**Sacred Journey XXXI**

**Encountering God: *Power in Presence***

**Luke 8:43-46**  43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

Here is an email conversation I had with Rev Ed Nelson in the Fall of 2017 on the reality of spiritual substance in Presence.

**JACK**: *When I woke up this morning God impressed upon me the reality of spiritual substance (with)in God’ Presence. Wind/breathe is evidenced/encountered as motion (it is motion) because of the substantive power* ***that it is****!  God chooses this word/metaphor, not just to reveal Himself, but for us to substantively experience Him.  Similarly, His 'kabod' or ‘Glory’ (literal meaning: weightiness) is also ‘a visual’ for us as its meaning/experience is contained and connected within the word ‘breathe’.  "And he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'."  God's Spirit is not ‘void’, that is to say ‘empty nothingness, for that would make Him without substance.  His Spirit is movement (ruach: wind/breathe) and weighty/heavy (kabod) and the very substance (“faith is the substance of things hoped for” Hebrews 11:1) that is 'life' and ‘brings life’!* *When He breathed into man in Gen 2:7, God breathed Himself into man and man became a 'nephesh’, ‘a living being, soul,’ meaning an ‘eternal being’.  The* ***‘substance of God’****, that creates unity (fellowship) within the Godhead, was planted within His creation whereby giving us the ability to* ***experience***[in Godly] *union with Him.  Yes, God is Spirit, but His Spirit is substantive* [has substance].

*Encounter may be the word to be used here along with experience.*

**ED:** *Got it. Recommend you order a book by Rabbi Rachel Timoner, BREATH OF LIFE. She has some good and some interesting insights for framing concepts, like ruach (wind, life-giving breath, spirit), neshamah (breath, soul), nephesh (soul), etc.*

**JACK:** *I have been carrying it around for months. I needed to share this and do seek agreement.  The 'blowing’ aspects in the physical articulation and pronunciation of certain Hebraic words, along with the meaning of Kabod (heaviness, sacred) from our recent conversations' brings out this revelation.*[**Note:** When you say the Hebrew words ru-ach and ne-phesh you actually make a blowing sound when you say them.] *Manifestations are not just* [the] *things God causes to happen as part of Him being among us, they are the coming of His Presence upon us.  He has moved into our midst! This is a substantive encounter as well as a supernatural experience.*

**ED:** *It is "in reality", not the supra-reality of mysticism*.

**JACK**: *Got it! God is not a 'ghost' but ‘ru-ach’, “substantive” in Spirit.*

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Here are some claims that I take away from this exchange:

*Presence is substantive*

*The substance of Presence is experienced in God’s Power*

*God’s Power is God’s Presence*

*To experience God’s Presence is to experience God’s Power*

*To experience God’s Power is to experience God’s Presence.*

As we dive more deeply into experiencing God, I want to take a moment and to just drive home one singular point. As we spoke about the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit we emphasized that even though they may be individually cited in the Scriptures we can be assured that we are seeing all three of the persons in the Godhead actively involved. They are inseparabl, and it is this same mystery that is active when we speak of the Presence of God and the power of God. They are also inseparable. Wherever there is the Presence of God there is also the power of God. If the power of God is referred to in a particular passage of scripture, we can say that the Presence of God is there. If we experience the Presence of God, it means the power of God is in our midst. Presence is Power and Power is Presence in the Godhead.

The manifestations and gifts of the Holy Spirt are evidence of the Presence of God. Some may speak of the power of God being on display, but the power is our evidence that the Presence of God is here.

My dialogue with Rev. Nelson came about because of my reflections upon the Presence of God, that whenever God's presence was experienced, the experience was an encounter with the power of God. Many times, the encounter would be both spiritually and physically impactful, and not trying to become too mystical in our understanding of Presence and power of God, we do know that God, who is spirit, is more than a wispy ghost. An encounter with God is an encounter with the most substantially existing Being ever. You cannot have an encounter with God without being impacted by God.

Part of the mystery is that some of the things we consider to be non-physical and lacking in substance are therefore thought to be without impact, and yet quite often they are discovered to be profoundly impactful. Take faith for example. Faith does not have any physical attributes and therefore is thought to have no substance. But the book of Hebrews Chapter 11:1 tells us that "faith is the substance of things hoped for". Here ‘substance’ is something we are "assured of". It comes from the Greek word hupostasis (**u`po,stasij**) and is defined as “substantial in nature, essence, an actual being.”

Can it somehow be weighed and measured? For that is normally how we determine that something has "substance". That it is some form of matter. But something doesn’t have to be made up of matter to be substantially impactful.

