



"One of the overarching themes in the Scriptures is the idea that God desires to live amongst His people. He loves us so much that He wants to live and be with us. This was the reality in the garden until we chose our way over God's way. Sinful, we could no longer be in the presence of the Most Holy God. We chose to go our own way, but He never chose to abandon us. He goes with us, draws near to us, moves heaven and earth to be with us. The Creator of the universe comes and lives in a box in order to be with His people. One of His greatest desires is for us to be in His presence."

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

When do you feel closest to God? Is it a place? A setting? Are you doing something? Are you alone or with others? When do you most feel God's tangible presence?

MEMORY VERSE:

Jeremiah 32:38

"And they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

SCRIPTURE READING:

Genesis 3:8

"And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of The LORD God among the trees of the garden."

Genesis 4:6-7

"The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

Exodus 40:34

"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

1 Kings 8:10

"And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord,"

Ezekiel 10:18

"Then the glory of the Lord went out from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. At 30,000' we can see this theme in the Hebrew Scriptures of God and His desire to be physically present with His people. Where do you see this theme crop up from Genesis through the Prophets?
2. Why do you think being physically present with His people is such a significant desire of YHWH?
3. What caused (and causes) God to have to change the way he relates to humanity? How has He provided avenues for us to be in His presence over time and why did He work in this way over time?
4. How is Jesus the perfect sacrifice and does His replacement of the sacrificial system replace the teaching of the Law in the Hebrew Scriptures? Why or why not?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. How does it impact you that God desires so much to live in your presence?
2. Looking at the holiness of God that is both dangerous and glorious, how does that impact you that He lives within you?
3. Put yourself in the shoes of the Israelites of Ezekiel's day. They had done what was sinful in the sight of the Lord and He had vacated their presence. He left the Temple. There is nothing in Scripture that says He ever returns. How do you feel? What do you do?
4. Fast-forwarding to the first century, the days of Jesus, what is the importance of the Temple? The Law? What is their hope? What do their day-in and day-out practices look like in light of a much more modest Temple and God not descending to inhabit that Temple?
5. How can we, today, in our lives honor God's holiness and approachability through the death and resurrection of the Messiah?

CLOSING PRAYER ACTIVITY:

Invite someone to close the group in prayer.