

The Throne of Grace

by Bill McLeod

The Throne of Grace is a place where we can come boldly to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, and it is made possible by the quick, living, and powerful Word of God.

Duration: 52:10

Scripture: Exodus 26:31-33, Psalm 29:2, Psalm 96:9, Acts 2:37, Hebrews 3:15, Hebrews 4:13, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of worshiping the Lord in the beauty of holiness rather than relying on superficial appearances. He shares the story of Duncan Campbell, a revivalist who experienced God's grace after being left for dead on the battlefield during World War I. The preacher also shares a personal anecdote about forgetting his pregnant wife at a store, but quickly moves on to discuss the power of the Word of God. He references Hebrews 4:12, highlighting how the Word is living, powerful, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The sermon concludes with examples of individuals being deeply impacted by the Word of God, leading to repentance and a recognition of their own sinfulness.

Transcript

I'm sorry, I must apologize for having such an awful time remembering people's names. You know, years ago I told the Lord, I said, I don't mind having a bad memory for other things as long as you give me a good memory for the Bible, and to some extent he's done that, I guess. But maybe he took me too seriously the other way.

You know, in Saskatoon a couple of years ago, one of the professors from the university, he was driving to the university in the morning and he saw an old lady trying to cross the street at the lights and she was having difficulty, so he left the car running and he went over and he took her by the elbow and he let her cross the street and he forgot his car and he walked all down the university. It was just around the corner, not far away. And then when he came out in the afternoon, his car was gone.

He phoned the police and reported his car was stolen. They said, yes, we have it down here. We found it running at a stoplight.

And I don't know, I think we're related. You know what I did one time, I shouldn't tell you this, but one time, and my wife was about six months pregnant at the time too, we were in Winnipeg and I took her to the

store and she went in to buy some things and I forgot she was in the store. And I drove off.

And it wouldn't have been so bad that I drove off, but I drove to Kenora, Ontario, 130 miles away. And my wife came out with these groceries and there was no car there. Well, let's get down to something better than that.

Hebrews chapter 4, and you're probably curious as to what happened when my wife got home or I got home. Well, it was before revival, that's all I need to say. Hebrews 4 and verse 12, For the word of God is quick, that is, it's living, it's life-giving, and powerful, full of power, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing thunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Maybe that's why I read a while ago that so many psychiatrists who are not Christians are studying the Bible because of the fantastic insight it has into human nature. They don't believe what it says about God, but they do believe what it says about human beings. A discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing, then, that we have a great high priest that has passed into, literally through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. If you were to visit Israel when they were traveling in the wilderness with the Tabernacle of Witness, as it was called, Tabernacle of Witness, the Tabernacle of Moses, the Tabernacle of the Congregation, as it was variously called, and were you able to walk into the tabernacle, you would have seen that the tabernacle was divided.

At the one end there was a curtain hanging, and if you were able, which you would not have been able, to go in behind the curtain, you would have seen a very small piece of furniture there. It was called the mercy seat. It was made out of wood that was overlaid with gold.

It was two cubits one way, a cubit and a half the other, and a cubit and a half high. They are not too sure exactly as to the measurement of a cubit, but obviously it was a small piece of furniture. If you were able to look inside the Ark of the Covenant, as it was called, you would have seen there a golden pot with some manna in it.

You know, the manna, the bread that came down in the wilderness every day for the people as they were journeying. And then you would have seen a rod that budded. It was Aaron's rod, and his name was inscribed on it.

And it blossomed and budded, and it grew almonds. And then you would have found what was called the Tables of the Testimony, which were two pieces of stone on which were inscribed the, well, sometimes what is called the Ten Words of God, the Ten Commandments of God, which were a beautiful summary of the law of God. Then resting on top of the Ark of the Covenant was something called the Mercy Seat.

It was constructed out of solid gold. The Mercy Seat itself was really just a flat piece of gold, and then on both ends of this solid piece of gold there had been carved two cherubim. F is not, there should not be

there.

They're not cherubims. I-M is a plural ending in the Hebrew language, so it's cherubim. And these two cherubim were carved.

They're angelic creatures, of course. We don't know their exact appearance because the Bible doesn't really indicate this, but no doubt if we could see them by the throne, the actual throne of God, they would be glorious in appearance. Constructed out of solid gold, and their wings met over the top of the Mercy Seat.

