

that is precious. What a precious lesson to share! Three reasons were shared as to why we may not feel God's presence, the first being we over-sensationalize the presence of God. We look for God's presence in spectacular displays of power and might rather than a quiet meditative reading of scripture, or the embrace of a loved one or a beautiful sunset. What do you look for when you want to feel God's presence? Prayerfully meditate on this question and write your response here.

Thursday, June 6

The second reason we explored for not feeling God's presence is hardened hearts. Some people have experienced a deep hurt that caused them to protect their hearts by shielding it with an impenetrable shield. They don't want to be injured again. Some hardened hearts are caused by an ongoing sin that a person thinks they can handle. The SIN is literally and expression of a "Soul In Need." A person can become mired in a cycle of shutting out both God and others from their life. Do you know people with a "hardened heart?" Are you experiencing a hardened heart? Pray and meditate over this reason for not feeling God's presence and write your reflections here.

Friday, June 7

The third reason we explored for not feeling God's presence is God wants us to draw near. The time and place of our lives indicates a need and desire for God. This may very well be God's gift to us! God wants us to pursue God! So, how do you pursue God? Through prayer, Bible reading and study, meditation, some form of service? It is a wonderful blessing to realize that God wants to draw us near and wants to be pursued by us. Make a plan to pursue God in your own unique way and in pursuing God may you be found! Write your thoughts here.

Message Notes – June 2, 2024

Ever Wonder Why?

*Why Does God Feel Far Away?**

- I. Our Mission Statement at Central church: "Central UMC: Connecting with _____. Connecting with _____. Changing Our World with Christ's Love."
 - A. It is our hope that a person's experience at Central Church will involve a cycle of developing meaningful relationship with _____ and _____.
 - B. Now that we're past the pandemic we've learned the importance of connecting _____ to _____.
 - C. Moses would not have been the leader of God's people if he had just met with God _____ to receive God's call upon his life.
- II. How many of you believe you felt the _____ of God at some point in your life?
 - A. Here's a follow up question: How do you _____?
 - B. If you haven't felt God's presence in a long time or very seldom or perhaps never been quite sure of God's presence, you are _____.
 1. King David, who wrote Psalm 88, "O Lord, why do you cast me off? Why do you hide your _____ from me?" (Verses 14)
 2. Paul must have thought, "But I thought we're going to reach the _____, God. And not seeing any lives _____."
 3. Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you _____ me?"
 4. Jesus felt far away from God in the moment when he _____ God most.
- III. Three reasons why God feels _____
 - A. First is maybe we _____ - _____ God's presence.

*Psalm 16 and Exodus 34:29-35

B. A second reason we might not be experiencing God, is that maybe our hearts have _____.

C. The third reason for feeling far away from God is maybe God just wants to _____.

- IV. So what are we to do? _____ God! Draw near to God. Call on God in _____ situations.
- A. Remember that God is not _____ from each one of us. (Acts 17:27)
- B. Today is our _____ and _____ to draw near to our loving Creator God

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, June 3

This week question in our series of messages titled “Ever Wonder Why?” is “Why Does God Feel Far Away?” The flip side of that question is when have you felt God’s presence in your life? What did you feel? What emotions welled up within you? What happened after you felt God’s presence? What was the result of feeling close with God? It would be our hope that you have

experienced God’s presence in some way. If you haven’t, have you ever wondered why? These are a lot of questions! Meditate upon them, be patient with yourself and write your reflections here.

Tuesday, June 4

Read Exodus 34:29-35. Take a moment to think about what Moses must have looked like as he descended from Mount Sinai with the Tablets engraved with the Ten Commandments. Read again this passage. Have you ever seen a person whose face shined? To be clear, there is no make-up involved, no mask or chemical peel; that person’s face just shined. I (Pastor Jack) remember seeing a young woman I’d known for years conducting a meeting for the first time ever; she had been at this annual meeting often as an assistant but now she was in charge and loving it! My comment was, “You are just shining!” She hugged me and said, “Pastor Jack! I just love my job. I’m having so much fun!” Have you had that type of experience of seeing someone shine? Have you ever been described as shining? Think about this passage from Exodus and these questions and write your thoughts here.

Wednesday, June 5

Read Psalm 16. This is a very upbeat Psalm attributed to King David. Verses 8 and 9 proclaim, “I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.” These words express deep joy at the presence of the Lord. Have you ever felt such a presence? This Psalm begins with the words, “A Miktam of David.” A Miktam is a valuable object made of gold or figuratively speaking a lesson or teaching