

Our Great High Priest **Part VII—The New and Living Way**

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the sanctuary [Holy of Holies] by the blood of Jesus, which He initiated for us—a new and living way—through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a Great Priest over the house of God, let us come near with a true heart in a fulfilled faith, we who have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our expectation unwavering, for He is faithful who promised” (Hebrews 10:19-23).

There is no more pivotal idea in all the Bible than the expression—“Let us come near.” In the Old Testament, for the most part, God guided His people from afar. There was little personal interaction between the individuals and God. There was, of course, the total national identity as the “people of God.” He cared for them; loved them (in a paternalistic way) and established for them a process of redemption that would ultimately bind them to Him forever.

In the New Testament, however, the ultimate intention of God is fulfilled—to imbue His people with His own Spirit—to bring them so near to Him as to dwell within them. Hence, the name of Jesus announced by the angel to Joseph—Emmanuel, “God with us.” His creatures, once very far away through the ravages of sin are now very near through the sacrifice of Christ. And thus the heart of Jesus’ message—“*Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*” (Matthew 11:28-30). And in John we have the expression of the “mutual abode.” We dwell with Him—“*In My Father’s house are many dwelling places* (not mansions),” and He dwells in us—“*We will come unto Him and make our abode with Him.*” And in the modern era, Tennyson caught the concept—“*Speak to Him, then for He heareth and spirit with spirit doeth meet. Closer is He than breathing—nearer than hands or feet.*” The Spirit of Christ, dwelling in us, gives to us a particle of divine energy—a seed—which becomes the eternal essence of our identity with Him.

Boldness to enter into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus . . .

The Greek word translated “boldness” does not mean “audacious” or “brazenly.” It really means “freely” or “openly.” There is nothing in the word of the common misconception of a mandate. There is a certain segment of Christendom that encourages mandates to the Deity—“You have to do this because you promised.” Using “leverage” on the Deity, a common custom among humans—is completely out of order. We must always come before God with humility—“*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*”—because “*It is of His mercy that we are not consumed.*” He doesn’t have to do anything—much less respond to insistent demands from the creatures of earth. The Greek word means literally “beyond speech.” It implies a kind of freedom and openness that goes beyond the capacity of human articulation.

A new and living way . . . Never before was access to God totally available to each one of His creatures. In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the general favor of God was obtained by appropriate sacrifices and mediated by a priest. And, as a matter of fact, entrance into the “Holy of Holies” was only available to the high priest, and that once a year, who must bring the blood to the mercy seat, once a year, on the day of atonement and offer it for the sins of the people.

Christ came with His own blood, demolished the veil, and made the way into the holiest of all accessible to everyone. Not only was it a new way, but it was a living way. The worshiper comes not to a “bench”—an altar of wood—but to a person. The “Mercy Seat” dwells within us. The touch with the *Shekinah* glory of God is ceaseless. It is not a yearly encounter, but a moment by moment reality within us.

Let us come near . . . The Greek word “to come” involves a preposition which is part of the word “face.” The preposition is used in John 1:1 where the *Logos* is said to be “with God.” The implication is a nearness that is a “face to face” encounter. Added to the verb form—“to come”—it means to come so near as to be “face to face.”

With a true heart . . . The Greek word for “true” is *αληθινη (alethine)*—from a Greek word which means “genuine” or “real.” When Jesus said (as recorded in John)—“*I am the Truth,*” He was expressing the same thought. He was saying, “I am the reality of the universe.” “I am all that is genuine and real.” The idea of the “true” heart really means the inner being identified with all that is real in the world. It expresses an inner being that has come to grips with the essence of the universe. This is because Christ, The Truth—The Reality—dwells within.

A fulfilled faith. The translation, “full assurance (A.V.)” is not adequate. The word has nothing to do with the human feelings of “assurance.” Human feelings of confidence or trust are totally inadequate to handle divine realities. The energy of faith is a gift of God, the power of which is resident within Himself and can never be a characteristic of the human mind. The Greek word—*πληροφορεω (plerophoreo)* means “carry through to fulfillment.” The human mind can never possess that kind of ultimate faith. What most people think of as “faith” is a very unreliable expression of the human mind—a vacillating emotion of confidence or trust. It comes and goes with the ebb and flow of the tide of human emotion. What the Scripture means by “faith” is the energy of God flowing through the human spirit and maintaining a constancy that is not possible in the human brain as such. It is the basis upon which our identity remains stable and secure. It is not affected by human emotion. It maintains our ties with God and guarantees the ultimate fulfillment of God’s purpose in us.

Sprinkled from an evil conscience . . . washed with pure water. The phrase “evil conscience” has to do with that accumulation of human thoughts and actions which reflect the satanic process of evil in the world (though not always assumed to be demonic), and the misconceptions of God that have plagued humanity from the Fall. The blood of Christ covers these human

perversions of truth and the river of divine grace washes away the pollutants that have inevitably evolved.

Let us hold fast the confession of our expectations . . . It is not “expectations”, but the expression of them that is in question. The substance of our faith and our expectations is in Christ. It is in the expression of these expectations—in the human mental process—that the trouble comes. The Greek word *ελπις* (*elpis*) is better translated by “expectation” than “hope.” Hope implies uncertainty in its major English usage. The confession of our expectation is what we can express in our grasp of the meaning of God’s faith. This expression is often affected by the circumstances of life. It is not God’s faith *per se* that is the problem, but our expression of it. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is encouraging the Jewish believers not to give up their expectations of God. He will come through in the end.

He is faithful that promised . . . The word faithful is better translated by “full of faith.” God is the Author of the energy of faith and will sustain this energy throughout the process of human life on the earth. Ultimately it is this energy of faith that will bring all of His people to glory and to the eternal identity with Himself.

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Next month “*Part VIII—The Living Way and the Believer*”
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