

# Drawing Near-1st Session

by Gisela Yohannan

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of drawing near to God with a sincere heart and full assurance of faith, highlighting the significance of the blood of Christ and the difference between the Old Testament and New Testament pictures of God.*

**Duration:** 1:06:56

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, John 14:23, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Hebrews 10:22-25, 1 John 4:16

**Topics:** "Experiencing God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the love of God and how it is portrayed in songs and scriptures. They question whether our understanding of God's love is accurate and emphasize the importance of recognizing God's authority. The speaker suggests that we can learn from how God is worshiped in heaven, as described in the book of Revelation. They also mention the reverence and respect shown to earthly rulers in the past, highlighting the need for us to approach God with humility and faith.

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## Transcript

When Lisa had shared with me that Gisela had agreed to come and do our Ladies' Retreat this year, I was ecstatic, I think is the word. We are so very blessed to have her here with us this weekend. Gisela has served with her husband, K.P. Yohannan, who is the founder and the international director of Gospel for Asia.

GFA's mission is to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who have never heard of his name. And for 30 years, Gospel for Asia continues to bring aid and hope to some of the most downtrodden people in the Eastern Hemisphere. My husband began to read K.P.'s books shortly after he was saved.

And K.P.'s writings literally have just impacted his life on such a great level. And then also, Gisela, I've just learned of in the recent years, that she also is authoring many books. And I have had the opportunity to read one of late that has just changed my life.

I would highly recommend Broken for a Purpose. I love that book. Thank you so much for writing that.

And so, would you please welcome Gisela Yohannan. Thank you so much. Well, thank you so much for inviting me to cold Michigan.

You know, where I come from there in the suburb of Dallas, today it's 88, and at night it's around 65, 67, which is cold. So I will try to enjoy this freezing weather. Well, it's actually very nice that we don't have to leave the building, at least I don't.

And we will be together for a couple of days, or one and a half days, it looks like. And we will look at the scripture that you picked out for us. So I trust that it was the Lord that was pointing Gisela to the scripture, and that he has something that he wants us to incorporate in our lives.

You know, all scripture is not for just reading, but that we live what it says, that we learn something for our lives. So tonight I want to read the whole scripture that we have for this weekend, and then we will look at each session at a small portion of it. Hebrews 10, 22 through 25.

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Now, everybody is wondering who wrote the letter to the Hebrews, and they haven't found out totally. Some say it was Paul, some say it was Apollos, and some say it was even someone else. But nevertheless, the person that wrote the letter to the Hebrews had quite some understanding of the Jewish culture and religion.

Now, when he wrote this letter, he wrote this letter to Jewish Christians, and it was probably these Christians lived somewhere in Palestine or Rome, and it was in the time before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which happened in AD 70. Now, during this time, persecution was widespread. Christians were persecuted everywhere, and it was just around the time of Emperor Nero, and I think most of us heard very bad stories about the Roman Emperor.

He had the Christians thrown to the lions or set aflame and tortured them to death. Now, these Christians were also suffering from persecution from their Jewish countrymen. Now, they had expected for Jesus to return in their lifetime.

Actually, they were thinking they'd get saved, and in a few years, Jesus is coming. And they waited and waited, and they were disappointed that the second coming had not taken place yet and that Jesus was delaying. Now, they had interpreted their time, you know, but they were kind of off.

It wasn't yet the time for Jesus to come. I mean, they may have looked at the persecution that was happening, and maybe they looked at Nero, and they were saying to themselves, there is no one else that looks more like Antichrist than that man. Well, if they would know about our times, they would say maybe Hitler looked pretty close in the Holocaust, but they were disappointed that Jesus hadn't come back, and then somehow many of them were shaken in their faith.

You know, they had all these struggles and these unfulfilled expectations, and some were in danger of falling away, and some were in danger of going back to Judaism and the law. Now, this letter was written to these Christians, and it's full of comparisons of Old Testament rituals and sacrifices and foreshadows of the New Testament fulfillment in Christ. Now, all these people were very familiar with the subjects they were talking about, and no one had to explain to them more because they came from this background.

