

OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

III. Let Us Come

“Let us therefore come freely to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help” (Hebrews 4:16, Author’s translation).

The great thing about our High Priest is that He wants us to come. He does not stand aloof from His creatures, untouched by their daily routines and prosaic life. He does not make Himself available only to celestial “souls who withdraw themselves from the stream of humanity and live in cloistered contemplation of the divine. As He walked among the commoners in His incarnate humanity, so now His Spirit dwells among us with the same real presence but in a glorified state. The glorified state, in fact, enabled Him to be with us more constantly and effectively than when He was here on earth in a bodily form. Now He dwells in our very being forever.

Let us therefore come near. The Greek word which has been inadequately translated by the simple word “come” is *proserchomai*. It adds a prepositional prefix which clearly involves the idea of proximity. It is the same preposition used in John 1:1 for the oneness between God and Christ—“the Word was with God.” It is also part of the word for face—*prosopon*. The Word was “face to face” with God. I am going into detail with these Greek words, because the passage is so greatly enriched by them. We are not only invited to come, but to come close. In fact, this idea, is at the very heart of all that God has purposed for His creatures. In a sense, it can all be summarized in one word—the Hebrew word “Immanuel”—“God with us.” In the garden, sin separated God’s creatures from Him; in Christ, God’s creatures are brought near to dwell with Him forever. To the disciples Jesus said, “*He dwells with you and shall be in you*” (John 14:17). This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost. In a certain sense it could be said that the throne of grace is within us even as Christ is within us.

Freely and courageously. The Greek word—*paresiazado*—does not mean “boldly” in the sense of “brazenly,” but courageously and freely, as one might approach a monarch who has extended the scepter—a sign that the petitioner may approach the throne. In such a case the petitioner is hardly going to come brazenly, making demands. And yet, it is not uncommon for Bible teachers to make such statements about the Word. Say they—“claim the promises—it is your right. God has to honor His Word.” Need I remind you—God doesn’t have to do anything. The correct posture before God is prostrate at His feet, pleading for His mercy. He owes us nothing; we owe Him everything. So let us come courageously as to the King of Kings, and freely as to “the God of all mercy and grace.”

The throne of grace. The Greek word is *charis*. It is universally misunderstood and misapplied. Somehow the religionists, constantly searching for ways to prove their worthiness to God, and superiority over the common “sinners,” have added their corrupting touch for a word of pure benevolence. The usual definition by these theological “predators,” is “the unmerited favor of God.” The simple word, “unmerited,” totally unwarranted by the nature of the concept, puts a cloud over it. It would be like giving a gift to someone and then reminding them that they are not worthy of it. The very nature of a gift is that

it is not something that has been earned or merited by the recipient. However, it is certainly not fashionable to remind them of that fact. The basic idea of the word, as evolved out of the Greek classics and touched by divine inspiration is “the flow of divine benevolence”, (“benevolence” means, of course, “good will”). We are in the river of God’s love and grace. There are no conditions and no limitations. There are no stated or implied suggestions of our unworthiness, although it is generally assumed that we are unworthy. It is not God who presses that point, but religious opportunists, who seek to keep people under their tyrannical authority, as the Pharisees, who were the ultimate expression of this religious authoritarianism.

So let us bathe in the river of God’s love and grace; it is the only cure for the leprosy of sin. In a very real sense, the “throne of grace” is within us, the fountainhead of God’s goodwill toward us. The angelic choir, at the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, sang out “*peace on earth, good will toward men.*” Once again, the religious despots have tainted that beautiful concept with the merciless cynicism of human religious opportunism—“Peace on earth to men of good will.” Obviously, they include themselves in the category of “men of good will.” The statement is well translated by the King James—“good will to men.” God’s great desire is that men everywhere should repent and should join Him in His universal family. Remember, that with all your human failures, when it is so tempting to feel unworthy and unable to approach God, the fact that you care—the fact that you want to approach Him—is the guarantee that you are already in the river of that grace.

Whatever your problems; whatever your concerns; whatever your weaknesses; whatever the surface appearances of your life, remember God’s Word to Paul—“*My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength [power] is made perfect [fulfilled] in weakness*” (II Corinthians 12:9).

David Morsey
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