And a number of places in the Bible it indicates very clearly that their faces were inward. They looked in to the Mercy Seat. And then God told the people, God told Moses and Aaron, I'll meet with you there, and I'll commune with you from above the testimony on the Mercy Seat.

And the high priest, when he went in there once a year on the Day of Atonement, he sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat. Hence we get the expression, the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat. God said, there I'll meet with you, and there I will commune with you.

Then we come to Hebrews 4, and he talks about the throne of grace. And there's a very obvious connection between the throne of grace and the Mercy Seat of the Old Testament, because first of all we come to obtain mercy, it says here in the 16th verse of Hebrews 4. Now let's digress for a moment or two. Do you remember how, or I should say this, that the cherubim were spoken of as covering the Mercy Seat? And over in the book of Ezekiel, God is addressing a person that Bible scholars believe is the devil.

And he's called there the anointed cherub that covers. Twice he's called that in that chapter. And then the Lord said, your heart was lifted up because of your beauty.

You have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. God said, I'm going to cast you down to the ground. I'll lay you before kings.

That's Satan. What happened? He got looking at himself instead of looking at God. The cherubim were to look inward always at God.

And to a point he did that. The Bible says, Thou wast perfect in all thy ways from the day that thou wast created until iniquity was found in thee. And his iniquity began when he stopped looking at God and began looking at himself.

He became aware of his own beauty. And I guess he began comparing himself with other created beings like the other cherubim or angels or seraph or whatever. And he realized that of them all, he was the most beautiful.

And he knew he was the most powerful. And he became proud. And God eventually had to cast him down.

Jesus said in Luke chapter 10, I beheld Satan's lightning fall from heaven, which is in part a quotation from Isaiah chapter 14. So he became aware of his own power, his own beauty, his own glory. And he sinned.

And God said, I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God. And he did. There's a warning here because pride was, in my opinion, the first sin in the universe.

And from that came all that awful, that sum total of wickedness that we hear about, read about, see about, and sometimes, alas, partake in. All right. Remember, the mercy seat, the cherubim, God on that blood-sprinkled mercy seat, communing with his people.

And under the mercy seat, significantly, the manna, the rod, and the testimony of God. Keep that in mind. Let's go back to Hebrews chapter 4, then the 12th verse, the word of God.

You see, it's a blood-sprinkled mercy seat, and God doesn't meet with people that reject the blood. Canada's largest Protestant denomination has deleted all references to the blood of Jesus Christ from their hymn book. They call it a slaughterhouse religion.

They do not believe that one person could shed their blood for somebody else. And I have a book at home written by all 30 or so of their scholars, who between them, I think, had around 100 degrees and all. And it's very, very nebulous.

They even think that someday Satan will be converted, that, you know, there's many more conversions on the other side of the grave than there are on this side of the grave. It cuts the nerve totally of missions and evangelism, and since it's a form of universal salvation, forget about it. God doesn't meet with people that reject the blood.

It's a blood-sprinkled mercy seat. God doesn't meet with people that reject the word of God. Remember that underneath God, he was, in a sense, sitting on the testimony, on his testimony, on his word.

The Lord Jesus Christ said, And heaven and earth shall pass away, and they will, but my word shall not pass away. He said, If you reject me and receive not my word, you've got one that will judge you. The word that I have spoken, the same will judge you in the last day.

For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven, the word of God. How we ought to cherish it, love it, believe it, obey it. John said, I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things written in the books, according to their works.

God won't have to ask you what you did. He knows what you did. He has a complete record of all that all of us have ever done.

You know what one of the problems is? As in Ecclesiastes where it says, Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. You know, just because God doesn't crack down on sin when it happens, a lot of people are emboldened to go on and to sin. Indeed, some people experiment with this idea, this God idea, and, you know, they sin and they watch heaven, nothing happens, there's no lightning, no thunder, the earth doesn't open up and swallow them, as it did in the Old Testament days apparently, and so they are emboldened to try something else, to go a little further, nothing happens, and finally they feel, well, you know, God is not in business at all.

In the language of some people in the Old Testament, the Lord has forsaken the earth. But don't be deceived by it. God has appointed a day in which he'll judge the world in righteousness by that man Jesus Christ whom he has ordained, who after he has offered faith unto all men, and that he has raised him from the dead.