If we probe a little deeper into understanding the substantial impact of God’s power and Presence upon our being, the thought is that the substance of our encounter is also an impartation of ‘wisdom, counsel and a witness’. The Presence and Power of God impacts us beyond the physical, beyond the emotional and deep into our conscious minds (the soul). *Hupostasis* is only found five times in the New Testament; once in Hebrews 3:14 and twice in 1st Corinthians 9:11 and 11:17. In these passages we see that ‘confidence, trust, and assurance’ are the translational meanings applied, but we also find it being used in Hebrews 1:3 and here it is translated as ‘*person’* or *‘being’*.

NIV **Hebrews 1:3** “The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his ***being***, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

Any encounter with the Presence and Power of God is an encounter with His ‘*being*’. But what kind of encounter is referred to? *Hupostasis* is used once in the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew and the Hebrew word that it corresponds to is ‘sode’ (**dAs**)))). ‘Sode’ is found many times in various contexts in the Old Testament but when used in connection with God it is primarily understood to mean ‘an *impartation of wisdom, counsel, revelation of secrets* and *witness’*.

Here in the King James:

KJV **Amos 3:7** “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his ***secret*** unto his servants the prophets.”

 And again, in the New International Version:

NIV **Amos 3:7** “Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without ***revealing*** his plan to his servants the prophets.”

NIV **Psalm 25:14** “The LORD ***confides*** in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.”

NIV **Proverbs 3:32** “for the LORD detests a perverse man but takes the upright into *his* ***confidence.”***

When we say that God can be substantially impactful during an encounter between Him and man, we are not implying that man has somehow connected or touched by the "matter" that is God. This would be absurd because God is Spirit, but there is something supernatural that happens during an encounter with God that is substantial. One of the substantial aspects of an encounter with God has to do with Him imparting Himself to the object of His love. And what God deposits into those who encounter Him is also a witness that He is God. He counsels us that He is real and what He declares about Himself in Scripture is true: “That He is alive makes us alive in Him!” From these encounters with God we are given the confidence to put our trust in Him. Through an encounter with God we have now experienced God in a substantial way. In His Presence we experience His power and wisdom, which imparts to us an assurance that what we have experienced is true.

What else can we say is important when we encounter the substance of God's Presence beyond His power and wisdom? Where might we discover the substance of God's character and nature? In a divine encounter with His Presence we can actually sense who God is. But is there evidence within Scripture to help us to defend what we have discerned about His nature? It just so happens that we can.

NIV **Numbers 14:18** “The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

NIV **1 John 4:16** “And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. *God is love.* Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”

Scripture does reveal God's nature to us. In both the Old and the New Testaments God is described as a "loving God". It is more than just a discernible attribute of His character; it is His very nature. It is impossible for God to act outside of His nature. Every decision of His will and every act of His Spirit begin and end in love. Even His judgment you might ask? Yes, even when He is judging His creation as Numbers 14:18 reveals. God's nature is to love. And His nature is substantially felt in His Presence. We feel and sense His loving nature and more specifically His love for us. 1 John 4:16 affirms that His love isn’t only felt but is transferable in His Presence by His power. “Whoever lives in love lives in God and God lives in him’.

In His Presence our spirit confirms what the scriptures affirm!

So, God's nature is love. And His love is defined for us in Scripture. Paul writes about God's love in 1st Corinthians chapter 13, verses four through eight.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8**  4 “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails….”

We also discern from scripture that love is not the only characteristic of His nature. His Spirit is described for us in Galatians chapter 5.

**Galatians 5:22-25**  22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control….”

So, we can surmise that the fruit, the resulting emanations of His love, are jointly exhibited wherever the love of God is expressed. The Presence of God deposits His love into us, and we simultaneously receive His love, His joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The fruit, by definition, can be distinguished separately, but they are received conjointly as one!

How wonderful and glorious is this gift? This portion in verse 23b, “Against such things there is no law” means that living by the fruit of the spirit is so perfect that it is sinless, and we are without condemnation.

Encountering God provokes a new life within us. “24 “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.”“ How is this possible?

“25 “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”” We strive to allow the Spirit, the Presence and Power of God, to live through us as He empowers us. This is the fulfillment of John 15:14.

NIV **John 15:12** “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

Believing and accepting this as true, we can make these claims:

*God is the substance of His Spiritual fruit*

*God is love*

*Love releases the fruit of God’s Spirit*

*His fruit releases His Love*

*To reject His love is to reject His fruit,*

*To reject His fruit, in a manner, is to reject Him.*