiation was even *present*. They thought it was just a bad fire.

And it killed them. Some within months and some within years.

Just like the presence of God means death for those who don't know *him*. Don't acknowledge *his* presence.

So yes, his presence is there whether you're conscious of it or not; whether you acknowledge it or not.

But your *response* is the difference between life and death.\*\*\*\*\*

And for those who *do* know God, who *have* put their faith in Jesus, being conscious of his presence has *massive* benefits. Benefits that lead to life to the full.

➤ Like that fact that **it deters sin**. If you're aware that God is not only looking on, but looking from within, you'll be less inclined to sin.

Just like you were less inclined to cheat in school when the teacher was present.

A constant consciousness of God's constant presence deters us from sin. It's a benefit.

Second, **it fuels our love**. His presence, and our awareness of it, fuels our love.

Have you ever noticed that you're nicer when you're around nice people?

My sister-in-law is one of the nicest people I know. And when I'm around her, *I'm* nicer. She rubs off on me.

Same for God. **1 John 4:16** says – *God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

So love and the presence of God go hand in hand in our lives. Especially if we're conscious of it.\*\*\*\*\*

And last, the last benefit of living conscious of God's presence, is that **it spurs us on**. To *greater* love; and greater good deeds. Heb 10.

Like when you were a kid playing sports and were spurred on by the presence of your coach; or your parents; or your girlfriend. You upped your game.

How much more when we're conscious of God's presence? **(Summary)**

6 reasons, 3 ways, and 3 benefits. So out of sight, out of mind when it comes to the presence of God, is out of the question. He's here.

Second, and moving more quickly . . .

**Live submissive to God's authority (John 14:15)**

If we're going to actively live *Coram Deo*, we have to submit to God's authority.

And make no mistake, he *is* in charge. *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.* (Ps 24:1)

It's his, and he *reigns* over it all. Like it says in 1 Chron 16:31.

*Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"*

Repeated in Ps 93 – *The LORD reigns*. And Ps 97 – *The LORD reigns*. And Ps 99 – *The LORD reigns*. Always has and always will.

*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.* Ps 45:6.

So God's authority is unquestioned. Past, present, and future.

What *is* questioned, is our submission to it.

Are you submissive to God's authority? Do you surrender to it daily? *Live* under it joyfully, following his commands? I hope so.

Because as much as God's *authority* is affirmed in Scripture, so is our submission; our *obedience*. Look at John 14:15 again.

*“If you love me [Jesus said], you will keep my commandments. You’ll obey.*

So to live *Coram Deo*, is to submit to God’s authority in your life. Living like he *wants* you to live. Going where he *wants* you to go. Thinking like he *wants* you to think. Giving like he *wants* you to give. Doing what he *wants* you to do.

Like getting baptized as a believer. It’s a command. *Repent and be baptized* the Bible says (Acts 2:38). And many of you have. You’re living *Coram Deo* in that respect. But some of you haven’t. And need to. Take a look. **(Video – Baptism)**

➤ Many of you have already taken that step of obedience, but some of you haven’t. And it’s akin to ignoring God’s *authority* in your life. His rule and reign as *Lord* of your life.

If that’s you, you can change that March 1st. **(Baptism Graphic)**  
It’s not the *only* way to obey God and submit to him, but it’s a biggie.  
So pick up a packet or go online, and start preparing.  
And don’t wait until the week before. That’s too late.  
There’s much to be done, and it’s your baptism.\*\*\*\*\*  
Live *submissive* to God’s authority.

And last . . .

**Live always for God’s glory (Rom 16:27)**

The truth is, *everyone* lives for *something*; or someone. Everyone.  
Every single one of us lives for the renown, the advancement, or the advantage of someone. Or maybe some cause, some organization.  
Whatever the case, nobody’s neutral.

And most of the time, we live for ourselves.  
Most of us do what we do, most of the time, for our *own* sake. Our *own* glory. Our *own* shine.  
Especially men. Whether it’s getting ahead at work, putting money in the bank, or pursuing your hobby – most of us live for ourselves instead of God.  
Or at best, it’s a combination. Sometimes for God’s glory, and sometimes for yours.

All of which is tantamount to *treason* in God’s kingdom.  
*My glory* [my worship, my adoration God says] *I give to no other.* (Is 42:8)  
*I am God, and there is none like me.* (Is 46:9)  
He *deserves* all glory, and he’s *jealous* for his glory.

And the Bible says to give it **(Ps 29:2)**. *Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.*  
As in give him all the honor, praise, worship, and credit he deserves.  
And not just with your mouth, but your life; your entire being. *Present your bodies as a living sacrifice* to God. (Rom 12:1)  
Start to finish, living for God’s glory is a command. Always.\*\*\*\*\*

➤ There’s only one problem. We can’t. It’s impossible this side of eternity.  
Generations of God-fearers proved it in the *Old Testament*, and *we* prove it every day.  
“Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.” The *power* of sin is broken, but the presence remains. So we *don’t* always live for God’s glory.

But Jesus does. So that in him and through him, we do too. It’s one of the many glories of the Gospel.

And why Paul says at the end of Romans **(16:27)**, his great treatise on the Gospel: *To the only wise God be glory forevermore* [as in now and always], *through Jesus Christ!*

It’s only through *Christ* that we can live for the glory of God. Only through *Christ* that we can ascribe his worth. Only through *Christ* that we can give what he deserves. And do.

Because when we don’t, when we *don’t* live for God’s glory, Jesus still does. Covering our treason with his grace; our failure with his perfection.  
So that the ascription of God’s glory never wanes. It’s always offered, and always there.

Does that relieve us of striving? Not at all.

It just relieves us of failure. So that we can *truly* live *Coram Deo*. Conscious of his presence, submissive to his authority, and always for his glory.  
Through Christ. **(Summary)**

Prayer – Lord Jesus, thank you for doing what we can’t, and helping us to do what we should. God, remind us of your presence daily; hourly. Grip us with the greatness of your authority, that we might joyfully submit. And make your glory our joy, more and more. Help us we pray, to live *Coram Deo*.