The small and the great will stand some day before God. And God will open the books. It says in Romans chapter 14, So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

That day is coming. The word of God, in every respect, it's God breathed. It's not that men wrote a book and then God sort of straightened it out a little bit and breathed on it.

No, these words were breathed out from God to men, through men, so that they often did not even know what they were writing. That's why it says in 1 Peter chapter 1, they searched diligently, they inquired, they prayed, God, what does this mean? When they wrote, for example, in Psalm 22, they pierced my hands and my feet. What did this mean? They didn't know.

When they read in Isaiah chapter 50, I gave my back to the smiters, my teeth to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. What did it mean? When they wrote, But thou, Bethlehem, the fruitful, thou be little among the thousands of Judah.

Yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old from the days of eternity. God, what does this mean? The plowers plowed upon my back, they made long their furrows. God, what does this mean? They didn't know.

They pierced my hands and my feet. God, what does this mean? The word of God. Love it.

Believe it. With all your heart. The word of God is quick.

It's living. It's life-giving. James 1.18 says, Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

We were born again, as Peter says in 1 Peter 1.23, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which lives and abides forever. And the Bible has that wonderful power that sinners can be changed into saints when they hear it. And if you're born again, you were born again by the word of God.

Or you're not born again. You know, sometimes people get talked into it. They have all the right answers.

I have a daughter, Joanna, she's teaching high school on an Indian reserve. And, you know, when she went to school, we used to thank God for her. One of the principals in one of the schools told us, we're so glad to have your daughter in the school.

And I said, why? And they said, well, if there's anything wrong going on, she'll take a very strong stand against it. We're so glad to have your daughter in the school. She used to carry her Bible to school.

And I remember her, when a teacher would say something in support of evolution, my daughter would get up and very politely defend the Bible, account of creation, and so on. She was baptized, a member of the church, and the whole thing. And then God showed her she'd never been born again.

She knew all the language. She came to me after morning service at Ebenezer, and she said, Daddy, I've never been saved. God showed me I've never been saved.

I said, Honey, you mean your heart is cold? No, Daddy. She said, I've never, never known the Lord. I've known all the answers.

She hadn't been born again. So she was born again by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. And she was baptized again, repentantly baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.

This is the teaching of the Word of God. Just to digress perhaps a wee little bit, sometimes people say, Well, I'll get baptized when the Lord tells me I should. Then you know he's already told you.

When people in the house of Cornelius got saved, what did Peter do? He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. And if they didn't get baptized, they were disobeying the Word of God. It's very clear.

Repent and be baptized. How many? Every one of you. It's just a matter of saying yes to the will of God.

That's all it is. The Lord probably intends that for some of you here tonight. The Word of God is living, life-giving, it's powerful, it's full of power.

Psalms 29 speaks about this in very wonderful terms. He says that the Word of God is full of majesty, the Word of God is full of power, the Word of God is on many waters. That is, you know, waters in the Bible are often symbols of nations and people and so on.

The Word of God is felt all around the world. Paul once said the Word of God is not bound. He was in jail part of his life.

But you can't put the Word of God in jail. You can put the preacher in jail, but not the Word of God. That's a wonderful thing to know.

Just to keep in mind, I prayed for years for China. China was closed to missionaries, but not closed to the Word of God. There are different ways by which God was getting his Word in there.

Powerful. And so in Psalm 29, he says the Word of God, it breaks, it shakes, it makes, it divides. It breaks the cedars of Lebanon and cedars and oaks in the Bible.

Very often they are symbols of proud people. Ever read Isaiah chapter 2? It's speaking about the coming day of God. When man's day ends and God's day begins.

And it says the day of the Lord will be on all the high towers, all the high hills, all the high fence walls. It'll be on all the oaks of Bashan, all the cedars of Lebanon. They'll all come down.

All the proud people. Thirteen references to pride and imbalance. I think what it is, eight verses perhaps? In other words, pride is going to be the number one sin in the world prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's going to deal with it. The Word of God is able to break the cedars. God is able to break proud people's hearts.

Well, it broke mine. Thank God for the power of the Word. And then it says that it makes the hinds to calve.

They bring forth young by the Word of God. And we as Christian people, we bring forth young. Others find Christ because we happen to pass by.

