



Title: Throne of Grace

Theme: Principles to Enjoying the Grace of God

Series: Grasping the Foundational Truths of Prayer

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Hebrews 4:14-16)

The confidence Christians may have in approaching the Throne of Grace

Today's passage of Scripture lays the foundation for the confidence Christians may have in approaching the "Throne of Grace." Christ being in heaven and without sin builds a full trust in the child of God. Christians who have Holy Spirit revelation and illumination on the truths found in today's message have the blessings of assistance in overcoming sin and guidance throughout their entire Christian walk. (The Expositors Bible Commentary)

I would propose to you that true prayer is spiritual business from beginning to end, and when offered in Jesus' Name, according to God's will prayer is powerful and effective. (James 5:16; Barnes Notes)

What are three principles to enjoying the "Throne of Grace?" It is imperative that we understand that 1.) The Throne is of a holy God. 2.) The Throne is of a Sovereign God and 3.) Know what the Throne of Grace is.

Throne of a holy God

In approaching the Courts of God one must remember that it is the Throne of a holy God. It should be approached in reverence. There are several passages of Scripture that show the response of great men who received a divine grace from God. In the year king Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Angels were flying above Him and calling one to another, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty...” (Isaiah 6:4)

In this Biblical record of the angels calling to one another we read of the prophet Isaiah getting a vision of God and receiving the commission of proclaiming a message to the Lord's people. Isaiah's work was about to grow. Perhaps the Lord saw fit to renew Isaiah's commission through a vision because, like most prophets, he had seen very little of what man calls success in his ministry. Maybe he had considered giving up so God saw fit to renew his commission through a vision.

Whatever was in the heart of the prophet Isaiah was overridden by what God wanted proclaimed about Himself, God is "Holy, holy, holy. When something is mentioned in the Word of God three times the people of God had better take note of it.

Isaiah's response while standing before the throne was, "Woe to me!... I am ruined!" (Isaiah 6:5) Isaiah began to confess his sin and the sins of his people. (Isaiah 6:5) Standing in God's light allowed Isaiah to see himself and the Israelites for who they really were. (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*)

I have noticed Christians who spend a great deal of time in the light of God's Word. The Holy Spirit just comes upon them and reveals to them what is in their hearts. They confess and they receive a special grace from God as well as becoming broken hearted over what they see in their communities.

They have Holy Spirit Illumination of was written by the beloved John, "But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7) The Greek word for purifies (*kathoriza*) means in a spiritual sense to purify from the pollution of and the guilt of sin.

That is exactly what happened to Isaiah in his vision and commission from God. After Isaiah's confession an angel took a live coal, which came from the altar where sin had been dealt with, which is symbolic of Christ's death. The angel touched the mouth of Isaiah and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." (Isaiah 6:7) Isaiah understood that the throne of God, the temple, representing the place of God presence was to be entered in reverence. God's response to Isaiah's heart was a cleansing that comes not because of what Isaiah had accomplished, but from that which represented the work of Christ.

The angel of God touched the lips of Isaiah with a "live coal" from the altar which symbolized the place where the penalty of sin was paid by a substitute offered in the sinner's place. Dr. Kay suggests that this fire is "the Divine love." The greatest love ever shown to mankind was when God sent His Son and Jesus came willingly to pay the ultimate price for sinners.

John the Baptist has great news for us. In Matthew 3:11 he speaks of the future work of Christ to His church, "[Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

To the believer, the Holy Spirit as fire ministers warmth to the spiritual heart, bringing illumination and revelation that enable the child of God to obey. He purifies and cleanses the soul. Because the carnal nature of mankind survives the baptism of water, it takes the continued work of the Holy Spirit to assure a personal life of holiness. (The Holy Spirit, L.Thomas Holdcrat)

While attending the North American Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Louisville, Kentucky, Bonnie and I attended a very large prayer meeting. Nearly 2,500 evangelists and their spouses were seeking the Lord in true heartfelt prayer. As we were praying the Holy Spirit came powerfully upon that service. We were able to get past denominationalism, legalism, and traditionalism. One man who was sitting not far in front of me went running to the front, fell on his face and began to weep and cry out to God. This visitation of the Holy Spirit came on a day when had spent the whole day on the messenger of the gospel and his need for the holiness of God in his life.

