

HOW CAN I COME TO GOD?

HEBREWS 11:6 • TV111A

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By

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Hebrews 11:6

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

My subject this morning is entitled: **“HOW CAN I COME UNTO GOD?”**

I am reading a passage of Scripture from the **Hebrews 11, verse 6** in which the apostle Paul writes, *“Without faith it is impossible to please God: For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

How can I come unto God? That’s what Paul’s writing about here; sinners coming to God. Now, how can I come to God?

Well, my friend, if you ask this question in the home or on the street or even in the church you will get about a hundred different answers: “How can a man come to God?” Do you know the reason you will get a hundred different answers? It’s because men do not agree on who God is.

Now, some people see God as all love and no wrath. And some people see God as all wrath and no love. And some people see God as all mercy, and no righteousness. And there’s some who see God as all righteousness and no mercy.

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Some see God as the Creator who is involved and interested in the affairs of His creatures. And some see God as an impersonal being that had nothing to do with the creation of this world and it simply evolved and so He's gone off somewhere waiting to see what man will do with the world.

So, that's the reason you will get a hundred different answers. "How can a man come to God?" Ask it anywhere, in the home, in the shop, on the streets, and in the churches and you will get many different answers because men do not agree on who God is.

And I will tell you something else; they do not agree on what sin is. That's the reason you will get many different answers.

How can I come to God? Well, men will give you many different answers because they do not agree on what's wrong with us and why we need to come to God. Some see sin as only outward acts and some understand sin to be only inward evil.

Some see sin as confined only to the acts of the flesh. And some people understand sin to be an act of the spirit, or a principle, or a nature.

Some see man as naturally good. You can hear them say: "Well, there's a little good in everybody isn't there?" And like the principal of the school who had the sign over his desk: "I never met a bad boy; there's no such thing as a bad boy."

So, some people see man as naturally good and other people see man as naturally depraved and evil. So, you can't get the same answer because men do not agree on what sin is and why we need to come to God.

Then you will get a different answer because men do not agree on what salvation is. What does a man receive who comes to God? Some people regard salvation as only a title deed to heaven. All they are interested in is having a title deed to heaven:

**"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the sky
I'll bid farewell to every tear
And wipe my weeping eye."**

Others regard salvation as a reformation of life. Others regard salvation as a doctrinal position, a denominational position. Some regard salvation as a new birth, a new life and a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Well, you will get many different answers to this question: "How can a man come to God" because men do not agree on what salvation is.

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Then, they do not agree on who does the saving. They certainly don't agree on that. Some people believe that salvation's of the Lord; that salvation is of the Lord in its planning, in its purpose, in its execution, in its application, in its sustaining power and in its ultimate perfection.

Some people believe that God has nothing to do with salvation, that he has done all He can do and that's totally and entirely in the hands of the sinner. They preach, "Sinner; save thyself." So, the question I'm dealing with this morning is vital and important but we get so many different answers. How can I come to God? And the reason we get so many answers is; *"There's a way that seemeth right unto man."*

And it's like old Naaman when he stood in front of the prophet of God's little house and the prophet had sent his servant out to talk to Naaman. Here he stands with his leprosy dying and the servant comes down and says; "My master says for you to go dip seven times in the River Jordan and you will be clean." Naaman went into a rage. This is what he replied; "Now that's not the way I thought I can be healed."

"Here's what I thought, that your master would come out here and strike his hand over the infected spot and say some words, magic words before God, and I would be healed but dipping in this river, especially considering the fact that we have two rivers at home that are a lot better than this one down here; this is what I thought."

And this is the problem when we deal with this question, "How can man come to God?" There are some folks that are giving answers that they think are right. We need to go to the Scriptures.

But I will tell you this, I do know this; I know this for certain, I must one day come to God, now that's for sure; I must one day come to God, even now for mercy or in the future for judgment. But, I am going to meet God. I'm going to come before God.

The Scripture says, *"It's appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment."* So, we are going to come before God either for mercy or judgment. And the Scripture says, *"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."*

And listen to this Scripture in Hebrews, *"All things are naked and open unto him with whom we have to do."* It doesn't say, "With Him, in whom we ought to do business with or should do business with but it says: *"All things are naked and open unto him with whom we have to do."*

So, I've got to come before God, even now or at the judgment. The Scripture says in Philippians, *"Every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess in heaven, earth, and under the earth, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."*

And in describing death Solomon said, *"The body returns to the dust from whence it came and the soul to God who gave it."* So, I'm going to come before God. Now, there's no question about that.

