



Bethel South Sermon Notes – “Friendship With God: The Secret Place”

Speaker: Ps Cruz Flores

Series: Awesome God

Scripture: Psalm 25:14, Exodus 20:18–21, Exodus 33:11, John 15:15, Hebrews 12:18–29

Main Idea

The fear of the Lord doesn't push us away from God. It draws us deeper into friendship with Him. God invites us into the secret place where He reveals His heart, His plans, and His presence, but intimacy requires **pursuit, position, and posture**.

Friendship With God Is the Secret Place

Psalm 25:14 says:

“The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.”

We can easily become too casual in the way we think about God. He loves us deeply and invites us into friendship, but He is still the holy, sovereign King of the universe.

The Hebrew word translated as “friendship” in Psalm 25 is **sod**, referring to an inner chamber or secret counsel. It carries the picture of a king bringing trusted people close enough to reveal things that aren't shared with everyone.

Friendship with God is an invitation into this **secret place of covenant privilege**.

God wants us close enough to know His heart.

Three Keys to the Secret Place

1. Pursuit

Jesus has already made a way for us to come near through His blood.

But our pursuit is our responsibility.

We are as close to God as we choose to be.

God isn't withholding Himself from us. The question is whether we are intentionally pursuing Him.

Intimacy doesn't happen accidentally. We have to choose the secret place, seek His presence, and make room to hear His voice.

2. Position

Through Jesus, our position has changed.

We aren't outsiders trying to earn our way into God's presence. Jesus has opened the way for us to draw near.

In John 15, Jesus tells His disciples:

“I no longer call you servants... I have called you friends.”

Jesus doesn't only want servants who carry out instructions. He invites us into friendship where He makes known what He has heard from the Father.

Through the Holy Spirit, we can experience this friendship with God **right now**.

3. Posture

Our access to God should never cause us to lose our reverence for God.

The proper posture for friendship with God is **the fear of the Lord**.

Holy fear isn't being terrified of God. It is recognizing who He truly is and responding with reverence, awe, humility, and obedience.

Intimacy should never produce casualness. The closer we get to God, the more deeply we should honor Him.

Step Into the Cloud

When God descended on Mount Sinai in Exodus 20, the mountain was surrounded by thunder, lightning, smoke, and darkness.

The Israelites saw what was happening and **stood far off**.

Moses responded differently.

He stepped into the thick darkness where God was.

Both Moses and the Israelites encountered the holiness of God, but their response was different. The people experienced a fear that caused them to retreat. Moses carried a holy fear that caused him to **draw near**.

Later, Exodus 33 tells us that God spoke with Moses **face-to-face, as one speaks to a friend**.

Sometimes our circumstances can feel like a thick cloud. We can't see clearly, and it may feel as though God is distant.

But God's presence can still be **in the cloud**.

Don't automatically interpret difficulty, uncertainty, or darkness as God's absence.

Instead of drawing back, step in.

From Mount Sinai to Mount Zion

Hebrews 12 contrasts two mountains.

Mount Sinai represented an encounter so terrifying that the people wanted to stay at a distance.

But because of Jesus, we have come to **Mount Zion, the city of the living God.**

Our access has changed.

God's holiness has not.

The same passage that celebrates our access to God reminds us:

“Our God is a consuming fire.”

Grace doesn't make God less holy. It gives us access to the Holy One.

Because of that, we worship Him with **reverence and awe.**

Holy Fear Draws Us Near

There is a kind of fear that makes us hide from God.

That isn't the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord recognizes His holiness and responds by wanting to get as close to Him as possible.

Deuteronomy 5:29 reveals God's desire that His people would always have hearts that fear Him and obey Him.

Holy fear and intimacy aren't opposites.

Holy fear is the posture that allows us to experience deeper intimacy with God.

The more clearly we see who He is, the more we honor Him. And the more we honor Him, the more deeply we learn to treasure His presence.

Final Challenge

Ask yourself:

Have I become casual with God?

Have other relationships, priorities, distractions, or desires taken the place that belongs to Him?

God is inviting us beyond surface-level Christianity and into the secret place.

Jesus has already made the way.

Now we choose to pursue Him.

Humble yourself before Him. Repent of casualness or idolatry. Restore reverence to your relationship with God and intentionally pursue His presence.

The secret place is friendship with God, and friendship with God is the secret place.

Discussion Questions

1. What does Psalm 25:14 teach us about the connection between the fear of the Lord and friendship with God?
2. Ps Cruz described three things needed for the secret place: pursuit, position, and posture. Which of these stands out most to you right now, and why?
3. What can we learn from the different responses of Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai? How can holy fear cause us to draw near rather than pull away?
4. What are some ways we can become too casual in our relationship with God without realizing it?
5. What would intentionally pursuing the “secret place” look like in your life this week?