And what the book of Hebrews was talking about was very relevant to their struggles. Now, when we think about these people's struggles, we can say some of the issues they had, we don't struggle at all with it. But it is very good for us to understand a little bit about the root of our faith.

You know, the Christian faith comes out of the Jewish faith. And Jesus was living as a Jew, and he was a Jewish Messiah. And our understanding of the scripture will become much deeper if we understand at least some of the Jewish religion, a little bit more about the Old Testament.

Now, I may have competition over there. Now, this evening, we will start with the first charge, actually, that is in the scripture that we've chosen for this retreat, let us draw near. Now, I will read this again, just that portion.

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Now, when we read let us draw near, it sounds like a really wonderful invitation of our Heavenly Father to smile to his beloved children. You know, when we read this, we picture a smiling father who is ready with open arms to embrace his little children that come running to him.

And he puts them on his lap, and he talks to them, and he enjoys their company, and they are not afraid of him. And they like to be with him. Now, how did we get this picture of God? Well, probably from some of the things we learned in Sunday school when we were growing up.

You know, we heard and we learned the Bible stories. Jesus blesses the little children, and he takes them in his arms, and he says, let them come to me. And then the story about the prodigal son, father can't wait to embrace his son that was lost and is found now.

And then, of course, we have the picture of the good shepherd and the lost sheep, you know. And the shepherd is so happy to have this little sheep, and he carries it on his shoulders, and he's rejoicing. And then we learned in Sunday school, you know, Jesus loves the little children, the little songs we had.

And Jesus loves me, this I know. And then, of course, we have all these wonderful New Testament scriptures for God so loved the world, John 3, 16. And then God is love, 1 John 4, 16.

Now, is it an accurate picture of God's relationship with us? What we just talked about, is it accurate? Yes, it is. It is the relationship we have with him after the cross, after Jesus died on the cross. That is the accurate relationship we have, a loving father who welcomes his children and who loves them and wants to be with them.

Now, the people of Israel had an Old Testament picture of God, and it was rather different from the smiling father that is bouncing the little children on his knees. Yes, they believed, you know, that God is the father of mankind because he created them. But he is also the God of Israel, the God who made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants forever and who brought Israel out of Egypt and sent ten terrible plagues upon the Egyptians and the God who divided the Red Sea and was drowning the Egyptians and the God who gave the law at Mount Sinai that defines right and wrong.

And he is the God who gave them a system of sacrifice and a means to atone for their sin. And he is the God who provided manna and water in the wilderness for 40 years and who was leading his people with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire and the God who brought Israel against all odds into the promised land. He destroyed all their enemies, and then he is the God to them who revealed himself and his deeds

through his words and through the prophets that spoke to the people.

And he gave them leaders like Moses and like David and Jeremiah and Joshua. And he is the God who gave them promises that he would bless them if they obeyed them and who promised them that the Messiah would come. Now, but that was not all of the pictures I had.

He was also the God of Israel who is their defender, their provider, their healer, and who is a father who is compassionate and gracious. But at the same time, he is also a righteous and holy God who by no means can overlook sin. And they found out before God, before their God, the God of the Old Testament, no one could hide their sin and get away with it.

And Achan tried, you remember, they went all to fight the war at Jericho. They marched around, and then Joshua had told them, you cannot take any of the spoil. And so Achan saw some really neat stuff, and he was hiding them.

He buried them in his hut or in his tent. And he thought God didn't see it either, but God saw. And he paid with his life.

They found out that God would judge with absolute righteousness. And the God whose law required life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. They also learned that he's a consuming fire and lives in a light that is unapproachable.

One wrong move and you are dead. That's what they found out. You remember Aaron was given the priesthood and his sons, and so they were starting their office, but it didn't take long before they made a mistake.

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, they decided they would burn incense to God, but they were lighting the whole thing in their fire pen, their censer, with the wrong fire, not the one that God commanded. They offered strange fire, and you know what happened. They dropped dead, Leviticus 10, 1 and 2. You should read the story.

