

BOLDNESS AT THE THRONE

HEBREWS 4:14-16 • TV184A

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Hebrews 4:14-16

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

I’m reading a passage of Scripture today from the book of **Hebrews, the 4th** chapter. I will be reading **verse 16**. In a few moments I will go back and read the **14th and 15th** verses.

This is my text in **verse 16 of Hebrews 4**; our subject today is: **“BOLDNESS AT THE THRONE.”**

Paul says in **Hebrews 4:16**; *“let us therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

I believe that I speak for many of you when I say that I want to learn to pray, don’t you? I want to learn, not just to say words or to go through a ceremony, but I want to genuinely and sincerely learn to pray. I want to learn how to pray and I want to learn the things for which to pray.

I realize that much of what we call prayer today is not prayer at all. I question its sincerity and its effectiveness. Prayer is more than asking and receiving.

I know that there is a famous book by a famous preacher that has been out many years that is entitled: “**Prayer, Asking and Receiving.**” My friends; I am convinced that this thing of prayer is much more than just asking and receiving. It is much more than petitions, blessings and benefits.

Most prayers that we pray and most prayers that we hear can be summed up in one word “give me, give me, Lord give me; I want this and I want that; give me this or give me that.” The Word of God teaches us that prayer is not just asking and receiving, prayer is worship, and it is the worship of the Lord.

Prayer is thanksgiving. Paul tells us that; “*in everything give thanks; this is the will of God for you.*”

Then, I am convinced that prayer is not only worship and giving of thanks but prayer is praise, just praising the Lord, praising his attributes, praising his glory, praising his mercy, praising his presence and just praising the Lord.

I think prayer might be summed up in one word. It can be summed up in this one word: communion. It is communion or fellowship with God. John writes about that in the **1st chapter of John**; he says, “*Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*”

I believe that it is the only way that you can sum up prayer in the light of these Scriptures. The Scripture tells us “*to pray without ceasing.*” If prayer is only asking and receiving, then you can get that job done pretty quickly. If you need something you can just ask God for it and the matter is settled.

If prayer is worship then we worship without ceasing. If prayer is praise then we praise God always. “*We rejoice in the Lord always,*” the writer of Scripture says. “*We rejoice in the Lord always.*”

If prayer is worship, thanksgiving, praise, communion, and fellowship with God, then we can praise without ceasing. The Lord said, “*Men ought always to pray.*”

Then, our Lord continued all night in prayer. If prayers are only asking and receiving, then why should the Master spend all night long in prayer? Prayer is more than asking and receiving. It is more than just seeking benefits. It is more than just offering petitions to God.

It is the worship of the Lord. It is a continual attitude of thanksgiving before God, an attitude of praise. It is a continual fellowship and communion with God.

Then, prayer occupies a most important part in the life of a believer. Old John Bunyan wrote this years and years ago: John Bunyan was a man of worship and a man of prayer; he said, “Prayer is the breath of a believer. You might sooner expect a natural man to live without breathing as to expect a believer to live without praying.”

Saul of Tarsus was converted. Saul the Pharisee was brought to knowledge of Christ. The Lord sent a messenger to Saul by the name of Ananias, a believer.

He told Ananias, *“I want you to go to a street called Strait; there is a man called Saul who has been converted.”* He was a notorious Pharisee. Ananias said, *“Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints.”* *“Lord, I heard how he persecuted the church. I heard how he took men and women out of their homes and put them in prison. I heard how he hated the name of Christ, the church, and the Gospel.”*

The Lord said to Ananias, *“Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.”* This was the greatest evidence that Saul of Tarsus had been genuinely converted because now he was praying.

Then, it is because of the supreme importance of prayer in communion with our Lord that we find so much about this matter in the Scriptures. I suppose you find as much about prayer in the Word of God as any other subject.

Then, our Lord called his house the *“House of Prayer.”* He said, *“My house shall be called, (not the house of entertainment, not the house of socializing), but the house of prayer, (a solemn and holy place).”*

**“Oh let us Lord thy presence share
While before thy throne of grace,
With holy boldness may we come?
Though of a sinful race.
Thankful to find there’s always room for us
At the throne of grace.”**

Listen to my text again in **Hebrews 4:16**: *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may find mercy and grace to help in time of need.”*

Let’s break this down. I want to offer you some suggestions about this matter of fellowship with God, communion with God, and coming before the Lord. I want to speak to myself as well as for you today. Let’s deal with five things:

First of all: Where do we come? It is said that we come to a throne of grace. Who is invited to come? It is *“let us come therefore come boldly.”*

Secondly: How do we come? We come boldly, boldly before the throne of grace.