Any Christian can have that glorious privilege. When I first got converted, I was such a shy person. When I lived in Winnipeg, if I was walking down the sidewalk and I saw somebody coming down the street on the same side of the street, I just crossed over.

I went like this all the way up and down the street. I know in western Winnipeg, I know every back lane in the country because I used to travel a back lane. You don't meet people down back lanes.

One of the reasons why when I left home when I was 18, one of the reasons why I went to work in the bush camps was because the trees didn't talk. I could talk to a tree and sometimes did. I wasn't crazy, but at least I don't think I was.

The Lord met me and saved me by his wonderful grace, but there was pride there just the same. God took care of that by his Spirit and his Word. When I was converted, I was so shy, I didn't know how to talk to people about the Lord, so I wrote them letters.

I wrote a fellow a letter and got a nice letter back. He said, I got your letter. I was shocked.

He said, I saddled my horse, I went off in the bush with your letter, and I reined the horse in on a clearing in the forest, and I read your letter through two or three times, and I gave my heart to Jesus. Wow, boy, that was wonderful. So I wrote another letter.

Another fellow got converted. I thought, being shocked, why not save a six-cent stamp? Back in those days, I think that's all it was. Something happened in the meantime.

Listen, God can use you. The Word of God causes the hinds to calve. It shakes the wilderness, it says in Psalm 29.

That's mission. It divides the flames of fire. That's revival.

That's the Word of God. And we see it. I remember preaching one time.

It wasn't a crusade, just preaching on Sunday morning. And the Word of God just laid a hold of that congregation in the most marvelous manner. Every word seemed to hit like a hammer, and God broke many, many hearts.

The Word of God has that power. The Word of God is living, powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. You remember when John saw the picture of the resurrected Christ in Revelation 1, among other things, there was a two-edged sword coming out of his mouth? Regardless of who preaches it, it's still the Word of God.

In Isaiah 55, God said, It shall not return unto me empty, void. He said, It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. It will not return unto God empty, because it is the Word of the living God.

It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. It will accomplish, God said, that which I please. All right? Here's the thing of Acts 2. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost and the people were pricked in their heart and they cried out and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do? The Word of God had a tremendous effect.

They had an all-night prayer meeting in a church. It was called the Kirk of Schott in Scotland years ago. A man called Livingstone, not the missionary, another man by the same name.

He'd spent that whole night in prayer. Five hundred were converted in the meeting that following day. We know something of the power of God in revival.

While we read about it, sometimes we see it. But oh, that we might learn to make the Word of God central in all our work, in all our preaching. Piercing, even through the dividing of the sunderer of soul and spirit into the joints of marrow and is a discerner.

The Greek word there is kritikos, from which we get our English word critic. It's a friendly critic. As a matter of fact, in a certain sense, the Word of God is the Christian's conscience.

And the more we know it, the more God has to work with. Many Christians know so little of the Word of God, they complain that God never speaks to them. I remember a lady one time, she told me she was having these wonderful visions at night and she was hearing organ music and choirs, angelic choirs singing.

And she wanted more of this, and so she asked me to tell her how she could have more of this. I said, is your basic desire to get to know God better, to grow as a Christian, to be strong? Well, of course, she said, that's what I'm thinking about. Then I said, in 1 Peter 2, it says, desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby.

But she didn't want that. She wanted more visions and more sights and sounds. But remember, if we're going to meet God, we meet God over the ark of the testimony, the Word of God.

Remember, the blood-sprinkled mercy seat, the Word of God. That's where God meets with his people. So it is a discerner, a critic of the thoughts and the intents of the heart.

Maybe you'll recall that in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, he talks about people prophesying in the assembly. He says, if everybody speaks in tongues and someone comes in that's not born again, that's ignorant, he's going to say, everybody's mad in that place. But if everybody prophesies, what does it mean to prophesy? He that prophesies speaks unto man to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort.

That's New Testament prophesying. And 1 Corinthians 14.31 says, You may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. That's true prophesying.

The Old Testament even talks about people prophesying with the heart. How in the world can you prophesy with the heart? Well, by singing the Word of God. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

You may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. He that prophesies speaks unto man to edification, exhortation, and comfort. Do you remember what Moses said? He said, Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them? If that was a prophecy or a prayer that is being fulfilled and answered, you may all prophesy.

