

**I. Introduction:**

- A. Next Wednesday we'll start a new series with Bro. Austin as our teacher.
1. In the mean time I wanted to use the two weeks between our study of **Proverbs** and this new series to encourage our hearts in the matter of prayer.
  2. Last week we considered "*The cry of the raven*" – that unclean bird.
  3. Despite its **fallen nature**; despite its **awful screech**; despite its **lack of authority** or **invitation**, God "*giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry*" – **Psalm 147:9**.
  4. We who have been **called and saved** by God's grace; we who are **clean** through the blood of Christ; we who have an **invitation and exhortation** to bring our requests unto God, should be encouraged toward prayer by watching God's care of the raven.
- B. The raven is encouraging, but not more encouraging than **Hebrews 4:16** .
1. "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*"

**II. Before we get to that exhortation let's consider its context.**

- A. The immediately preceding verse is the equally great declaration that we have an interceding High Priest.
1. "*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.*"
  2. Let us **THEREFORE** come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
  3. Not only did the eternal Son of God become the sacrifice necessary for our salvation, He was the priest who shed the blood and presented it to the Father upon the altar.
    - a. Christ was not murdered; He was sacrificed.
    - b. Christ was not sacrificed by the Romans or even the Jews, but He gave his own life a ransom for many.
  4. The immediate context of the invitation to come boldly to the throne of grace is the High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ – who we may trust is interceding on our behalf.
- B. But go back a couple steps in that context.
1. **Verse 12** – "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"
  2. I cannot read those words without picturing my Bible – the word of God.
  3. Quite often in my writing, out of respect I will capitalize the word "**Word**" – it is God's Holy Word.
  4. But notice that your Bible, the word "**word**" is not capitalized.
  5. To our translators and Bible printers, the "**word of God**" in **verse 12** is the Bible, even if they don't capitalize the word as I do.
- C. But **John 1** and other scriptures teach us that "**the Word**" is also one of the names of the Son of God.
1. And in **John 1:1** the word "**Word**" **IS capitalized**, because it is clearly a name of God.
  2. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*"
  3. And in **Revelation 19:13**, John saw the victorious Son of God, "*And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God*" – with a capital "**Word**" – even the article is capitalized.
  4. But as I say, the "**word**" is **NOT capitalized** in **Hebrews 4:12**.
  5. **However** – notice **verse 13** – "*Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in **HIS** sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*"
  6. In whose sight is everything manifest? The antecedent to "**his**" despite the change in gender is "**the word.**"
  7. It is not the written word which knows all things – it is the omniscient God.
  8. And remember, all this precedes "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*"

### III. Now think about the throne itself.

- A. We are not given a description of the throne.
1. Is this the **Great White Throne** of **Revelation 20**?
  2. Is this the throne which is high and lifted up that we see in **Isaiah 6**?
  3. Is it made of white marble? Ivory? Gold and silver covered with the richest of tapestries?
  4. It doesn't matter what its color or size, when it is under the title – *"the throne of grace."*
- B. You, know it might be argued that this is a **figurative throne**; a **virtual throne – an allegory** which speaks of God and His authority to hear and answer prayer.
1. For example, consider that title a little more deeply – *"throne OF grace."*
  2. When we say *"house of God"* what do we mean? Don't we mean the building which belongs to God?
  3. With that in mind doesn't *"throne of grace"* mean the throne **where grace sits and rules**?
  4. One might argue that this isn't exactly God's throne, it is grace's throne.
  5. And that would lend more credence to the figurative interpretation.
  6. Despite all of that, I am not going there. I do not take a figurative interpretation.
  7. This is the throne of God, who is gracious by nature, and who dispenses *"grace to help in time of need."*
- C. But let's shake things up just a bit more.
1. Who is sitting on this throne? The Lord Jesus, you say? Our Great High Priest?
  2. As you think back on the ministry of God's priests, when did they ever minister while sitting?
  3. Sure Annas and Caiaphas, corrupted versions of the priesthood, may have had thrones, but not the better priests from the Old Testament.
  4. What my feeble mind pictures here is God the Father sitting on the throne of grace with our great High Priest standing at His right hand interceding on our behalf.
  5. Christ Jesus, *"who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,"* knows how to plead our case better than we ever can, and that is exactly what He is doing today.
- D. Of course, God is a spirit, unseeable by any mortal eye.
1. We may *"see"* God, sitting upon this throne, but only through the regenerated eye of faith.
  2. That vision may be more clear than anything our 20-400, cataract covered, macular degenerating eye sight will ever see.
  3. What is it that our faith recognizes? In this case it is grace. This is the throne of grace.
  4. I am convinced we will never see the Holy Spirit per se; nor will we see God the Father.
  5. As I have said, what I picture is a throne occupied by the gracious God, but recognizable only by faith.
  6. And at His right side is our intercessor – the *"one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."*