Thirdly: Why do we come? Why do we come to the throne of grace? We come *“that we may obtain mercy, that we may find grace to help in time of need.”*

BOLDNESS AT THE THRONE

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Last of all: I am going to speak about the basis on which we come, what right do we have to be there at all? What rights do you and I have to come into the holy presence of God Almighty?

Let's look at these five things from **Hebrews chapter 4:16**:

Paul said, *"Let us therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*

Now, the first question was this: Where do we come?

"Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace." We are talking about the presence of God. Back in the Old Testament under the law there was a tabernacle. In that tabernacle there was a holy place and a Holy of Holies.

In that Holy of Holies was an ark, the Ark of the Covenant. In that ark was Moses' law, the tables of stone. There was Aaron's rod that budded and there was the pot of manna.

Over the top of that ark was a solid gold mercy seat. Over that mercy seat were the cherubim's, facing the center of it. Over the cherubim's was the Shechinah glory of God Almighty.

In other words, this small space which was 15 feet wide, 15 feet high and 15 long; in this small space dwelt the presence of God Almighty. This was where God met men and men met God. It was a picture of the presence of God. It was actually a type of the presence of God.

But, into this most awesome and holy place, the high priest came once a year into the very presence of God, into the very awesome presence of God whose name is Holy and Reverend.

That high priest would come under the veil into the Holy of Holies only once a year bringing the blood of atonement, the sacrifice, also the censor with the incense burning. The smoke would fill that place. He came into the very presence of God. Only once a year the great high priest came with the atonement.

Now, when our Lord died on the cross, that veil in the temple was rent into; the Scripture says, *"From the top to the bottom."* There was not a small space torn from the side or even from the bottom to the top.

It was if God himself had taken that veil and torn it into and opening for us into the presence of God, into the Holy of Holies, opening for us an entrance into the presence of God. That is where we come, where the high priest could only come once a year, we can come every day.

That is what we are saying; it's the presence of God; *"let us come boldly unto the throne of grace,"* which is literally, the presence of God. But, I must suggest two things and let us remember where do we come? We come to a throne; it is a throne.

Now, I know God is our Father and we cry, “*Abba Father.*” We have a relationship with Him as sons of God. Don’t ever forget we come to the throne; a King sits on the throne.

Isaiah said in chapter 6:1; “*In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up, sitting on a throne. His train (or his glory) filled the temple and the cherubim’s and seraphim’s cried; holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.*”

My friends, when we pray or when we worship or when we give thanks or praise God or when we come into his presence, let us always know that though we are coming into the presence of our Father, we are also coming into the presence of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

He is God! The Scripture tells us; “*The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.*” It says in **Ecclesiastes**; “*Don’t be hasty to utter anything before the Lord.*” He is infinite, eternal, unchangeable, sovereign and mighty over all.

One of the great old writers said:

**“You are coming to the King
You are coming to the King
Large petitions with you bring.
For his grace and power are such
That none can ever ask too much.”**

We are coming to a throne. Don’t ever forget that. When we offer prayer, praise, thanksgiving or whatever, let us remember that this is the presence of the Lord God of the universe.

Thank God it is a throne of grace. I never get tired of that word grace. Grace is the choice word in the description of communion with God. It is all of grace.

If this were only a throne of justice, how terrified I would be to come because I am guilty. I would feel just like Job when he said, “*Lord; I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear but now mine eyes seeth thee, wherefore, I hate myself, I abhor myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes.*” Thank God it is not a throne of justice to which we come.

Nor is it a throne of power. If it were only a throne of power like Daniel, we would say; “*our strength melted into corruption.*”

It is not only a throne of wisdom, though it is a throne of wisdom, and yet not only a throne of wisdom, because we would have to say, “What are we doing here?” How foolish we are; “*the wisdom of man is foolishness with God.*”

If it were only a throne of holiness, we would be like Isaiah, “*woe is me; woe is me; I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.*”

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First of all: Where do we come? We come to a throne. Thank God it is a throne of grace, grace for the guilty, grace for the helpless, grace for the weak, grace for the sinful, and grace for the needy. God has grace.

“He delights to show mercy.” That is what the Scripture says. He delights in mercy; He is merciful. He said, *“I will be merciful, I will be gracious.”* So, that is where we come.

Secondly: The second thing about this thing of prayer, worship, or fellowship, or communion with God is this: Who is invited to come, just who is invited to come?

Well, it says; *“Let us.”* Paul didn’t say “come to the throne of grace.” He didn’t say, “Go to the throne of grace.” He said, *“Let us come to the throne of grace.”*

Do you know who is writing these words? Some of you are reluctant to worship and reluctant to pray, and reluctant to approach God because of your sins, because of your feelings of unrighteousness, and your unworthiness.

