

OCTOBER 2004

THE THRONE OF GRACE

“Let us boldly approach the throne of grace, so that we may find mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

In Hebrews 4:16 we are told to approach the throne of grace so that we can find mercy and grace in our time of need. But in the OT we see that God's throne was a throne of righteousness and justice, Psalm 89:14. *“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; grace and truth go before you.”* What happened? We see the same God and the same throne, but now we see a throne of mercy and grace!

What happened is the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross where he fully paid the penalty for our sins, thereby completely paying the penalty for all our sins and totally satisfying the righteousness and justice of God.

The throne of God; approaching the throne of God, speaks of how God deals with man. Under the Old Covenant the righteousness demands of God had to be met. Under the New Covenant the righteous demands of God **have been met**, (through the blood of Christ), leaving God free now to deal with us on the basis of grace.

But even under the Old Covenant God still dealt with man, or desired to deal with man, on the basis of grace. *“Grace and truth precede thee”*, it says, that is, grace and truth go before God as messengers or runners with their message that the king desires to deal with them on the basis of grace.

If the people hearken to his grace, through faith application of the truth, then the justice of God demanded by his righteousness will be avoided. **But, if one does not hearken to these messengers of grace and truth, then all they are left with is the righteous justice of a holy God.**

The idea is one of a good and powerful king and his army posed at the border of a country, He is ready to do battle with them, and he will win. But he does not desire to do that. He wishes that they will submit to his will. So, what he does is send his messengers to them with his offer of peace. If they hearken to his messengers, then there will be no war, and peace and prosperity will be had throughout the land. But if they don't, then they will have to face the wrath of the king.

It was like this under the Old Covenant; God longed to be gracious to his people, but there was still the matter of his righteousness and justice. Under the New Covenant they have been fully satisfied.

We also need to note that the two issues that are involved here are grace and truth! We

also need to see that they are connected to each other! Grace accompanies truth, and truth accompanies grace. If you want the one, then you must accept the other. If you want God to deal with you in grace, then you must accept, love, believe and live by his truth! And as truth accompanied grace under the Old Covenant; it still accompanies grace under the New Covenant. Grace and truth have not been done away with under the New Covenant, rather they have been established as the basis for God's dealings with us.

Too many people are running away from God today because of their fear of him. Like Adam they are conscious of their sins and their sinful condition. Who has not felt unworthy? Who hasn't felt ashamed of their sinful acts and fallen state? Who hasn't, at times, run from God because deep down inside we know that we can never measure up to his purity and holiness?

It's a plight that Christians wrestle with at times, and something that unbelievers run away from. It's there because we all live in the flesh, in Adam's fallen nature. The flesh knows what it thinks of God; it knows what it has said about God and his Holy Son; and it's ashamed, afraid and angry at the same time.

But we must stop listening to the flesh and start listening to the Word of God! And what does it say? *“Let us boldly approach the throne of grace, so that we may find mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.”* Hebrews 4:16

“To approach” is the present middle subjunctive of *proserchomai* and is a cohortative subjunctive where the author is exhorting us to join with him in an action. **He is coming before God to receive grace and mercy and he wants all of us to join him.** He also tells us that we will be benefited by the action if we do, (middle voice). And in the present tense he wants us to do it continually, everyday!

“To receive mercy and to discover grace” are used in the subjunctive with *hina*, and *hina* with the subjunctive introduces a purpose clause. It lets us know that there is a purpose behind the action. **God wants us to come to his throne, (to him), for a reason, and that is, to receive his mercy and discover his grace!**

And it's interesting that the word *heurisko*, to *discover*, is used here with grace. You see, most people won't come to God because they are afraid of him; they don't know what they'll find. They think he's mad at them, or doesn't care about them, or doesn't like them. **Imagine they're surprise when they make the discovery of finding out that he loves them and will deal with them in grace!**

The mercy of God is that aspect of God's nature that does not deal with us as our actions deserve. It's almost like the concept of pitying someone, **not the pity of arrogance that we see so much of today, but the pity of a living heart.** You see, in God's justice his justice demands that he pay back to every individual according as their actions and attitudes deserve. But mercy is that aspect of God that doesn't give back to us accordingly.

Ancient kings reserved the right of mercy in their dealing with people; courts across the land deal with people in mercy, and God certainly reserves the right to be merciful to

whomever he wishes. Now that the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, the Son of God, has fully satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God, God now is free to be merciful to everyone! **And his throne, now, is a throne of mercy and grace.**

The grace of God is his undeserved, unearned, unmerited favor. It is not based upon our actions, or character, but solely upon his character. In the OT it is translated as love, grace, kindness, loving kindness and other words. The truth is it is all these things and more! How can we adequately define the infinite love, grace, kindness, gentleness and compassion of a God who loved us so much that he sent his Son to die for our sins? The truth is we can't! But by faith we accept it and accept that that is how he will deal with us, because he said he would. And he is able to do this because Christ's death satisfied his righteousness and justice.

And remember also, it's how God deals with all of us! The most depraved of individuals are saved by the same grace as the most moral. In the eyes of holy God there is no difference. The same grace forgives and saves the gentlest of people along with the murderers.

And God treats all his people in the same manner also- in grace. That Christian you just can't stand! That Christian that irritates you so much, or offends you to the place that you might say, "I just don't know how God could bless that person?" **Well, he treats them in the same way that he treats you- in grace!** When we see Christians acting in a manner that we know that God doesn't want them to, whether in the bars getting drunk, or rolling around on the floor barking like a dog, just remember **that God, now, deals with them and all of us on the basis of grace! And thank God for that!**

Now God not only wants us to keep coming to him for his grace and mercy, and to keep coming to him daily, but he wants us to do it boldly! *Parrhesia*, the word for boldness or confidence, referred to the mental attitude that the Greek citizen had when voicing his opinion in the political process.

He was a Greek citizen, the same as every other Greek citizen, and he had just as much a legal right to say what he had to say in the political process as the next man, much like we see going on across America. So, when he stood up to speak, it was not "hat in hand", it was not as a foreigner, outcast, or outlaw, but with the full boldness of having every right to do so as a citizen of Greece.

And this is the mental attitude that God wants us to have when we approach his throne with our prayer requests! He wants us to be bold and fully assured that we have every right to be there, and every right to ask for his grace! And when we do, we will receive his mercy and discover his grace, and this is due to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. So, let us all go before God's throne and take advantage of the grace he has for us, and if you would remember to pray for me, my wife, and the ministry here, for our health and protection from the attacks of the devil.

Pastor Mike

