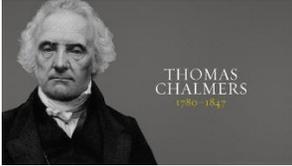


HEBREWS 4:14-16
Our Sympathetic High Priest pt 2

WHAT DO these have in common??



19th cen Scottish author, pastor



The Valley of Vision and The Bible

That's a question we'll get to in a few minutes. But first I want to revisit the two questions from last week...

Last week we began with two questions, and answered one of them

Q#1 What does God want from me/ US?

HOLD FAST OUR CONFESSION

COME TO HIM IN TIME OF NEED

TODAY we'll look at the 2nd question

Q#2 What does God want to give me/US?

Friends, I have some good news for you today as we consider this question.

Let's read the text from Heb 4 - READ ALOUD CORPORATELY

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Q#2 What does God want to give me/US?

MERCY AND GRACE HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY. Is there a better present than mercy and grace in time of need???

At first glance, this may be hard to believe. Some of you right now are saying, "Yeah, right. Where is this mercy and grace?"

You may be thinking, "If I were an all-powerful God who wants to give mercy and grace, I'd handle things very differently.?"

On every row there are stories, known and unknown, of situations where we've wondered about the mercy and grace of God in a time of need. One of the challenges of our life of faith is a willingness to trust God when there doesn't seem to be mercy and grace in a time of need. We think it should be immediate and pre-emptive, i.e. it goes ahead of us and eliminates all of our trials and hardships.

EX; Helicopter parents have become "Snowplow parents"

<https://www.todaysparent.com/blogs/snowplow-parenting-the-latest-controversial-technique/>

(Hover and micro-manage out of fear vs do the same with an eye on the future and seek to remove any possible barriers, pain or difficulties.)

Honestly, I want a snowplow God who will go ahead and clear the way. It's ok to pray that way because we can be honest with God, but if we demand that of God, then we have a skewed view of how He operates and how we grow.

Honestly, if God always simply clears the way, I won't rely on Him as much. I'll develop a sense of entitlement and stop pursuing him.

God allows and brings trials and affliction so that we might know if our faith is real. Biblically speaking, faith is always tested. The fact that so many have held fast for so long is a witness to the supernatural grace and comfort that comes even in the midst of difficulty. The world will say, "Where is your God?", but because we have a sympathetic high priest, we can know that God is near to us.

The mercy and grace we find is not always what we're thinking it should be. **Grace in time of need doesn't always mean that a snowplow God has gone ahead to clear the way. It means that our sympathetic God comes and comforts us as only He can in times of trial.**

Let us continually approach the throne of grace – keep on coming to the throne. NOT A ONE TIME EVENT.

** We are afraid that we will reach the bottom of the well of mercy and grace. We tell ourselves that "God forgave me last time, but not again. I don't want to mock God by confessing again." We mock God by thinking that His grace through Christ has a bottom to it.

EX: the "bottomless" soup offer on the Chili's lunch menu will run out if you keep eating. It will all be gone. NOT SO WITH God'S MERCY AND GRACE.

You can't wear out God. This is how the Christian holds on and grows. **You are not going to reach the bottom of God's well of mercy and grace.**

We ARE CALLED to come to obtain mercy for our sins and failures and find grace to obey.

We can draw near with boldness/ confidence and therefore with honesty about our sins, fears, doubts, sorrows, joys, etc.

Mercy – Mercy or compassion is the withholding of a deserved punishment;

Grace is the giving of something good we do not deserve.

Do you see yourself as one needing mercy? If so, turn to Christ. If you HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED MERCY in Christ, then remember Christ. We still sin, and it is His mercy and grace that cover our sin—past, present, and future.

FIND Grace to help - “time of need” = well timed.

There is a supernatural resource that is available if we will call on him.

EX: Dorothy and Ruby slippers – she had the power to go home anytime, but didn’t know it. We have access to grace anytime and God has told us.

Christ being a sympathetic high priest is in the context of weakness and temptation. So, what does it look like in times of temptation to draw near to God with confidence and boldness to find mercy and Grace at the time of need?

EX: It looks like having enough self-awareness to see the oncoming temptation and to cry out, “God HELP, give me grace”. It means that we recognize that God is on a rescue mission for our hearts.

Since we don’t always do that, then it means trusting God enough to go to Him in repentant faith to confess – agree with Him and call it sin, call it forgiven, and call on Him for sustaining grace. Even in our confession and repentance, God is on a rescue mission for our hearts. He invites us into His presence. THIS IS GOOD NEWS!!

Mike Gaudet...

God shows love by coming to the aid of those in need. Why do we hesitate to approach God? Why do we remain distant when He lovingly beckons us to come close to receive mercy and grace? Shame and fear keep us from approaching God. We can feel ashamed to approach God. He is perfect - we make mistakes. He is strong - we are weak.

Shame keeps us from approaching God openly. Fear keeps us from approaching God freely. Since Jesus is a sympathetic High Priest, God's love enables us to approach God confidently.

We no longer need to be paralyzed by fear and shame.

Our failure to believe in the mercy and grace of God at the throne of Grace keeps us from enjoying Him and bringing our cares to him. Numerous songs and hymns express the cry of the soul before God, but few say it as well as Charles Wesley’s hymn... ARISE, MY SOUL ARISE

“Arise, my soul, arise, shake off your guilty fears.”