Do you know who this man is who is writing these words? You might say, “Paul.” I know, but he was Saul of Tarsus, do you remember? He was Saul of Tarsus. He was the man who hated the name of Christ. He was the man who consented to the death of Stephen and held the cloaks of those who stoned this godly man.

Saul of Tarsus was a man who persecuted the church, who blasphemed. He said, *“I was a blasphemer; I was injurious.”* Saul of Tarsus was the man who called himself the *“chief of sinners.”* That is who says to you and to me, *“let us come boldly before the throne of grace.”*

So, we should certainly be able to sum up enough courage to come to the throne in such company. He was a man of like passions, needs and guilt as we; *“let us;”* that is what Paul says; *let us come to the throne of grace.”*

Here is another thing about this invitation. He is not only speaking for himself and for you and me but he is writing under the power and the direction of the Holy Spirit.

This is the Word of God. This invitation comes not only from an apostle but it comes from the Spirit of God himself. You need not question the authority of the invitation; *“let us, (you and I, sinners in need of God’s mercy); let us come to the throne of grace.”*

Thirdly: Where do we come?

We come to the throne; it is the very presence, the awesome presence of God. Don’t ever forget that. Let us, you and me, ordinary people; we don’t have to be a priest or a preacher; we don’t have to be a bishop or an elder; we don’t have to be a cardinal or as a chief in the church, *“let us come boldly.”* How do we come? We come boldly. *“Let us come boldly.”*

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Now brethren, let's not mistake the meaning of that word "boldly." We do not come proudly; we do not come proudly, God forbid. I think that every one of us ought to study the prayers of Abraham in **Genesis 18**. Jot that down, **Genesis 18**.

When God told Abraham that he was going to destroy the city of Sodom, Abraham began to intercede for that wicked city. He began to approach the presence of God on behalf of the people of Sodom.

His nephew Lot was there, his family. Abraham began to pray for Sodom. Do you remember, he asked God; "*if he found 50 righteous men, would he spare the city, and then 40, 30, 20, and 10?*"

Every time, if you will read **Genesis 18**, you will find that every time that Abraham approached God he would approach God with these words, "*behold, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord. I am but dust and ashes. O Lord let me come into thy presence. Consider me not proud or presumptuous. I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord.*" Do you see the humility? He came boldly but not proudly.

This word "*boldly*" does not mean arrogantly. I hear some prayers today and there is a taste of arrogance, presumption, and pride, and it is a throne. We are His servants and He is the King. We come humbly. Even our Lord Jesus Christ when He prayed, said; "*not my will but thy will be done.*"

I believe that the word "*boldly*" might be translated this way and I believe that it might rightly mean first of all: "Come boldly into the very presence of God before the throne of grace." It would be to feel free to come at all times; you are always welcome. That is a boldness to always feel welcome.

There are places where you go that if you just open the door, you walk in, anytime, you just feel welcome, you are part of the family, and you walk right in. There are other places where you stand outside and knock, even then, hesitating to come in, but boldness, if you have a boldness of friendship, and he said; "*come at all times.*"

Secondly: I believe that the word "*boldly*" also might mean come freely with simple words.

I wonder if our children petitioned us like we do God in the same thing, what we would think about it. For example:

What if one of our children comes to us and he needs a new pair of shoes. He says, "Father, whereas, I am your son, and whereas you are my father, and whereas you have the means and the facilities to supply my need, and whereas I am in need of certain things, and whereas I have to have a pair of shoes, I wonder if you could take it upon yourself to supply me with the means to purchase a new pair of shoes?"

You would say, “Son; what in the world is the matter with you, have you lost your mind?” No, we go to the father and say, “Dad; I need some new shoes, these have holes in them,” just in simple, everyday words.

Why don’t we pray like that, just simple words? We listen to our children and they talk to us. They may be two, or three, or four years old and butcher the King’s english, but we think every word is precious and cute.

We are just glad to do what they say. A little fellow can’t even ask for a glass of water. He just mumbles what he thinks is water and everybody just gets so happy about it and runs and grabs a glass and gives him a glass of water.

Listen; he asked for water; let’s come to God in prayer, in simple, everyday words. *“We are not heard for our much speaking.”* We are not heard for our eloquence. We are not heard because of the number of our words; we are heard for the sincerity, the sincerity of heart, from which that prayer comes.