Now, this was just some of the picture. These Jewish people had the people of Israel about God. Now, even the high priest had to be really, really, really, really careful how he would approach God.

No layman was allowed to approach God's presence in the holiest of holy, only the high priest. Now, we read that King Uzziah, he decided to enter the temple to burn incense. Now, he wasn't a Levite.

He wasn't a priest. He was the king, and he was thinking, I'm the king, and I can do this. So, he went into the temple, and the priests tried to stop him, and they said, it's not your place.

You are not called for priesthood, and he got angry, and the end of the story is that right there in the temple, he broke out with leprosy. You read that in 2 Chronicles 26, 16 through 21. Only once a year on the Day of Atonement, the anointed high priest could go behind the veil where the Ark of the Covenant was, and he had first to go through all kinds of ritual washings.

He had to wear certain kind of holy clothes, and then he had to take coals from the altar and put it on the incense, and then he had to carry blood with him from the land that was sacrificed, and so he went with these things behind the veil, and then he had to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat, and should he approach God's presence in the wrong way, in an unworthy manner, or if he would not keep the

prescribed law and protocol how to approach God, he would be a dead man. I'm sure he rehearsed and rehearsed and rehearsed, and maybe the other priests were tutoring him and saying, don't forget this, and don't forget that, and you need to be so careful any wrong step you take, and I imagine he would not have slept all night before he had to go there. Now, the Israelites would stand outside, and now the priest, the high priest would go in with the incense and the blood, and he would sprinkle it on the mercy seat, and if the smoke of the incense would fill the holies of holies, and the high priest came out alive, they were all rejoicing because their sacrifice for their sin was accepted by God, and their sins were atoned for for another year.

The Israelites learned approaching the holy God, drawing near to him, was a very risky thing. It was risking your life each time. Is it an accurate picture of God's relationship with us? Yes, it is.

It is the relationship we had with him before the cross. That was the relationship before the cross, and after the cross, we have this other picture. We started with the father with open arms saying, Draw near to me.

I want you to come close. Now, the Hebrew Christians, that was their background. Think about it.

Imagine what went through the mind of a new Jewish convert, a new Jewish believer when he was told, Well, you can come into the presence of God yourself anytime you wish. You can approach God even without any blood. You don't need to bring any more, any sacrifices.

The law requires, and you don't have to be afraid to get zapped, you know, or drop dead. Think about it. This Jewish convert, for the first time, he's approaching God's presence.

Don't you think he was a little bit trembling in his heart because he was brought up with this picture of God, the consuming fire, the holy, the righteous God who cannot let you get away with anything. Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. I imagine that Jewish believer, when he draws near to God, in the beginning, he must have been a little hesitant.

All his life, he was taught the opposite. What if he makes a mistake? What if he's not qualified? If we have this in our mind, we understand why the writer of Hebrews explains to them, draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith. You know, the writer of Hebrews explains to these Jewish Christians why they can come so freely.

He tells them, you know, the blood of Christ is superior to all the animal blood because it cleanses us from all sin, past, present, and future. And he explains in some of the chapters of the book of Hebrews, he explains how Jesus fulfilled all the requirements for us to be reconciled with God. There is no other sacrifice needed.

Jesus was the last sacrifice. And then he explained, you know, since Jesus is now in heaven, he's our high priest in heaven. Therefore, you don't need a high priest on earth, an earthly mediator between God and you.

You can come right away. And then he explains how the new covenant is in all aspects superior to the old one. And after he explains all that, he says, therefore, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

That's why you can come, he told these Jewish Christians. And you can come so freely. Now, I don't think any of us has the same problems like these Hebrew Christians had.

But I realize, you know, when I read this thing, we got other problems and other issues when we approach God. There are, I picked out two of them. I'm sure there are more than two, but these were the two that I think maybe we may be struggling more or less with that.

The first one is we lack reverence for God. We are so familiar with the love and grace of God that we take his presence for granted. And the second problem we often have is that after we become Christians and we make mistakes, we often live with a lot of condemnation.