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I better find out the answer. The Scriptural Bible answer to this question, how can I come before God for mercy, because I certainly don't want to stand before Him in the judgment and hear Him say, *"Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

My friend, I'm interested personally, in coming to God now. And I'm interested in your coming to God in saving faith, in godly sorrow over sin, in true repentance and in receiving Christ. I'm interested in your coming to know the living God.

You know David, in **Psalm 42** said, *"As the deer panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for the true and living God."* Oh, he went on and said, *"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"*

And our Master said: *"This is eternal life that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."* I want to know God. I want you to know God.

It's not important for you to become a denominational promoter. It's not important for you to become a great theologian. It's not important for you to know a great deal about prophecy and what's going to happen here in the millennium or during the tribulation. But, it is important for you to know Christ.

My friend, you can perish knowing all the answers to the prophecies but you can't perish knowing Christ. Paul said, *"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering."*

May I suggest four things to you about this business of coming to God? How shall I come before God? Let me deal with four things. Let me offer four suggestions and you consider them please!

First of all: I must come to God now: *"Behold, now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation. Boast thyself not of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth"*

My friend; today belongs to the wise; tomorrow is a refuge for fools. Do you remember when Paul stood before Felix? Felix was impressed by what Paul preached and what Paul said, and what he declared.

When he got through listening to him, he said to him: "You go your way for now. When I have a more convenient season I will send for you and we will hear some more about this matter." But, he never sent for him. He never heard the Gospel again.

I wonder if you are hearing the Gospel for the last time. I wonder if I'm preaching the Gospel for the last time. I will someday preach it for the last time and you will someday hear it for the last time.

There's an old song we use to sing when I was a small boy in a Baptist church in Alabama:

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**“Tomorrow’s sun may never rise
To bless thy long diluted sight,
This is the time; now is the accepted time
Harden not your heart
Receive Christ, when, tonight.”**

Now, I’ve given some years to the study of the Scriptures. I’m not boasting about my knowledge of the Scripture at all. *“If a man thinks he knows something, he knows nothing as he ought to know.”*

But, I’ve never found in the Bible anywhere God commanding any man to do anything tomorrow; I never have. It’s always now; *“Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation.”*

There’s only one thing that I’ve found God commanding us to do about tomorrow and that’s not to boast about it and not to be anxiously concerned about it. I do find that. In fact, our Lord was very emphatic in calling a man a fool who insisted on doing something tomorrow.

There was a rich young man whose field yielded such a great harvest that he was lying on his bed one night thinking about all that he had, all this world’s goods and how he had prospered.

He was lying there thinking not about his soul and his relationship with God, death, judgment and eternity, but he was thinking about his corn, wheat, oats, rye, and all of these things that he had piled up yonder in his barn.

And he said: “I know what I’m going to do tomorrow, tomorrow; I’m going to tear down those old barns and I’m going to build bigger barns in which to store my grain.” And God spoke to him and said: *“Thy fool, this night shalt thy soul be required of thee and then who shall these things be that you have accumulated?”*

A lot of folks have listened to this telecast all over West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, and Southern Ohio. And I’ve heard from them through these past several years and I’ve gotten acquainted with some of them.

Every once in a while I’ll get a letter from a widow who will say “My husband passed away last month, he enjoyed your program; he listened every Sunday.” Or I will get a letter from a man who said “that the Lord was pleased to take my wife; she was a regular listener to your program.”

He’s going to take everybody one of these days and the time to come to God is now. *“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.”* For he warned us in **Proverbs 1:28**: *“Then shall they call on me but I will not answer. Then they shall seek me but I shall not be found of them.”*

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There will come a day when men will cry; they will cry, “*for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of God who sitteth on the throne.*” The time to call on God is now: “*Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation.*”

Listen to David in **Psalm 6:5**, “*In death there is no remembrance of God. In the grave no one gives God thanks.*” **Psalm 30:9**: “*Shall the dust praise God?*”

If you are going to praise God you’ll do it now, not in the grave. If you are going to seek God, you’ll do it now, not in your grave. If you are going to thank God for His mercy, you will do it conscientiously now through Christ, not in the grave.

