

Prayer Problems – Hebrews 10:19-22

I. Introduction:

- A. What would you say is **greatest blessing** that we have as Christians?
1. Is it the **forgiveness** of all our sins – past, present and future?
 - a. Is it the ability to **live above** our temptations with assurance of victory through Christ and the Spirit?
 - b. Is it **eternal life** and our **inheritance** in Heaven? Mansions in Heaven?
 - c. Is our greatest gift it to be a part of the **family of God** with so many wonderful brethren?
 - d. Is it the ability to go through the stress and strain earthly life with the **peace** of God to sustain us?
 2. Among the dozens of benefits to being a child of God, we might be more blessed by one of them on Monday, but then another thrills our hearts on Thursday.
 3. At this moment it might be **Christ's love** which fills you with joy, but yesterday, when you were listening to the world news, it was the **Christian hope** that made you look beyond all the chaos.
- B. The truth is, I'm not prepared to tell you that at this moment any one blessing means more to me than another.
1. But I am going to point to something which the writer of **Hebrews** highlights in our text.
 2. We have the **privilege** to **boldly enter** into the presence of the Almighty God at any time, from any place and under almost any circumstance.
 3. We have access to a **fountain** of **comfort** when we are grieved, and we can **strengthen** our hearts and our service with the **power** that can come only from the Omnipotent.
 4. Do you need a **road map** for your life, or **a light** for your path? The Lord has those things for His children.
 5. *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*

II. We have **ACCESS** and an **INVITATION** to enter into the holiest of all places.

- A. *"HAVING therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest... let us draw near..."*
1. Paul doesn't actually define *"the holiest,"* but he has been talking about the Old Testament way of life.
 2. He has been describing Old Testament worship, including animal sacrifices just outside the tabernacle.
 3. And he has spoken of that tabernacle which was divided into the holy place and the holy of holies by a thick curtain or veil.
 4. As he does in **verse 1**, he mentions that such things were a shadow of better things to come.
 5. And here he uses that word *"holiest"* once again, certainly implying the *"Holy of Holies"* where the Ark of the Covenant represented the presence of the Lord.
- B. I have no doubt but that *"the holiest"* to which he refers in **verse 19** is wherever Jehovah is to be found.
1. And where exactly is that?
 2. Of course God is a spirit and as such cannot be confined in any way.
 3. As Solomon was completing the first Temple, he acknowledged that fact. **I Kings 8:27** – *"Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"*
 4. The Lord cannot be limited to some particular place, & we will never be able to **see** God the Father as such.
 5. But the Holy Spirit tells us that we have access to enter into God's holiest place with Him.
- C. Shall we call this place *"the throne room"* of God, from where the Lord dispenses His sovereignty?
1. Is it a cathedral for worship or a court room for judgment? Is it *"the treasure room"* of the Lord?
 2. What ever else it is, this is the place where things get done.
 3. It is the power house and furnace room of creation. It is where creation began & where it is still controlled.
 4. We are talking about the presence of Lord.
- D. And Paul says, brethren, we have **access** to the Lord, and to Him we **may come boldly**.
1. *"HAVING therefore"* – as God's children we **already possess** this opportunity and invitation to enter.
 2. This avenue is a wide boulevard with encouraging angels along the way. It is a double-wide doorway.
 3. *"Let us draw near ... in full assurance of faith."*

- E. You & I may come into this holiest of all places, because there is a *“new & living way”* through which to enter.
1. It is *“a NEW way”* as opposed to *the old way*.
 2. The old way involved people’s sacrifices, personal qualifications – their righteousnesses, their submission.
 3. But this new and living way is different; it is through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 4. We don’t need the referral of a worthy priest, and we don’t have to bring the price of a gory dead animal.
 5. We don’t have to worry whether or not the invitation has expired, or if we defiled it with our dirty hands.
 6. Admission into the Lord’s presence is now free to those who are under the blood of Christ Jesus.
- F. Notice the word *“consecrated;”* the new and living way has been **consecrated** by Christ Jesus.
1. This word is found only twice in the Bible, and in addition to *“consecrated,”* it is translated *“dedicated.”*
 2. I notice that Strong used the word *“inaugurated”* in his definition.
 3. Christ Jesus officially opened this way and dedicated it to our use while consecrating it to the Father’s glory.
- G. As you’ll remember, at the time that Jesus died on the cross, the temple veil which divided the Holy place from the Holy of Holies was torn apart into two pieces.
1. Yes, there was a severe earthquake at the time, but there is no way that an earthquake could have ripped open that new doorway.
 2. Rather, when the flesh of the Son of Man was ripped open, and when His blood was poured out, that was when He inaugurated and consecrated that new way to come to God the Father.