Now, to us also, the writer of Hebrews says, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith for our problems. He says, let us draw near. Now, people look at these two things, and maybe I don't know where you are in your faith, but I trust that God has something for you that you can learn for your life.

So we will look at let us draw near with a sincere heart. We said our first problem is we lack reverence for God. You know, sincere means to be genuine, to be honest, truthful, and earnest.

You know, we often take his presence so lightly because we no longer get sapped and drop dead. That's what it is. You know, I think you were saying to switch the cell phones off and not to Twitter and all.

Think about what God would have done in the Old Testament setting if we sit and we eat our donut and coffee and we chew our gum and we Twitter away and we look up, and I think we wouldn't have made it very far. Now, we live in a different time, but God has not changed. You know, we often take his presence so very lightly.

We are not very sincere in the presence of royalty. Now, I think we almost forgot who he is, and we have often very little reverence and respect in our behavior. I have seen amazing things, what people all do.

But we need to remember, yes, he is our loving father, but he is still almighty God. Yes, we have free access to the throne of grace, but he is still the king of kings. And yes, we can come without fear, but he is still the holy one of Israel.

Now, our 21st century culture doesn't teach us hardly anymore how to honor and respect anyone, actually. I mean, maybe you still have something, but the generations that are growing up now, they can't even remember when you stood up when the teacher enters the room. Or, I mean, we have a wonderful country, and it's a democracy, and everybody is equal, and we don't have to bow down to anyone.

We have all the freedom, and we found out that even our president made some slight mistakes when he met royalty. There, the queen in England and all. You know, we have trouble with protocol that involves reverence and respect.

Now, if you have some time, I would suggest to you, and I don't do that very often, I suggest to you go on Google and type in, you know, how did people behave in the presence of a king, or a pharaoh, or the Roman emperor, you know, kind of 2,000 some years ago. Because this letter was written in a time when that understanding was in the mind of people. They knew what was required if you met pharaoh of Egypt, or if you met Caesar, or if you met a king.

You know, each of these people, each of these amazing rulers had a protocol, how you have to approach them if you want an audience and you want to live. And how do you have to behave in their presence, how you address them, what kind of titles. You know, I looked one time, you know, English royalty, the titles, I mean, your head spins.

How many different titles and each level of blue blood, how you have to address them. But it was, it's nothing compared to what it was. In the time of the Old and New Testament, you know, I read about pharaoh, you know.

If anyone approaches pharaoh, you have to prostrate yourself seven times. Seven times, both on your belly, face forward, and back, on your back. And then if you talk to him, you have to address him like comparing pharaoh to the sun and yourself as the dust under his feet.

You know, these thoughts don't even enter our mind anymore, but that was normal at the time. And if you, maybe we understand a little bit more if we look at the story of Queen Esther. You know, she got married to this king, and she was made queen.

But she could not approach her husband, her own husband, the king, without being called by him. Obviously, she was not sleeping in the same bedroom. She was somewhere in the harem.

She had her own quarters. And she could only come when she was called by name. And if she would come without an invitation, she would risk her life, you know.

If she didn't find favor and he hold out his golden scepter, she'd be executed. Think about it. And that's the queen.

What about the normal people? We are still talking about, you know, we take God's presence so lightly. Now, maybe we can say it's not totally our fault because we didn't grow up with any of this frame of reference. But therefore, I think we could learn a few things.

You know, our God is so loving. But when we think about it, in heaven where we are about to go soon, some of us sooner. In heaven, in the kingdom of God, there is no democracy.

Did you know that? God will be the supreme ruler. And the angels and all the saints are there. And they are his subjects and we are going to obey him.

Now, something may be very helpful if we look how God is worshipped and treated in heaven by the angels and the saints. And you read actually quite lengthy description in the book of Revelation. You know, Revelation chapter 4 and Revelation chapter 7, verse 9 through 11, it gives you a glimpse how worship is conducted in heaven.