We all have the Spirit of God. We cannot be a prophet in a formal, public sense, but all of us have the gift of prophesying in the sense of being a blessing to other people by speaking for God, what we know. I just want to say it again.

to man, to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort. So the Word of God is a discerner. To go back to 1 Corinthians 14 for a moment, it says, Of all prophesy, thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest.

He is judged of all, he is discerned of all, and judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest. And so, falling down in his faith, he will worship God and report that God is in you of a truth. When you get a church that is healthy, I have a book at home that talks about revivals of religion that were sweeping across the United States back about the 1860s or so, if I remember correctly.

And he was telling about certain churches that Sunday evening, Sunday morning they had the preaching of the Word of God, Sunday evening they had nothing but testimony. And he gave many examples of the hardest of sinners finding Jesus Christ in that Sunday evening service. He tells of one man so hardened that people despaired he would ever be saved.

They didn't even know how he ever got in the building, and there he was. And a little old lady got up with a heart full of God and began to share. And they just saw that man break into a thousand pieces and find Jesus Christ within a matter of moments.

The Word of God is powerful, sharp, let's learn it and let's use it. There is no creature that is not manifest in his sight, all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

God has been everywhere, God has seen everything, God has a record of all that's ever happened. That's why God can conduct a judgment time, because he has a perfect record of all that's ever gone on. I read somewhere that there are 250,000 unsolved murder mysteries in North America.

They'll all be solved some day, and the blame will be laid at the proper door at the coming judgment time. Up in northern Manitoba, two Eskimos went hunting some years ago, and only one Eskimo came back. He said they ran into a terrible blizzard, they were hunting polar bears, and his friend got lost.

After the blizzard subsided, he searched for him and couldn't find him, and so that was that. The following spring, a motorboat was chugging down Hudson Bay, and there were some icebergs floating in the bay. As they were going past an iceberg, they saw an Eskimo encased in the ice with a bullet hole between his eyes.

They turned around and went back to Churchill, and the Mounties came out with their powerboat and they chopped that body out of the ice. It was the Eskimo that supposedly had disappeared in the snowstorm. Then they confronted this other Eskimo with what they had found.

Then he confessed to what had happened. He hated this man. He took him hunting and he shot him between the eyes.

He went out and there was an iceberg there, right up against the shore, and there was a huge crack in the iceberg, and he dropped the body in the crack of the iceberg and shoveled it all full of snow, and he thought they would never find him. But they did. And if they hadn't of, God knew all about it.

Do you remember that verse I quoted before? Those sentenced to evil a hundred times in his days be prolonged. You can be very wicked and live to be a hundred years old, or maybe a hundred and five. Those sentenced to evil a hundred times in his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God.

All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Dear people, when you come before God, when you come to meet God in prayer, does it frighten you that God knows everything? It ought to be a beautiful comfort to your heart, that before you ever kneel to pray, God knows all about it. It ought to inspire us to be honest.

But if you look at Psalm 139, you notice how it begins? O Lord, thou hast searched me unknowingly. How does it end? Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. I wonder why it ends that way when it starts the way it does.

There can only, in my opinion, be one answer to that question. It's because it's true enough that God knows all about me, but I don't know what God knows about me. I'd like to know how God sees me.

Ever prayed that way? Ever asked God to show you what you look like to him? A friend of mine was preaching in a revival meeting, and just before he began to preach, he asked the congregation to pray. He said, I'd like all of you to pray this prayer, God, show me what I look like to you. He barely got praying when a man gave a scream at the back of the auditorium and came running down the aisle and fell flat on his face on the floor at the front, and just lay there trembling.

Some of the men came and they carried him out into another room, and all he could say was, God answered my prayer. And he saw himself. Daniel just stood in the presence of an angel of God, and all of a sudden he had no strength to even stand.

He said, My comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. And when Peter in the book, Luke chapter 5, heard Jesus Christ preach, he saw him work a miracle. Then he fell down at Jesus' knees and prayed and said, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.

Oh, Lord, that's how we feel when we get close to God. All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. In Psalm 139 it says, There is not a word in my tongue but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it all together.

Every word I've ever spoken or you've ever spoken, God knows all about it. He could stand you up, how old are you, 40, 30, 20? He could stand you there for 20 years and repeat into your ears every word you've ever spoken for 20 years or 30 years or 40 years or 60 years or whatever. He knows it all, because he is the God of the universe.