So, that’s my first suggestion: “How shall I come to God?” I come now, now. “If I have not loved thee before let me love thee now.”

Secondly: My suggestion is this: I must come to God as I am!

Charlotte Elliott picked that up in her great, old hymn:

**“Just as I am without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me
And that thou bidd’st me come to thee
O Lamb of God I come,**

**Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee whose blood can cleanse each spot
O Lamb of God I come.**

**Just as I am poor, wretched, blind
Sight, riches, healing of the mind
All these in thee I’ll find
O Lamb of God I come, just like I am.”**

I must come to God. Now listen to me, I must come to God as a sinner because that’s what I am, and that’s what you are. We must come to God not as righteous because we are not righteous. We must not come to God as deserving because we do not deserve; we are ill-deserving, undeserving, and hell-deserving. I must come to God as a sinner; that’s what I am.

And all the boasting and bragging and self-righteousness and pride are not going to change that fact, I’m a sinner. “*If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*” It makes us greater sinners to say, “*We have not sinned;*” we make God a liar. “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There’s none good, no not one.*” Job said, “*If I justify myself my own mouth would condemn me.*”

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So, I must come to God. If I'm going to come to God I must come as a sinner because that's what I am, a sinner.

Thirdly: I must come to God as a sinner because, "*Christ came into the world to save sinners*"

That's why He came. He said: "*The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.*" Paul wrote in **Romans 5:** "*Christ died for the ungodly.*" Again he said: "*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus is come into the world (for the purpose of saving) to save sinners of whom I am chief.*" That's why He came.

I'm coming to Christ as a sinner because that's what I am and I'm coming to Christ as a sinner because Christ came to save sinners. "*Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins.*"

I'm coming to Christ as a sinner because He died for sinners. I'm coming to Christ as a sinner because He said, "*he didn't come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*"

All to whom the Lord has ever saved, or is saving now, or ever will save, is a sinners. Those are the only people who need salvation. He said, "*The well don't need a doctor; it's those that are sick.*"

God doesn't demand that I produce righteousness. God commands me to receive one that is already produced by the obedience of His dear Son.

God almighty doesn't command me to put away my sins; I can't put them away. Repentance can't put them away. Esau sought repentance with tears but his tears never put away his sins, they were not put away.

Death will not put them away. Christ said, "*You will die in your sins and you can't come where I am. Only the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*" He tells me to come to Him for mercy, for grace, for help:

**“Let not conscience make you linger
Nor a fitness fondly dream
All the fitness that Christ requireth
Is to feel your need of him.”**

You know that in the Scriptures every person who came to Christ and was received and helped came with a need. Just start all the way through His ministry. Take the Canaanite woman. You take the woman with the issue of blood. You take the Publican and his guilt and Zacchaeus with his evil.

All of these, the thief in his inability, his dying moment; everybody who came to him came with a need and they went away full.

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So, I come to God now and I come to him as a sinner because that's what I am. And that's who he came to save. And those are the ones he invites to come to him.

Fourth: I must come to God; (now you stay with me here) this is important. I must come to God realizing that He is offended; God is an offended God!

Now, my friend; God is love but God is Holy. God is merciful, there's no question about that, "*He is plenteous in mercy; he's rich in the mercy unto all that call upon him. He delights to show mercy,*" but God is righteous.

The Scriptures declare "*that God is angry with the wicked every day.*" The Scripture tells us that "*God will in no wise clear the guilty.*" The Scripture plainly teaches that God will, must, shall, punish sin. He always has. Sin must be punished. "*The soul that sinneth it shall surely die. Your sins have separated you and your God.*"

God is an offended God. And when a man is made to see the judgment of God against sin, the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, and the justice of God, he's made to cry with Job, "*How can he be clean that's born of a woman?*"

"Behold the moon; it shineth not. The stars are not pure in God's sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" How can a sinner be clean and justified before God? That's a good question.

We come before an offended God. We must not become so taken up with the love of God that we forget the righteousness, justice, and holiness of God.

Back in the Old Testament those people who stood before Mount Sinai when God gave the Holy law to Moses, they backed off and they said, "Moses; you speak to God for us. Don't let God speak to us lest we perish."