In other words, “God I’m afraid to approach You because I know what I’m like, I know what I am, I know who I am, I know what I’ve done; I know You ought to condemn me!”

What is Charles Wesley going to argue against those guilty fears?

“Arise, my soul, arise, shake off your guilty fears.”

“The bleeding Sacrifice on my behalf appears.”

He appeals to Jesus. And throughout that song he just piles up reason after reason why he shouldn’t be afraid of drawing near to God. His confidence to draw near is because Jesus has covered those sins and He’s dealt with that guilt at Calvary. And what are his last words?

“With confidence I now draw nigh, with confidence I now draw nigh, and ” Father, Abba, Father, cry.

That’s exactly what the author of Hebrews is saying to you. Come close to the God who is your Father in Jesus Christ because Jesus knows the temptation to sin that you’re enduring and He will not break a bruised reed and He will not put out a smoldering flax, but He’ll bring you to God and He’ll put you back together.

The prayer I read last week relates to the principle of drawing near to God because we see His goodness, love, and sympathy in Christ.

THIS IS A FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE OF Christian GROWTH.

WE grow and are changed by considering Jesus and coming to Him.

THE DARK GUEST

There is no treasure so wonderful

As that continuous experience of Thy grace

Toward me which ALONE can subdue

The risings of sin within:

GIVE ME MORE OF IT.

Stay with me here as I make some connections- Remember the opening pictures of Chalmers, McGraw, Beach Boys and Johnny Cash and the VoV and The Bible? Here comes the connection... When I hear those words, "Give me more of it" my mind goes to some country song lyrics - (sorry, that's just how I roll.)

"I like it, I love it, I want some more of it". - those are the only words in the song that I know so I googled the lyrics and I found something.

Songwriters: Jeb Anderson / Steve Dukes / Markus Hall; sung by Tim McGraw are proclaiming the same principle as VoV

*Spent forty-eight dollars last night at the county fair
I threw out my shoulder but I won her that teddy bear
She's got me saying sugar-pie, honey, darlin', and dear
I ain't seen the Braves play a game all year
I'm gonna get fired, if I don't get some sleep
My long lost buddies say I'm gettin' in to deep*

*But I like it, I love it, I want some more of it
I try so hard, I can't rise above it
Don't know what it is 'bout that little gal's love
But I like it, I love it, I want some more of it*

- He has reoriented his life because his heart has been captured by a greater affection.
- Jesus tells the parable about finding the Pearl of Great Price, and the one who finds it is willing to sacrifice everything for it. JESUS IS THAT PEARL.

Beach Boys - "Help Me Rhonda. Help me get her out of my Heart" - Jesus is "Rhonda". His love for us and our love for him helps us in time of temptation.

Johnny Cash - "Because you're mine, I walk the line."

*I keep a close watch on this heart of mine
I keep my eyes wide open all the time
I keep the ends out for the tie that binds
Because you're mine, I walk the line.*

Why does he "walk the line?" HE IS changed by a relationship and a greater affection.

Thomas CHALMERS sums it up in his essay- The Expulsive Power of a New Affection

"The object of the gospel is both to pacify the sinner's conscience and to purify the heart, ...The best way of casting out an impure affection is to admit a pure one....Thus it is that the freer the Gospel, the more sanctifying the Gospel.

The more it is received as a doctrine of grace, the more it will be felt as a doctrine leading to godliness.” Thomas Chalmers

Martin Luther version of Psalm 130

“Though great our sins and sore our woes His grace much more aboundeth.
His helping love no limit knows. Our utmost need it soundeth.”

When you are in your greatest extremity of need, His helping love reaches to the bottom of it. It sounds it out to the bottom.

“Our Shepherd good and true is He, who will at last His Israel free, –
“From all our sins and sorrows.”

That’s what I need. That’s exactly what I need. And the author of Hebrews is saying Jesus will provide that.

You may counsel people in difficulty to ask God for mercy and grace and they may look at you like you have two heads.

“That’s it? All you have to offer is‘pray’.”

Don’t knock it until you’ve tried it – REALLY TRIED IT. Too few really try it.

People will say, “It must be harder than that.”

NOT REALLY – it may be more complicated, but it isn’t harder. That kind of prayer is HARD FOR US – it calls us to a heart posture of humility, and we don’t like that.

Would you rather have a list of 16 things to do?

You can have that, or you can find grace. Which do you want?

MATURING AS A BELIEVER MEANS THAT GOING TO THE THRONE OF GRACE IS BECOMING OUR FIRST RESPONSE, NOT OUR LAST RESPONSE.

**MERCY AND GRACE ARE SOMEONE WE MEET.
Do you know Him?**

Our sympathetic High Priest has given us access to the throne of grace. We’re crazy not to rush in.

The way to grow in faith and grace is to run to Jesus, and the bread and the cup have been given to help us do that. The bread and the cup, the body and the blood, say, “No sin has more power than the cross. No sin is beyond the mercy and grace found at the throne of grace.”

This isn’t magical bread or magical juice, but they represent the work of Christ for us and the Holy Spirit nourishes us as we partake in repentant faith. All of us have sinned, ignored God, given in quickly to temptation in deed, word, or thought. This table invites us to the throne of grace to find mercy and grace.

Come to the Table

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