III. So *“let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”*

- A. Let us have *“boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus... with a true heart.”*
1. *“With a true heart”* – there is an interesting choice of Spirit-directed words.
 - a. When Paul tells us to come to the Lord with a true heart, it suggests that it is possible to come with a heart that is not true.
 - b. And elsewhere the Bible tells us that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked – **Jeremiah 17:9**.
 - c. Jesus said that *“From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications... blasphemy, pride and foolishness...”* – **Mark 7:21**.
 2. So from where does this true heart come? This is one of the blessings of being born again.
 3. It is not that our wicked heart has been totally replaced, but by God’s grace we **CAN** be **honest-hearted**.
 4. We will be true hearted when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.
 5. Truthfulness and honesty may not be listed among the fruit of the Spirit in **Ephesians 5**, but they are definitely products of the Spirit.
- B. I read recently a sermon which spoke of the sinfulness of prayer.
1. Be forewarned, you may hear a message along that line one of these days.
 2. But at this point I’ll just remind you of what **James** said in **chapter 4**.
 - a. *“Ye ask, and receive not.”* To whom did these people offer their requests? These were prayers.
 - b. *“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”*
 3. How many times do we pray with dishonest and untrue hearts?
 4. Once in a while we need to ask ourselves: Why have I come to the Lord?
 - a. What is it that I want of Him? Am I willing to accept His sovereignty even if it is not my wish?
 5. We often ask and receive not, because we haven’t come into the Lord’s holiest place with true hearts.
 6. We have ulterior motives, selfish motives, sometimes with sinful motives.
- C. But perhaps even more often, **we don’t come** with our hearts full of the **assurance of faith**.
1. Wrestling the scripture just a bit: *“He that cometh to God must believe that He is”*.... that He is God.
 2. The only One who can save that loved one of your is the Lord. Do you have assurance of faith that He will?
 - a. Do you pray for soul-stirring, soul-saving revival?
 - b. Perhaps you do. But do you have faith that God will answer that prayer?

3. I know how easy it is to lack faith and confidence, because we don't know what God intends to do.
4. But isn't the problem that we are placing our faith in the object we are seeking from the Lord rather than in the Lord Himself?
5. For example, we may be praying for faith toward someone's salvation, when really our faith should be in the Lord. We should be trusting the Source of the blessing, not the result.
6. So God didn't give us fifteen visitors last Sunday and we didn't see four people trust Christ as Saviour, but can you look back and say,
 - a. *"Thank you, Lord, for giving to us exactly what You intended for us to have?"*
 - b. *I expressed to you my selfish desires, but I trusted with the assurance of faith that you would carry out your perfect will, and you did. Praise your holy name!"*

- D. Another thing which Paul mentions in regard to our coming boldly into the Holiest is **personal cleanliness**.
1. *"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."*
 2. I think, among other things, this takes us back to the Lord's washing of the disciple's feet.
 - a. That was much more than a gracious act of kindness on dirty, calloused and perhaps injured feet.
 - b. As Jesus himself said, *"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all"* – **John 13:10**.
 3. All the disciples, except Judas, had been washed by the blood of Christ unto righteousness and salvation.
 - a. But there is a constant need for the washing of water and blood of the Red Heifer.
 - b. There is a continual need to recognize that we sin daily, and this daily defilement needs to be removed.
 4. Not just at communion, but every time we come into the Holiest, we need to check with our conscience.
 - a. *"Hey, conscience, tell me whether or not I need to deal with any sin before I go to God."*
 - b. More often than not, our heart will say, *"Yes, there are things you need to confess and surrender."*

IV. And finally, **WHY** are we coming into the holiest?

- A. Let's review the text and context.
1. *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,*
 - a. *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;*
 - b. *And having an high priest over the house of God;*
 - c. *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."*
 2. Does Paul encourage you here to come to the Lord because your ingrown toenail is really painful today?
 - a. I am not saying that we have no right to pray about our aches and our pains.
 - b. But Paul doesn't refer to that sort of thing here.
 3. Does he tell us to pray for the death of Caesar, and that a new leader might release him from his Roman incarceration?
 4. Does he pray for the salvation of souls, or revival, or even for God's glory?
- B. Perhaps the lack of specific prayer requests in this scripture should tell us that our bold entry into God's Holy of Holies should be **simply to fellowship** with the Lord.
1. Isn't this at the heart of our prayer problem?
 2. We *"ask and receive not,"* because we are more interested in what the Lord can do for us than simply to enjoy the Lord.
 3. We *"ask and receive not,"* because we have a desire for what the Lord might give us, rather than for the Lord Himself.

- C. How is it that history speaks about many of God's greatest servants who could spend an hour every day in prayer and several hours every once in a while?
1. You'd think that after ten minutes they'd run out of things on their prayer lists – the way we do in five minutes.
 2. What were they doing for so long in prayer?
 3. They were in communion and conversation with their heavenly Father.
 4. They were exposing their hearts to God, and examining more closely His heart.
 5. They were like the disciples at Jesus' feet, asking the Lord to explain this scripture and that doctrine.
 6. Their heads were on Jesus' breast, whispering words of love, and sharing mutual promises and plans.
 7. Those notable people of prayer were inside the Holy of Holies with no one to interfere with their communion.
- D. **However** – having said that, let me point out **verse 24** as part of the context.
1. *“And let us consider one another...”*
 2. *“Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works...”*
 3. If there are people for whom we should pray, it should, first of all, be others. *“Others Lord, yes others.”*
 4. And in what regard should we pray for others? That they might grow and prosper as saints of God.
 5. **Grow in love** for example – Love for the Lord, for the Lord's work & glory, & also for other varieties of love.
 6. Familial love and love of the brethren.
 7. Oh, how God's churches would prosper if there was greater love between the brethren.
- E. Also, says Paul consider one another to provoke... **to good works**.
1. Is Pastor Oldfield becoming too selfish? Too lazy? Too worldly?
 2. More important than confronting him, pray for him; pray that he might abound in good works.
 3. And then remember the rest of the family – your brothers and sisters in Christ.
 4. *“Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works...”*

V. Conclusion:

- A. We have access to the Holiest of all holy temples. What a fantastic blessing that is.
1. We need to be bold to enter in, while remembering that it is through the door opened to us by the blood of the Lord Jesus.
 2. We need to be bold, but humble, and we need to enter that holiest place cleansed – washed clean once again.
 3. We need the boldness that comes with a true heart and the full assurance of faith.
- B. This is no mere religious exercise.
1. This is an opportunity to access the omnipotence of the Lord.
 2. Let us come boldly and in faith.