That law didn't draw them to the mountain. That law frightened them and drove them away from the presence of God. They feared God. They knew they were sinners and guilty and they knew God was an offended God, that His justice was offended, His righteousness was offended, and His holiness was offended and somebody had to do something about it.

There had to be a mediator. There had to be a sacrifice. There had to be atonement. And all the way through the Old Testament Scriptures from the time that Abel offered that first blood sacrifice, the Scriptures are teaching this; "*Without the shedding of blood there's no remission of sin,* (there's no forgiveness of sin, and there's no approach to God)." God will not speak to nor be spoken to by an ungodly, wretched, rebellious, guilty sinner, except through the Mediator Jesus Christ who has a suitable and acceptable sacrifice in His hand.

That's what the Scripture says in **Hebrew 9:22**. "*Almost all things under the law were purged by blood, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness, there is no forgiveness.*"

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Call it what you will; call it “the slaughterhouse religion,” “the bloody religion,” or anything you want to but I’m telling you this; *“The life of the flesh is in the blood and God said I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your sin. Without the shedding of blood there’s no remission.”*

God is an offended God. This is what our Lord said to His disciples when they gathered about Him at the Lord’s Table before He went to the cross. He took bread and He broke it and He said, *Take eat; this is my body broken for you;* (in your place, and in your stead, for you).” The perfect sinless body of Christ was broken unto the wrath of an offended God as our sacrifice and substitute.

Then He poured the wine and blessed it and gave it to them and said: *“Drink ye all of it. This is my blood shed for the remission of your sin.”* It’s by His stripes that we are healed.

So, if I come to God, I come now; I come as a sinner. And I come to an offended God who must deal with sin. He must deal with sin in me or in my substitute. I must come to God knowing that He has and He must and He will punish sin.

But thank God that I can come to Him in Christ who made a perfect atonement, who gives to me a perfect righteousness.

Fifth: How can a sinner come to God, now, as a sinner and come to an offended God? We can only come in Christ, through Christ, because, *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”*

That’s what Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians Chapter 5:19:** *“God was in Christ.”* God came down here in the person of His Son to honor His holy law. You see, God’s law will be honored; God’s law will and must be honored. It’s a holy law. It will be kept. There’s no man who shall enter heaven without a perfect righteousness before the law.

Well, you say; “We don’t have that; we can’t produce that, no man can.” With men it’s impossible; that’s right. It’s not impossible with God; all things are possible with God.

So Christ came down here and Jesus of Nazareth was a man. He was God and man, the God-man. And He met the law: *“He was made like unto his brethren in all things. He was tempted as we are, yet without sin, (without corruption). He knew no sin.”*

And as our representative He obeyed God’s holy law. *“By one man’s transgression we were made sinners. By one man’s obedience we were made righteous.”* Why did He go to the cross? He went there to die under the wrath and judgment of God for our guilt. God must punish sin and then justice must be satisfied.

The judge can’t sentence a man to serve time in prison and then just say “let him go.” The law has got to be honored. Justice has got to be satisfied. Now, when he served the time and pays the

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debt, and fulfills the sentence, he'll let him go free because the law has no claim on him, no further claim. This is what Christ did for every believer.

Christ Jesus honored the law and He satisfied justice. He served the sentence. He died for our sins; *“Christ died for our sins according to the scripture. By his stripes we are healed.”* Christ honored the law and died for our sins.

In **1 John 5:11** it says: *“This is the record; God hath given to us eternal life (salvation). And this life is in his Son.”* That's where it is; it's not in the law, it's not in the church, it's not in the rituals, it's not in the ceremonies, and it's not in the hands of a priest, preacher, missionary, or an evangelist.

It's not down at the front of the church. It's not in a mourner's bench. It's not in the baptismal pool. It's not in the sacraments, communion, or the Lord's Table, or any other ordinance.

It's not in doing good. It's not in helping your neighbor. Salvation's in Jesus Christ the Lord. It's the person and work of Christ. He accomplished it on our behalf. And we receive eternal life by believing on Him, by receiving Him, and by bowing to the royal claims of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter said, *“There's none other name under heaven given among men, whereby, we must be saved.”*

John wrote, *“For this life is in his Son and he that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God, (whatever else he has, whatever else he might go through) if he has not the Son, he has not life.”*

**“There's a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stain.**

**The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day
There may I though vile as he
Wash all my sins away.**

**Dear dying lamb thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Til all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.”**