Men from the Billy Graham organization went and put their hands upon him and prayed with him. It was very evident the Lord was doing a cleansing. Wonderful things happen when you seek the Throne of Grace and are willing to just let the Holy Spirit into the sanctuary of the heart to do the work of God.

Charles Spurgeon wrote it well: "In prayer we are to come to the Throne of Grace in reverence. Rebels with unrepented sin in their hearts and those who will not leave their pride should not come before the Throne."

The Body of Christ is to approach the Throne of Grace with the heart of the Psalmist who wrote; "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offense way in me, and lead me in the way of everlasting." (Psalm 139:24) Walking in this foundational truth allows Christians to enjoy the Throne of Grace and enables them to walk in reverent fear of the Lord, knowing that He is holy.

Christians need to grasp the truth revealed to the Apostle Peter as the Holy Spirit moved him to write to God's elect. "Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:13-16)

Throne of a Sovereign God

The second principle to enjoying the Throne of Grace is to rest on the fact that it is the throne of a Sovereign God. Psalm 103:19 in the New American Standard Bible says, "The Lord has established His throne in the heavens; And His sovereignty rules over all."

Sovereignty is a prerogative arising out of the perfection of the Supreme Being. God is Spirit (John 4:24) and therefore a person, infinite, eternal, and immutable in His being. He is perfect as Creator and the Preserver of the universe and everything in it.

The Spirit of the Living God reveals to us in Psalm 115:3, "Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him." Let the Holy Spirit place this truth in your heart as you approach the Throne of God, "...His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: "What have you done?" (Daniel 4:34-35)

In other words, the child of God who enjoys the Throne of Grace understands that He does not approach God saying, "What are you doing! Why don't you do it this way?" But rather saying, "Father, you are loving and you know best, therefore, give me the will to want your will and pray accordingly.

A Holy Spirit led prayer warrior prays as King David prayed, "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all." (1 Chronicles 29:11) When Christians fully have a Biblical view of God's love and sovereign control they express a life that says, "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; (Psalm 24:1)

From these passages of Scripture and many more we see what is plain. 1.) The sovereignty of God is universal. It extends over all His creatures from the highest to the lowest. 2.) God's sovereignty is absolute. There is no limit to be placed to His authority. 3.) It is immutable. It can neither be ignored nor rejected. It binds all creatures as inexorable. This means that prayers cannot bind God to our will, but we should desire to pray His that will be done.

The Word of God as a whole teaches us that His sovereignty is exercised, 1.) In establishing the laws, physical and moral, by which all creatures are to be governed. 2.) In determining the nature and powers of the different orders of created beings, and in assigning each its appropriate sphere. 3.) In appointing each individual his position and lot. It is the Lord who boxes the bounds of our habitation. Our times are in His hands. He determines when, where, and under what circumstances each individual of our race is to be born, live, and die. Nations, no less than individuals, are thus in the hands of God, who assigns them their heritage in the earth, controls their destiny. 4.) God does what He wills with His own. He gives to some riches, to others, honor; to others, health; while others are poor, unknown, or victims of disease. To some, the light of the gospel is sent; others are left in darkness. Some are brought through faith unto salvation; others perish in unbelief. (Systematic Theology, Hodge)

There are some people frightened by the sovereignty of God and other protest.

