

LEADING FROM THE THRONE ROOM PART 5 SHIFTING OUR PRAYER FROM AN OLD COVENANT (RELIGIOUS) MINDSET TO A NEW COVENANT (RELATIONSHIP) MINDSET

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we might receive mercy and find help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16 NKJV)

Introduction

A. If we are going to be effective in prayer, we must answer the question, “Why should the perfect God in Heaven answer the prayers and move on behalf of someone like me?”

Boldness and confidence are crucial. James tells us that a double minded person shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. If you are doubtful and uncertain that your prayers will be answered, you will be ineffective in _____ in prayer.

B. Jesus pointed out the ineffectiveness of the Pharisees' prayers and those who operated in an Old Covenant mindset. They thought they would be heard because of their long prayers, religious rituals and piety. We see they had a form of godliness but no power. People weren't healed; society wasn't changed.

1. All religions call people to pray. But the premise for praying that Jesus taught was completely different than those controlled by a mindset of being under the law, where God is at the top of a ladder that we have to climb up to.
2. Because of what Jesus did, the writer of Hebrews and other New Testament writers taught that our approach to prayer is to be _____ not religious. It is coming with _____ not shame and unworthiness. It is coming as a _____ not a slave, believing we have favor, not needing to cower in fear.
3. So many people with a religious mindset come in prayer with a fatalistic attitude not a _____ attitude. They really doubt their prayers will make much of difference; prayer is like playing the lottery. Contrast this to Jesus' way of praying...

Example at Lazarus tomb

“Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” (John 11:41-42 NIV)

Hebrews 10:22 says we are to come with the “full assurance of faith... because our hearts are cleansed from a guilty conscience.

Four shifts the book of Hebrews teaches us to make in moving from an Old Testament to a New Testament prayer mindset.

I. We move from thinking of God's presence being in a holy place (temple) to being _____ and always around us in the Spirit. The presence of God is completely _____ and the throne of God is right here for us to come to Father in intimate fellowship.

In contrasting how frightening and intimidating the approach to Mount Sinai was in the Old Testament the writer says.

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22-24 NIV)

(Abel's blood called for vengeance; Jesus' blood calls for _____ and favor)

A. We see the veil was torn at Jesus' death. Everything that stands between where we are and our ability to approach and sense God's availability has been removed. Even the veil between our soul and _____ has been removed (what we know in our head and have ability to sense God in our heart).

B. Why this is important

1. Many people know what they feel in worship but don't fully grasp where they are in worship (at God's throne).

2. The holy ground where Moses was invited to encounter God is the ground we walk on _____. It is interesting to see in Jacob's story that when he realized the presence of the Lord in that desert place, he went from a fugitive to a missionary in his faith and had a sense of purpose.

We can think of God's presence not as a lighthouse to travel to, but as a lantern we carry with us _____.

3. This means I can be in the Spirit and operate with the Spirit to have influence in the spirit realm wherever I am. (The example of John on the

island of Patmos, who though he was in prison said, “*I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.*”)

4. It means I don’t have to wait for the Spirit to fall on me. The Spirit doesn’t have to come like lightning; He is already here in me. Like a faucet, I need to simply allow His presence to be turned on and flow out of me.
5. So importantly, it means I have _____ to the voice of God continually.

II. I don’t need a priest; Jesus is my High Priest. In Christ, we are _____ a kingdom of priests before God.

A. Key aspects of Jesus’ high priestly ministry on our behalf

1. He brought atonement for our sins. By bringing His blood to the mercy seat, our case was completely settled and we were declared “not guilty.”

We don’t have to wait until judgement day to find out our verdict; we already have it.

This gives us one of the most important keys to effective prayer and that is the ability to move from a sin consciousness to a _____ consciousness in our approach to God.

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!
(Hebrews 9:14 NIV)

We don’t have to waste our time trying to do “dead works” of penance to make us feel worthy enough to ask God for things.

2. Jesus did and does _____ with us. We know as we approach Jesus, He fully realizes how we feel and prays for us with exact awareness of what we need to be whole and successful.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. (Heb. 4:15 NIV)

This knowledge makes us free to be vulnerable in pouring out our heart, more capable of receiving grace, and more confident that He will act on our behalf.

