

In The Father's Throne Room

Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens . . . But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises (Hebrews 8:1, 6).

Jesus has always been God (John 8:58, Revelation 1:8). He was the God of creation (John 1:1-3). He was the God Man in His incarnation (Matthew 1:23). He is now and always will be God (Hebrews 13:8). The writer of Hebrews tells us that Christ is now seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty. Since this was always His privilege, why is this so important to you and to me?

The significance is that through His sacrifice as the Lamb of God, He, our High Priest, has done what no other High Priest had ever done. He completed the work of redemption and sat down. Now because He is there, you and I as believers in Him, can come *boldly to the throne of grace* (Hebrews 4:16). This is not a future promise. It is a present reality.

Realizing that access to God's throne room is readily available should give Christians an excitement about prayer and cause us to use that privilege constantly. Who would not want to have an audience with the King at any time, seek His advice and know that His presence is only as far away as a thought?

I am on a quest to learn more about prayer. If I had the opportunity to talk with the writer of Hebrews, my question to him would be: "What can your letter teach me about prayer?" The answer to that question is the subject of this study.

The Life and Words of God's Son

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:1).

Although the beginning verse of this letter does not reference prayer itself, there is an application to prayer. Prayer is a conversation with God. A conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. If you are truly interested in hearing from God (His side of the conversation), you must be able to know how He speaks and recognize His voice when He does.

In the Old Testament, He prepared us for the coming of His Son. He spoke *to the fathers by the prophets* promising the redemption that would come through Jesus Christ. Abraham was justified by faith, not by works (Romans 4 and Genesis 15:6). The men and women mentioned in Hebrews 11, the great "Hall of Faith," were justified by faith. Their faith was in the promise to come.

In the New Testament, we have the account of Jesus' birth, life, sacrificial death, resurrection, ascension and presence in His body as well as additional prophecies about His second coming. If you are a believer, like Abraham, you are justified by faith, not by works (Romans 5). Your faith is in the promise fulfilled.

God, who chooses to speak with His children, speaks to us clearly through His Son. Jesus told His disciples, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. . . . But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things that I said to you"* (John 14:23,26).

If you want to hear God speak to you, listen to Jesus. If you do your part (love Him and keep His word), God will live with you and in you and His Holy Spirit will remind you of the things that you need to hear Him say to you.

Reflections for further study:

- What were some of the ways that God spoke in the Old Testament? Examine the accounts of Abraham, Moses, Job, Elijah and others.
- Since God has *in these last days spoken to us by His Son*, give examples of ways that you can hear Jesus speak to you.

The Throne of Grace

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

As has been mentioned, because of Jesus, believers have access *to the throne of grace*. Every need you have is met at this place of privilege. Prayer is the means by which you *come boldly to the throne of grace*.

Reflections for further study

- This verse begins with *Let us therefore* . . . What does the writer of Hebrews say in the preceding verses that help you know that you may come *boldly to the throne of grace*?
- Can you picture yourself at God's throne? Are you dressed appropriately? Do you have any need for cleansing before you come to His throne? What will you say to Him today when you approach Him? Do you need forgiveness . . . help. . . instruction. . . insight. . . wisdom for a task? Whatever your need is, He is there to meet it.

Christ's example in prayer

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety (Hebrews 5:7 NASB).

Read the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus and note the many times it is mentioned that He spent time in prayer. He prayed for others, He prayed for Himself, and He taught about prayer.

Reflections for further study

- Read Matthew 6:5-15, 7:7-11, 7:21-23. What does Jesus teach about prayer in His sermon?
- What does Matthew 9:37-38 tell you about prayer and evangelism? Are you faithful to pray for God to send *laborers into His harvest*? Is He speaking to you to become a laborer?
- Read Jesus' prayer of Matthew 11:25-26. Read the chapter in its entirety. Why did Jesus pray, *"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes?"*
- Before Jesus fed the four thousand men with seven loaves and a few fish, *He took the loaves and the fish and gave thanks* (Matthew 15:36). Have you ever experienced the multiplication principle in your own prayer life? If so, share with someone what God did.
- When Jesus addressed the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, what did He have to say about their prayers (Matthew 23:14)? What prayer principle is He teaching here?
- Matthew 26:36-46 is the account of Jesus and the three disciples in Gethsemane. What did He pray? What did He ask His disciples to pray?
- Compare Jesus' prayer of Matthew 27:46 and Hebrews 5:7-8.
- Read John 17 and "The World's Most Majestic Prayer" (another Bible study on this website). Answer the "questions for reflection" at the end of that study.
- If Jesus found it necessary to pray, how much more do you and I need to pray?