Holy Spirit illuminated Christians rejoice with the apostle Paul who wrote about our spiritual blessings in Christ, “In Him we were chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.” (Ephesians 1: 11)

The child of God who allows the Holy Spirit to place a trust of God’s sovereignty in his heart establishes the same relationship with God in prayer that Christ had on this earth. Our best Biblical example of submission to the sovereignty of God in prayer is found in Gethsemane. In Matthew 26:36-46 we read some very key passages of Scripture that teach us a key truth to accepting God’s sovereignty and enabling us to pray, “Your will be done.”

This key truth is found in observing our greatest example in prayer, Jesus. In Matthew’s account we read of Jesus being overwhelmed with sorrow, even to the point of death. (Matthew 26:38) Our Lord struggled in those hours and Luke tells us that Jesus was in anguish... and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.” (Luke 22:44) Jesus was not a man in anguish because of dreading the results of sin that He had committed, but we read here the language of innocent dread of suffering over that which was about to be laid upon Him.

Between those prayers of, “...if you are willing, take this cup from Me;” and “Yet not My will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42) our Lord came to understand that the way of the Cross was the only way to atone for the sins of the world. (Hebrews 9:22) Jesus clearly understood the sovereignty of His Father and submitted to God’s perfect will. The Bible says that Jesus’ prayers were “...heard because of His reverent submission.” (Hebrews 5:7) “Heard” (*eiskakouo*) means to have prayers heard favorably, to have the petitions granted or answered yes to.

Knowing that God is in full control and able to do all things according to His will, enables the child of God to run to the Throne of Grace and enjoy the sovereignty of God in His life. The Lord knows what is best for us and He will clean our hearts and prepare us for service to accomplish His will.

The Throne is a place where Christians find grace

The Throne in heaven is where a holy God reigns and His sovereignty rules over all and 3.) It is a place where Christians find grace.

Our text says, “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Grace (*charis*) used in Hebrews 4:16 means “through the graces counsel of God.” (Spiros Zodhiates)

Dr. Jim Berg has a definition of grace that will help us apply God’s grace in our lives. He writes, “God’s grace is revealing His will to you and then enabling you to achieve it.”

How does a child of God enjoy the counsel of God? Psalm 119:105 says, “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” Not only does the Word of God inform us of His will, but also serves as light on a path in darkness. The Word of God tells how to live a life of righteousness in a sin dark world system. The lamp of the spiritual heart is fed with the oil of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Ephesians tells us that the sword of the Holy Spirit is the Word of God. (Ephesians)

Let me give you some examples. The first grace God offers sinners is the revelation of their need to know Christ. Then He draws sinners to Christ. Romans 3:23 says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Jesus said, “No one comes to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.” (John 6:44)

The Father draws sinners through the Holy Spirit by bringing revelation of God’s Word to a hard heart. (The Bible Exposition Commentary) Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears My words and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” (John 5:24) Jesus also taught this about the Holy Spirit’s work, “When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.” (John 16:8)

If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, it is not because of the work of man, it is God drawing and enabling you to receive the Son of God into your spiritual heart and life. Accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord opens the curtains to the Holy of holies, allowing you to have fellowship with a loving father. You may go before His Throne of Grace and give heartfelt petitions for the souls of family members, friends, and co-workers. God’s Word gives this counsel, “...[He is] not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

A second blessing of walking in the counsel of God’s Word is to enjoy the promises of having all our needs met by Him. Matthew 6:33 tell us the blessings of not putting off God’s will for us. Jesus said, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33) If a person is pursuing God’s will for them as directed through the written Word, he will see the Lord provide for his ordinary needs in life, such as food, clothing and shelter. (Matthew 6:31) (The Bible Exposition Commentary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; Matthew Henry Commentary)

A third grace to enjoy from our heavenly Father is having the High Priest, Jesus Christ standing at the Throne interceding for us. The Book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus sits at the right hand of God in heaven. (Hebrews 8:1) Jesus serves as a High Priest who is able to sympathize with us in everything we face in life.