And our worship leader is nodding her head. I'm sure she studied it. You know, God is sitting on his throne and then there are 24 elders sitting on thrones around him.

And they have crowns on their heads. And four living creatures, they are also around the throne. And day and night they cry out, holy, holy, holy.

And you can read what all they say. And then when they worship like this, the 24 elders fall down before him. They are no longer sitting on their throne.

They are casting their crowns at the feet of God. And they worship. And the other picture we have is of this great multitude from every nation standing before the throne.

And I think we are, we will be among them, you know. And the angels are there and the living creatures and the elders. And then it talks about they are singing and they are worshipping.

And then everybody is falling on their faces before the throne and they worship. I would suggest read this scriptures a little bit and think about it. This is how we all will be have in his presence when we get to heaven.

I think it'd be a good thing we practice just a little bit. Starting now to come to God's presence with not so lightly. We often order God around like he is our servant.

We tell him, give me, give me, give me a bigger house, a newer car, a better job, more money, a husband, a dishwasher, a new wardrobe. And maybe one of these designer purses and shoes. We got this list and Sunday in church, we come to church and we had got a to-do list for the next week.

You know, some of, I don't know, if you do that to your husband, you give him a list. You know, next week you need to mow the lawn and take the trash out and fix the fence and pick up the laundry. We kind of do that to God.

Have you ever noticed, you know, the pastor will tell us let's pray for one another and we find ourselves praying for ourselves. Have you ever seen that? And then we so often question his wisdom. We say to God, why did you do this? Why did you create me not any prettier than I am? Why did you give me a body that is not as nice as my neighbors? And we ask God, why didn't you do something? And we doubt his love.

We say, I thought you loved me, but you didn't answer my prayer. I prayed for this man to get married to him. I liked him, but he married someone else.

Why you did that? Why did you allow this? Now, think about it. What did Jesus do when he drew near to God? We see that in all kinds of different situations. When Jesus drew near to God, he was praying even to the last, yet not my will, but thine be done.

Luke 22, 42. He even said, I came to do your will, O God. That is how he drew near into God's presence.

Not with a to-do list, not with twittering and being totally distracted. He would come to God and say, Father, what do you want me to do next? Which disciples do you want me to call? Where do you want me to go? Lazarus is sick. Should I go now or should I go later? Actually, when he was teaching us, he was telling us how we can draw near to God.

He said, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6, 33. So, maybe we should start asking God when we draw near to him, Father, what do you wish me to do today to bring honor to your name? And then, we often tell him, and we do that in our songs and with our words.

We tell him, we love you, Father, but we don't love him to the point of obedience. Jesus said, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word. John 14, 23.

If we say to God, we love you, the proof is our obedience to his word. Actually, we make promises and commitments to him on Sunday. We even come forward, you know, and we forget them on Monday.

If we did the same with the IRS, the promises we make to God and we don't keep, if we do the same to the IRS, we all would be in jail right now. We would do very well to learn from Israel, at least a little bit, how to treat God as holy and how to show him reverence for who he is. He's still our loving, heavenly Father.

We need to draw near to him with a sincere heart. You know, let us never forget the privilege for us to draw near to him. It came at the highest price.

Jesus had to lay down his life so we could draw near to him. Let us remember that, and then let us draw near with a sincere heart. Now we will look at the second problem we talked about.

And we will look also at the second part of this verse. Let us draw near with a sincere heart, the second part, in full assurance of faith. That means we're supposed to draw near with full assurance of faith.

We said our second problem is, at least for some of us, we live with condemnation. Do you remember the day you got saved? You know, you were filled with joy and peace and your sins were forgiven and you were set free from bondage. And at that day you desired that you want to live for the Lord and you want to please him with all your life and you want to honor him.

But what happened five years, ten years, twenty years later? You feel unworthy and condemned because you didn't live up to your desire to honor God. Some of us have made detours. Some of us have made bad mistakes.

Some of us have dishonored God privately and some have publicly. And we dishonored the church with our weakness, our failures, our sins. Of course, since we are Christians, we ask forgiveness from God and he forgave us.