The Intercession of Jesus

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).

Picture the throne room of God. Visualize God the Father and God the Son talking about you: someone made in *Our image, according to Our likeness* (Genesis 1:26). Since Jesus can *sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin* (Hebrews 4:15), He stands ready to intercede for you. Now,

imagine yourself approaching *the throne of grace* boldly asking for His mercy and grace to help in your time of need (Hebrew 4:16). Pray “in His name” (John 14:13-14) and let Him do the rest.

- How comforting is it to you that your risen Lord is still interceding on your behalf?
- Compare Romans 8:26, 8:34 and Hebrews 9:24 with Hebrews 7:25.

Clean and Pure

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:19, 22).

How can you approach God’s throne of grace boldly? No one can approach God through any personal merit; only through the shed blood of Jesus. The apostle John says that *the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:7b, 9). In Psalm 24:3-4, David says, *Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart. . . .*

Before the coming of Jesus, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies. There was a veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The historian Josephus reported that this veil was 4 inches thick and that even horses tied to each side could not pull it apart. Yet, at the death of Jesus (Mark 15:38), this veil was torn in two from top to bottom.

Reflection for further study

- What is the significance of the veil being torn from top to bottom?
- If you have come to Jesus, confessed your sins, received His forgiveness and serve Him as Lord, you can have *boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus*. What does being welcomed into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies mean to you?

Pleasing and Praising God

...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name (Hebrews 13:15).

Reflections

- Is it your desire to please God? If it is, the answer is simple. Trust Him. Prayer, communication with God, is the means by which to *diligently seek Him*.
- The Old Testament records the sacrifice of animals to God. This was a prelude to the sacrifice that Jesus would offer as He submitted Himself to the cross for us. It also was a tangible witness to the pagans that the people of Israel worshipped the one true God. Now, verbal witness of God's working in a believer's life, *the fruit of our lips*, is the *sacrifice of praise*. Do you tell others of God's involvement in your life?

Privilege of Praying for Others

Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably (Hebrews 13:18-19).

No one knows for sure who wrote the book of Hebrews. From this request it appears that there may have been more than one contributor to this letter. They all had a clear conscience before God. That would have only been possible through the blood of Jesus (see Hebrews 10:19, 22 above). These men desired *to live honorably* and for the glory of God.

God designed the family of God to care for one another. It is a privilege to pray for our brothers and sisters. If someone asks you to pray for them, do so. Just as parents are thrilled when their children watch out for each other, God is pleased when we care enough about each other to bring someone's request to His throne room.

Question for Reflection

- Is your conscience clear before the Lord? Do you confess sin as soon as you are aware of it?
- Do you desire to live honorably before the Lord?

A Prayer and a Purpose

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever
(Hebrews 13:20-21).

This summarizes the body of the letter itself. The *God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead* provided through His Son a way for us to come back to Him; to have peace with God.

. . . that great Shepherd of the sheep

The letter states that it was Jesus, who being our High Priest, gave Himself as the ultimate sacrifice. He accomplished what animal sacrifice could not. He completed the requirement for justification. At His crucifixion, He said, *"It is finished"* (John 19:30). In John 10, He said as the Good Shepherd, He willingly laid down His life (John 10:17-18). He is the Priest who offers the sacrifice (Hebrews 2:17). He is the Lamb of God, the sacrifice itself (John 1:29). He is the Shepherd who protects his sheep (John 10). Everything that was required to reconcile sinful man back into relationship with righteous God was accomplished through Jesus (Romans 5:1-11).

. . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days," says the Lord: "I will put My laws into their hearts and into their minds I will write them," then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Hebrews 10:16-17). This is the final everlasting covenant. Jesus fulfilled it when he *offered one sacrifice for sins forever* (Hebrews 10:12).

. . . make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever.
God has a purpose for your life. He has given you all the resources in Jesus for you to accomplish that purpose, please Him, and bring glory to His name.

Question for Reflection

- Is your life pleasing to God? Does it bring glory to Him?

The Benediction of the Letter to the Hebrews

Grace be with you all (Hebrews 13:25).

This was the type of benediction that Paul used to conclude his letters. Since the other letters of the New Testament written by James, Peter, John and Jude do not conclude this way, this may be one reason that some scholars suppose that Paul penned this letter or was one of its authors.

Questions for Reflection

- Are you willing and able to share God's grace with others?
- Is prayer a duty or a privilege to you?
- What has Hebrews taught you about prayer? Are you encouraged to pray more?