3. As our High Priest we have the powerful knowledge that He is eternally and perfectly in intercession _____.

Jesus became a priest, not by meeting the physical requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. (Hebrews 7:16 NLT)

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.” (Romans 8:26 NIV)

“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.” Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Romans 8:33-35 NIV)

Effective prayer is not convincing God, but _____ with God by becoming aware, by the Spirit, how He is interceding for us and agreeing with Him.

“Prayer is finding what God wants to give me and asking Him for that.” - Graham Cooke

“The essence of prayer is a loop in which our Heavenly Father, by His Spirit places His requests and petitions on our hearts, only for us to offer them back to Him. What begins in Heaven returns to Heaven via the mysterious power of prayer. In this way prayer is working not to change our Father’s mind, it is instead finding the mind of God.” -Jack Graham

B. What is so powerful is that He invites us to join with Him as priests. We get to partner in affirming and enforcing His will on earth by _____
_____ to argue the case for our friends on earth and then for the verdict to be executed as we speak the word of faith and the angels of God are sent into action.

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9 NIV)

III. We come before God in the confidence of a New Covenant with promises that are based on Jesus' righteousness and not our righteousness. In this covenant we are invited to simply obtain and receive the gifts _____ earned and provided by Jesus.

_____ of the promises that we could never deserve are ours; they are "yes" and "amen" in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. 1:20)

He created a New Covenant. That New Covenant makes the first covenant obsolete. This New Covenant is based on better promises. (Hebrews 8:6)

The New Covenant changes the way we pray in the following ways.

A. We pray based on _____ that aren't centered around our merit but the merit of the mediator of our covenant with God. Jesus _____ us for the covenant promises. Just as if I was given a check by a millionaire, I would not see my right to cash the check based on what is in my account but on the basis of what is in His account. (Another way of saying things is that we obtain things with His credit card).

As we read about this New Covenant each part has implications for prayer.

1. He is our God and we are His people. The covenant making process involved changing garments and pledging in every way that what is mine is yours and yours is mine. Your friends are my friends and your enemies my enemies. If ever there is a battle you will fight for me; it will become your battle. We see this boldness on display when kings like Hezekiah prayed in response to enemies attacking.

2. Your sins will be remembered against you no more. There is no fear or shame that can play a factor in whether our prayers are answered, as we approach the throne of grace.

3. We shall all know Him from the least to the greatest. His voice and the knowledge of His will is guaranteed. We can have the confidence that we know that we know we are praying according to His will. In fact, His laws and will are _____ in our hearts.

B. This covenant gives us the ability to pray based on a completely _____.

1, You are seated with Christ in heavenly places and already blessed with the right to all of His blessings (Eph. 1:3).

2. We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17). How does an heir with the will in hand respond to what the will says is theirs? (boldly they move to obtain)

3. We don't have a spirit of fear or slavery; we are as confident as sons (Romans 8:15-16).

One writer describes it as praying like a bride not a widow.

IV. In the New Covenant we don't simply pray with desire but _____. We are not just inquirers or intercessors, we are enforcers.

A. The right to pray in _____ completely changes how and where we stand in prayer. We are standing in the completed work of Christ and all He did in obtaining victory and the right to rule from Satan's hand. We don't just pray for victory against the attacks that Satan brings; we claim and enforce the victory.

B. The main ways we enforce the victory is by _____ and _____. Our declarations of faith are often best expressed in words and songs of praise that shatter the strongholds of the enemy.

Matthew 18:18 states, what we bind on earth is bound in heaven; what we loose on earth is loosed in heaven. I believe there is close connection in this verse to praise as seen in the stories like Paul and Silas in prison and Jehoshaphat's victory in 2 Chronicles 20.

The beauty of such examples is that God shows His wisdom and glory in using even the _____ among us to break down the enemy's defenses and release the angelic armies to do battle and bring victory as we declare words of praise.

"You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger." (Psalms 8:1-2 NIV)

(**Answers:** A. leading, relational, confidence, son, faith I. in us, available, mercy A. spirit B. every day, wherever we go, access II. all A. righteousness, empathize, for us, partnering B. standing in the gap III. already, All A. promises, qualifies, written B. new identity IV. authority A. Jesus' name B. declaration, praise, weakest)