There is great significance in having Jesus as our High Priest, serving at the Throne of Grace. Hebrews 2: 17-18 says “For this reason He had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for sins of the people.” The Book of Hebrews tell us “...that we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have One who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”

Our Lord knows our weakness (*asthenia*). That means He knows our incapacity or rather our limitations. This includes all weaknesses, moral and physical, which predispose a person to sin and facilitates the functions which birth forth sinful acts and meditations. This nature undermines our resistance to temptation and makes it impossible to get victory through our own strength. (Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains; Word Studies in the New Testament; Wuest’s Word Study)

The Lord knows how we feel when our flesh, the world and the lies of the devil attack us persistently and from every direction in life down here. Because all the sins of the world were laid upon Jesus, He is able to sympathize with us. “Sympathize” (*subpathesai*) means to have compassion upon, literally feel for and suffer within one’s own heart with the person being tormented in his weaknesses.

Every parent knows what it feels like to see a child hurting from a physical injury that keeps him from performing at his peak. Every parent struggles and hurts with their children as they struggle against the temptations of sin. I have seen the look upon parents when they watch their children come out of a cancer treatment center. Many a husband or wife has suffered with their spouse in battling a life crippling disease. Jesus felt the pain of every illness, crime committed and torment that comes with fighting sin that longs to destroy relationships.

Christians who are fully enjoying God’s grace in finances have sought His Word and found the Biblical principles to stewardship. Christians who are enjoying God’s grace through His wisdom have taken James seriously when he wrote; “If any man lacks wisdom, he should ask of God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5) There are many areas of life of which the Bible gives clear directions. Those who are enjoying the counsel of God are illuminated Christians that spend painstaking hours prayerfully studying the Bible.

Whatever bondage the flesh, the world or the devil may use to get a hold on the child of God can be defeated by going to the Throne of Grace. Jesus, through the Spirit of Christ, which is the name of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:9, will empower His children to overcome everything that tries to destroy a healthy relationship with the Lord Jesus and hinder service unto Him.

In Closing: *We are to approach the Throne with reverence and in a true humble state, for the One who sits upon it is Holy. The Bible beckons Christians to be hungry for the holiness of God.* Know for a fact that God is Sovereign and He does all things as He pleases and He does all things well.

Christ, the Great High Priest, purchased Christians with His own blood and He is able to sympathize with us regarding every part our lives. God's grace is sufficient and the Lord longs to enable obedient Christians to walk in His counsel all the days of their lives.

Pastor Kavanaugh knew the power of the Throne of Grace. Once while visiting with an unsaved doctor he was challenged to give a reason for the hope that he had. The doctor said, "I find it hard to believe that an intelligent man like you believes in the Word of God."

Pastor Kavanaugh responded with this powerful teaching. "Suppose doctor, you had a disease that if not treated with medical intervention would cause you too surely die and someone gave you a drug that restored you back to good health. For twenty-five years you gave this same drug to others who had contacted this same disease which saved them from certain death. Those who were able to get the medicine survived and those who did not died."

"What if someone who had this dreaded disease refused to take this medicine when offered and then died. What would you think?" The doctor said "Well he was a fool!"

The pastor replied; "The dreaded disease of sin had me bound and I was surely living for the flesh, the pleasures of this world and listened often to the lies of the devil. I was surely headed for eternal death. Twenty-five years ago God's grace revealed to me that I was a sinner bound for the gates of hell. My life was in fact being directed by the disease of sin."

"God's grace revealed to me the Name of a Savior who died for my sins and offers to me forgiveness and a new fresh start with God. This grace has changed my life and purpose for living. This grace gives me counsel from the living God through what is revealed in the Bible. This grace knows my weaknesses and sympathizes with me in my struggles to overcome all that longs to destroy me. In His grace I find help in times of trouble and endurance to achieve all He calls me to do."

For those who will approach the "Throne of Grace" there is forgiveness, cleansing, protection in God's sovereignty and grace that abounds for the enabling to live the abundant life promised in Christ.

Let us pray!

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