Thirdly: Then, I believe the word “boldly” might mean this: hopefully and expecting. If we expect great things from God we will receive great things. He said, *“If your child asks for bread would you give him a stone? If he asked for meat would you give him a serpent?”*

“So, if you being evil know how to give great gifts to your children, how much more shall the father give good things to them that ask him?” Come hopefully and expectantly.

Then, I believe that we should come perseveringly, boldly means to stay around; don’t leave. Did you know that the Scripture says, *“Ask and you shall receive? Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you?”*

Really it is translated, and I think in a better translation, “keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking.” For example: For Jacob said, *“Lord; I will not let thee go except thou bless me:”*

**“Just as I am, without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me
Oh Lamb of God I come to thee.**

**Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot
But that thy blood will clean each spot
Oh Lamb of God I come.”**

Come boldly!

Fourthly: Why do we come?

Do you feel your need to come into God's presence? Do you feel your need to come boldly to the throne of grace? I do and here is a two-fold reason to come:

First of all: That we may obtain mercy, (m-e-r-c-y), mercy.

My friend, this is the first matter on the agenda; this is the first order of business. Worship, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, rejoicing, fellowship, communion, whatever; we have no place speaking with God on any other matter until this question of sin has been settled. I need mercy and you need mercy.

Ruined sinners need mercy and redeemed sinners need mercy. We need mercy to forgive our sins. We need mercy to put away our transgressions. We need mercy *"to make us acceptable in the beloved."* We need the mercy of God.

This mercy is in Christ. God can receive us and hear us and grant mercy unto us because Christ Jesus our Lord has come to this earth in the flesh and bore away our transgressions, put away our sins, and paid for our iniquity.

He honors the Holy Law for us and satisfies the justice of God. So, God can be just and justifier; He can be merciful and righteous. I want mercy. We come to God's presence to obtain mercy (mercy, not justice).

"If thou O Lord shouldest mark iniquity, who would stand?" If God gives us what we deserve we will perish. Grace is God giving us what we do not deserve and mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve.

Secondly: *"That we may obtain grace, and grace to help us in time of need."*

When is your time of need? I will tell you this:

**"In every hour of every day
In every moment in every way."**

I need his grace. I need grace to live. I need grace to forgive. I need grace to love and grace to labor. I need grace to rejoice, always, even in time of trial. I need grace to walk with Christ. I need to walk by faith and not by sight.

I need grace to understand His Word. I need grace; I need grace right now, grace to preach, and grace to understand the Scriptures. I need grace to feel a passion and affection for those to whom I preach. I need grace and you need grace, every hour, every moment, of every day. We need the grace of God.

So, Paul said; *"Let us, therefore, come boldly, (frequently, at all times, freely, perseveringly, hopefully, expectantly), unto the very presence of God that we may obtain mercy."* That is where mercy is obtained, in the presence of God.

That is where grace is received for our time of need from the hand of God. He is the source of grace and He is the source of mercy and the only source:

**“Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear?
The hour I first believed.”**

Now last of all: On what basis do we come? I say that we go to the throne, to the very presence of God, to obtain mercy and find grace to help, on what basis?

Paul said, *“Let us, therefore.”* Do you see that little word *“therefore?”* When you find the word therefore in the Scriptures; read the preceding verses, the verses above it, to see what it is there for. Now you can remember that, it is very simple; when you find the word therefore, see what it is there for.

So, we go back to the two verses that I suggested at the beginning of this message: *“Let us, therefore.”* What did he say before that which gives us a reason to come to the throne of grace or the right to come? What right do we have to come into God’s presence?

In **verse 14** it says; *“Seeing that we have a great high priest.”* Now, my friends; the high priest was always chosen of God. There is Aaron, Levi, and their sons. The high priest always had a sacrifice, a sin-offering, and atonement.

Jesus Christ is our High Priest; He is the *“High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.”* He is our High Priest. *“Seeing we have a High Priest, (we have a representative, we have a mediator, and we have an advocate), Jesus Christ.”*

It says in **verse 14**; *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.”* He is not entered in the Holy Place made with hands. He has entered into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us, not with the blood of an animal but with his own precious blood.

He is Jesus Christ the Son of man and the Son of God, the God-man. Do you see what right we have to come into his presence? We have a High Priest who is seated at the right hand of God, even Jesus Christ. In **verse 15** he says, *“who can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities for he was tempted as we are and yet without sin.”*

Because our High Priest loves us and understands us, He knows your need. He knows your sins, He knows your heart, He knows your trials, and He knows your temptations. He was a man too, *“yet without sin.”*

So, *“Let us come boldly, (because we have a High Priest, come into God’s presence) unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy; and find grace to help in time of need!”*