We think in terms of God being so tiny and so small, we sort of bring him down to man's size. We must not do that. Do you know what it says in the Bible about man in relation to God? It says that all the nations of the world are like one drop in a bucket.

If you were walking down a path with an empty bucket in your hand and somebody came along and put one drop of water in the pail, would you be aware of the weight? Of course not. All the nations of the world before God are like one drop in a bucket, that's all. And God is so great, the Bible says he has to even humble himself to look at the things that are happening in the earth, Psalm 113.

That's not all it says there. It says that God is so great that he has to humble himself to behold the things that are in heaven. Did you ever think of that? Our God is so great, so mighty, we call him a transcendent God, greater than the universe.

Man is less than nothing in vanity, that's a mathematical impossibility. I accept that as being true, and I remember when God worked in my heart in the time of the Revival, prior to the Revival, for two years, from 1969 approximately on. So many times I saw myself as being absolute zero, less than nothing in vanity, and I remember sometimes telling God, God, I'm just a hole in the ground, why don't you fill it in and forget that I ever lived.

That's how I felt. I couldn't understand how God could ever spend a moment with me, how God could bother with me at all. But he did, because of his grace, if not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his infinite mercy that he saved us.

God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. And the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. To go back again, all things are naked, and open up the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

And there in Psalm 139, not a word of my tongue, but, Lo, O Lord, thou knowest it all together, you understand my thought afar off, you are acquainted with all my ways. What was the reaction of the writer? O God, where will I hide? Where can I hide? Where will I flee? And you get a beautiful answer a little later on in one of the later psalms, I flee unto thee to hide me. If you're going to hide, hide in God, don't try to hide from God.

Where can you go where God is not? If you could travel at the speed of light for a billion years and then get off the rocket or whatever, you'd find God was there before you ever got there. God is simply everywhere. I flee unto thee to hide me, rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.

Let the water and the blood from thy ribbon side which flowed be of sin a double cure, save me from its guilt and power. And there's a line of an old Greek hymn that says, My God, shall sin its power maintain and in my soul defiant live, tis not enough that thou forgive. The cross must rise and self be slain.

God can do it, but only God can do it. There's that song, you know, Rock of Ages, there's an Indian song to those words. The words are slightly different, it goes like this.

Very old stone, split for my benefit, let me absent myself underneath your fragments. Let me absent myself, let me become nothing underneath your fragments. Does that frighten you? It frightens some Christians to be nothing, but that's the secret of all blessings in the Christian life.

So then all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Depending on the attitude of my own heart, that can be a tremendously comforting thing or a very, very frightening truth. Oh, I flee unto thee to hide me.

God you know me perfectly, all my failures, you know my pride, God knows my sin, God knows all about it, all those failures, and he loves me. What he wants from me is honesty. Let us draw near, it says in Hebrews chapter 10, with a true heart, true as the opposite of false.

It doesn't say a perfect heart, it doesn't say a sinless heart, it just says with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water, let's draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Here in Hebrews 4, he talks about the Lord Jesus Christ having passed into, as we said when reading it literally through the heavens, we don't have a high

priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmity, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

If nobody else understands, God does. There are some things that go on in our lives sometimes we just don't tell anybody. But you can tell God, and he understands absolutely everything, because he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

And that's the beautiful thing about the Lord Jesus Christ, that he was man as well as God, and he lived in our world for 33 1/2 years. Don't let the devil tell you that Jesus doesn't understand. He does.

Maybe you've tried and tried and you've tried and you've failed. The Bible says a just man falls seven times and rises up again, but the wicked shall fall into evil. If you're God's child, no matter how often you may have failed, come back to God.

Jesus Christ understands. He's touched with a feeling of our infirmity. And don't be afraid or ashamed to share it all with him.

Therefore he says, let us come, let us come boldly, let us come boldly unto the throne of grace. Are you glad it's that? Our blood-sprinkled mercy seat, are you glad it's that? The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. Revelation 1, 5 says unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

How wonderful to know that. If we walk in the lightest, he is in the likeliest fellowship, one with another, the Christian with his God, it means, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. How wonderful.

You know, to a lot of people God's just a cozy thought out there somewhere. We hope he's sort of got his hand on the throttle in case the thing gets going too fast down the hill, and then he'll slow it down. That's about as far as it goes.