But so many times when we come to him, we remember and we feel discouraged and condemned and unworthy because of what we've done as a Christian. It seems whenever we draw to our Heavenly Father, there is always the shadow of our past failures. And this affects our faith and when we pray and our relationship with him.

Now, does God see us unworthy as well when we approach him? We feel unworthy. But does God see us unworthy? No, he doesn't. And I tell you why.

First of all, when we were born again, all our sins were washed away by the blood of Jesus. And he washed away our subsequent sins and failures. 1 John 1.9 If we confess our sin, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1.9 That means he washed away all the sins before we were saved and he does it ever since. Each time we come to him, confess our sin, he forgives us our sins and cleanses us from a few unrighteousness, some, three, four, five, all unrighteousness. And actually, he not only cleanses us, but the Bible says he remembers our sins no more.

You read that in Jeremiah 31, 34. God says, I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more. Now, we remember it.

How come God doesn't remember it? Does God have amnesia? I don't think so. But you know what? He chose. He chooses not to remember our sin no more.

The ones we did before we were saved and the ones we committed after we were saved. He chose to remember them no more. He doesn't look at us as unworthy.

He doesn't want a shadow between him and us because his forgiveness is complete. It's actually us that have the problem of feeling unworthy and condemned. You know, the second reason that God does not see us unworthy each time we approach is we were given a new position as a believer.

When we got saved, God gave us a new position, actually a lot of them. He says, we are a child of God. That's my new position.

I am a child of God. 1 John 3, 2. I am born of God. John 1, 13.

I am an heir of God. Galatians 4, 7. I am a new creature. 2 Corinthians 5, 17.

I am accepted in the beloved. Ephesians 1, 6. I am blessed with every spiritual blessing. Ephesians 1, 3. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5, 21. I am free of condemnation. Romans 8, 1. I am complete in Him.

Colossians 2, 10. I am an overcomer. 1 John 4, 4. I am more than a conqueror through Christ.

Romans 8, 37. I am seated in heavenly places with Christ. Ephesians 2, 6. God doesn't see me unworthy.

He sees me in these positions that I just told you about. That is how God sees me. But then we look at ourselves again and we ask, how can God talk about us as if we were already perfect? He knows we fall short.

He makes all these declarations. How can He declare these things about us when we make all these mistakes? The Bible tells us the reason He can declare these things about us is because God sees us in Christ Jesus. That means God the Father, when I stand before Him, He doesn't see me directly.

He sees us in Jesus or through Jesus. I want to read two verses. 2 Corinthians 5, 17.

Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Romans 8, 1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I want to give you an example.

I've got a kitchen window. And when I look through that window, there is a tree in my yard. Every time I look through the window, I see the tree.

But actually, I don't see the tree not so directly. Between me and the tree, there is a window. There is a glass window.

There is glass. It stands in between me and the tree. And the Lord Jesus is just like this glass.

You know, He stands between me and God. When God looks at me, He first sees Jesus. And Jesus is altogether righteous and holy and complete.

And with Jesus standing in front of me, my insufficiency is totally covered by His completeness. Do you understand? When God looks at you, when you draw near to Him, He doesn't see you directly. He sees you with Jesus standing in front of you.

And when He sees Jesus, He sees completeness. And that's how He sees you. Jesus is right in front of you, and everything is covered up.

That is not perfect yet. But God sees us in this new position, and we need to see ourselves like that. Now, when you read the scripture verses, when God talks about us as an overcomer, or a conqueror, or that we are complete, He always talks about our position as a child of God, not about our perfect deeds.

Remember that. When God calls you an heir, when God calls you a conqueror, He talks about your position as a child of God, not your perfect deeds. Your deeds won't be perfect until you reach heaven.

And we need to realize also our position that God has given us as daughters of God, as children of God. It's a right now position. When you look at the scripture verses and God makes His declaration about our position, He always uses either past tense or present tense.

He never uses future tense. I want to give you an example. 1 John 3, verse 2, He says, Now we are children of God.