### IV. Now, for what reason does Paul encourage us to approach this throne of grace?

- A. Generally speaking – for two things – grace and mercy.
1. This is not described as *"the throne of God's omnipotence"* even though that would not be incorrect.
  2. This is not described as *"the throne of love"* or *"the throne of all supply."*
  3. It is *"the throne of grace"* where we can come for mercy and grace.
- B. *"Mercy"* is one division of *"unmerited favor,"* and in the case of the Lord it is *"divine favor."*
1. Usually it is studied from the negative side of our needs.
  2. Mercy is the favor which God bestows on us when He does not give to us what our willful sins deserve.
  3. *"Mercy"* is described in **Ezra 9:13** – *"And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this....."*

- C. The unpopular truth is this – Christians still need as much mercy as they did at the time of their salvation.
1. It might be argued that our sins today are more hideous and heinous than they were before, because we have been blessed more than we ever have been before.
  2. *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy.”*
- D. But we also need the more positive blessing of *“grace to help in time of need.”*
1. Last Sunday the Lord was **merciful** to Kathleen Moreno, when He saved her soul.
    - a. Tomorrow as she goes into the hospital for extensive surgery, she needs the Lord’s grace.
  2. Not only are we **sinful** and in need of constant mercy, we are so **helpless** that we need constant grace.
  3. We are **blind** and **foolish**, not knowing which path to follow; we need the grace of God’s pillar of cloud.
  4. We are **weak** – **gullible** and **temptable**; we need the grace of Him *“who was tempted like as we are yet without sin.”*
  5. If it was not for the grace of God, we’d have no blessings in this world – no family life; no food on our table or in our church service; no friends; no reason to keep moving forward.
  6. Out of all that the world might promise to provide, only God’s grace is what we need and is sufficient for us.
  7. And remember that God is *“rich in grace”* as we saw last Sunday.
  8. Today and *“in the ages to come he (will) shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”* – **Ephesians 2:7**.

#### V. Paul encourages us to come unto this throne of grace – but in what manner should we come?

- A. The word he uses is *“boldly”* – that is – *“with confidence.”*
1. But **how can we** who have been recently saved from the cesspool of sin, approach God’s holy throne with confidence?
  2. As difficult as it is to learn and practice – we may be **bold** – in the Lord Jesus, our great High Priest.
  3. **He** has paid the price to cleanse us from our sin, and it’s in His righteousness that we stand before this throne.
- B. But still, that doesn’t negate the necessity of **humility**.
1. *“For the word of God... is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*
  2. If there ever comes a time when we think we have so **successfully defeated** our **sinfulness**, when we have **sufficiently served** our **Savour**, when we have **satisfactorily surrendered** our **hearts** that we deserve to approach the Lord, we should be judged not blessed.
  3. Humility is one of the most important and most blessed characteristics of the godly Christian.
- C. And thus, **submission** to the Lord is also a necessity in our approach.
1. We may honestly think that some course of action or some specific item is exactly what we need in order to do the Lord’s work more perfectly.
  2. But the Lord is under no obligation to agree with you about anything.
  3. We must be ready to sacrifice our desires, our wishes and our hopes when He shows us that His will is different from ours.
- D. And a further suggestion would be to **take care of our face and heart**.
1. Artaxerxes was king of Persia, and at the time Nehemiah – a saint of the Lord – was his cupbearer.
  2. The king had never seen Nehemiah when he didn’t have a positive attitude and a smile on his face.
  3. Until one day – *“Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick: this is nothing else but sorrow of heart.”*
  4. Nehemiah confessed that at that point, *“I was very sore afraid.”*
  5. When it comes to earthly despots, we never know how they will respond to our sorrow.

- E. I would say that we **should** come to God's throne of grace with joy – as often as we possibly can.
1. He who is a *"discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,"* will know our true condition.
  2. But in the case of the Lord, who has been *"touched with the feelings of our infirmities,"* He will not turn away if we are honest before Him with our emotions.
  3. Is your heart broken, and do you need mercy because you have sinned against the Saviour once again?
  4. Come boldly to the throne of grace.
  5. Are you in grief because of another great loss in your life? Remember that Christ wept at the tomb of Lazarus.
  6. But ordinarily, even in our need of more grace, it is best to come with a joyful heart – an expectant heart – an already thankful heart.
  7. *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*
- F. And why?
1. Because He is a gracious and merciful God.
  2. He is very willing to be merciful and gracious toward us.
  3. Therefore, *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace."*