To some people, you know, God is just like a can opener on the wall. You don't have fellowship with a can opener, you just use it to open a can. Or God is something like an elevator in a building.

You don't talk to the elevator, you don't have fellowship with the elevator, you push the button to say, free, because you're going to the third floor, and you get off, and the door is open so nicely, and you get off, and the elevator goes on its silent way. That's how a lot of people look on God. He's just around like a cozy thought, as I said, to take care of the things that we can't take care of, to get us out of messes when we get into them, and so on.

There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, it's your friend. You confide in Jesus Christ with everything. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.

You can't see it, but you know he's there. I remember one time praying with a fellow, we had a terrible gash in his forehead, and I said, I was running a wood-splitting machine, and the wedge flew off, it came loose, and it hit me in the head. He said, I was almost killed.

I said, supposing you were? Well, I would have been bad, he said. I said, yes, but what about your soul? Well, I hadn't thought about that, so we talked about it, and the upshot was, he finally wanted to be saved. So he knelt.

Remember what the word of God says, 2nd Corinthians chapter 10? But they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. That's a fool's program.

God, show me what I look like to you. That's the prayer we need to pray. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there's any wicked way in me. And God will do that. God will show us.

And it probably will not be a happy sight. I knew a pretty good priest. He was a preacher.

He took an independent church out in Washington, oh, 13 or 14 years ago. He didn't know what he was getting into. It was a scrappy church.

Not only was it a scrappy church, but they actually had board members that were not even born again. They had some board members that got drunk. He didn't know this until he got there.

He told me, he said, Bill, sometimes I went home from the church, I threw myself across the bed, and I cried until I never had another tear in my head. My wife used to sit in my bed and try and console me. This went on for several years.

Then he heard there was a revival in Canada, and he hopped the plane and flew all the way down to Winnipeg. He came to see me after a meeting, and he said, Can you tell me how to be revived? I said, Yes. I said, You start by asking God to show you what you look like.

Will you do that? Why not? He said. Two nights later he came to see me. He said, Bill, this is like looking into hell.

Oh, God has been showing me the sin of my life as a Christian. It's terrible. I said, Do you want to do something about it? No, he said, I don't.

Well, I said, Do you know what the alternative is? He said, What is the alternative? I said, The alternative is that you get honest and leave the ministry, and he turned and he dropped on his knees. There was a chair right there, and he began to pray. Do you know how he prayed? Well, he prayed the way that a lot of us pray before we know better.

Oh, God, help me! God, help me! God, you know all about it! And he went on like this, and I stopped him, and I said, You know, God doesn't really want to help you. God wants to kill you. Well, there was a happy ending to it.

God did revive him and his wife. They came together. They went back to that church.

He began preaching this message, Galatians 2.20, Colossians 3.3, Romans 6.6, and so on. And God began to work in a revival burst on the church. People either left the church or got converted or got their lives cleaned up or something happened.

And I was there just last fall for a crusade. They had a building seating 600. It's now too small.

God gave them a beautiful 35 or 40-acre property. They're going to build a Christian radio station. They're going to build a Christian bookstore.

They already have a Christian school going. They're going to build an elderly citizens complex there and a large church or a large auditorium. And he said, Life is so great when you walk with God.

He knows it all. He says, Now you come, and you come boldly to the throne of grace. Blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

Come taking your stand on the word of God and let the chair you've been looking to God. He's the one. Paul asked the question, O wretched man that I am, who, not what, who shall deliver me from this body of death? You know, back in those days, if you murdered somebody and you were caught, they would often take you and then tie you face to face to the carcass of the person you had murdered.

Or they might chain you by your wrist or by your leg to the carcass of the person you had murdered. And they didn't let you free that stinking, rotten carcass until people usually went raving mad and died. And he likened that self-nature we have to that, a stinking body of death to which we're tied and there's no way to be free.

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. You can paint it with invisible paint and pretend it's not there, but it keeps erupting and betraying its presence in many, many different ways. And the only way of victory over self is by the cross and by the power of God.

You can't do it yourself. You can want to, but you can't. It's only God's grace.

It's only God's power. So God says, come boldly to the throne of grace that you may first of all obtain mercy and then find grace to help in time of need.

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