Now is present tense. It doesn't say you will be a child of God when you are perfect. It says, Now we are children of God.

Colossians 2, verse 10, You have been made complete. That's in the past. You have been made complete.

It doesn't say you will be made complete. It says you have been made complete. It already has happened through Jesus.

Romans 8, verse 1, There is therefore now no condemnation. It doesn't say there will be no condemnation for you after you died or something like that. It says there is therefore now no condemnation.

See, in God's eyes, I am what He says I am right now. In God's eyes, you are what He says you are right now. Not in ten years.

Not after you die. You are right now. Regardless of your performance.

If you mess up, God knows that. But in His eyes, you are complete. And then it's also regardless of what I think.

Or regardless of my feelings. Or my thinking of unworthiness. And it's also regardless of what the devil is trying to tell me about myself.

Did you ever know, realize the devil is trying to tell you something about yourself? He says, you are not good enough. God is not pleased with you. Look how you messed up.

God cannot use you. See, what do you think you could accomplish for Him? Look at all these failures. That's what you are.

God doesn't listen to the devil and He doesn't listen to what I think about myself. So whom should we believe? What God says about us? Or what we think about ourselves? Or what the devil is saying about us? Which of the three is speaking the truth? Is God speaking the truth? Do I say the truth? Or is the devil saying the truth? I think we all know. God says.

Jesus said, I am the truth. And whatever He speaks is truth. Jesus said, if you abide in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine.

And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free, set you free. John 8, 31, 32. So what is the truth? That I am accepted in the beloved.

That I am a conqueror right now. That I am an heir. That I am totally accepted by God.

That's the truth. And if I know that, it will totally set me free. It will set me free to draw to God with confidence, with joy.

So if you believe what God says about you, it will set you free from all the feelings of unworthiness. And from all the condemnation. You know, I find people sometimes battling condemnation and unworthiness for one year, two years, five years, ten years.

And they still feel unworthy. Why is that? Because they have listened to themselves and they have listened to the devil and accepted what he says about us. Instead of listening to God, what he says about you.

And then, if you believe what God says about you, there will be no shadow of your past failures between you and your Heavenly Father. There is no shadow any longer. And your heart will be so full of joy to draw near to him and spend time with him.

I remember a dear sister was telling me once, you know, some years ago, I walked away from the Lord for a period of time and I did things I am not proud of. When I came back to God, I felt so unworthy and condemned. And she said, I thought my feelings of unworthiness and condemnation is the punishment I have to bear for my failures as a Christian.

She thought that is what God assigned to her. You know, now you have to bear your feelings of unworthiness. And we were talking about some of these things that we shared tonight.

How God sees us and how we can believe him what he says about us. And that Jesus is standing in front of us and all our unworthiness is covered. So, this dear sister realized, you know, all these years she could have drawn near to God with joy and with full assurance of faith.

If she only knew how God sees her. Now, I don't know where you are in your Christian life and how you draw near to God. But if you live in defeat and self-condemnation as a result of not knowing who you are in Christ, then tonight, I believe you can settle this issue and believe, decide, you have to choose to believe what God says about you.

And don't listen to yourself, don't listen to the devil. Dear sisters, if you continue to live with the unworthiness after you hear the truth, how God sees you, then it is some self-inflicting pain you put on you. God did not put that on you.

He doesn't want that on you. He wants you free, that you can draw near to Him with full assurance of faith that all sin is paid for. That Jesus will always be in front of you.

And as long as you are in Him, you are all that God says you are. You know, we honor God if we believe what He says about us. We honor Him.

And then God has a promise for us. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. James 4, 8. We got an invitation, let us draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

I believe we can do that this evening. And shall we close and pray together and maybe we can take a few minutes to draw near to God. And if you leave all your unworthiness away, you can do it with great joy, believing what God says about you.

Shall we pray? Lord Jesus, we thank you so very much that you told us how you see us. That we are in you. And as such we are totally accepted.

And we can come to the Father with confidence. And we know that He will draw near to us when we draw near to Him. And we thank you for loving us so much.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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