

The Throne of Grace

by Jim Cymbala

The book of Hebrews teaches that Jesus is greater than the prophets, angels, and Moses, and that he is the final word that God has to say to the world, and that believers can approach God's throne of grace with confidence, knowing that Jesus has made a way for them to come boldly before God.

Duration: 32:09

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30, Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 10:22, Hebrews 10:24-25, Hebrews 10:35-36, Hebrews 13:6

Topics: "Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of getting to a specific place, which he refers to as 'there.' He encourages the audience to focus on this place and hold firmly to their faith in Jesus, who has ascended into heaven. The preacher explains that this place is a throne of grace, where God pours out gifts freely and undeservedly. He emphasizes that God wants to help and protect us, just like a loving grandfather would, and urges the audience to stay close to this place and not be swayed by the lies of the world.

Transcript

In our reading this week, we're reading through the New Testament in a different format, and we've been studying the first six, seven chapters of Hebrews. We've been trying to preach, whether it's Pastor Tim, myself, from something that we read this week, and I want to do it, because one of my favorite Bible verses in the whole Bible is found in our reading this week. In fact, when someone asks me to sign a book I wrote, or they say, sign my Bible and put a verse in, I use that verse as much as any verse, if not more.

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers 2,000 years ago, who were starting to struggle with their Christianity because of the persecution that had come upon them. When they were practicing Judaism, there was no problem. Nobody was getting up in arms against them, for the most part.

But once they became Christians, and then being Jewish, and they received Yeshua, Jesus, as their Messiah, the fur started really to fly, and things got difficult for them. Some of them wanted to go back to their Jewish practices, where they knew there'd be more safety. The other thing, and this is what makes Hebrews a little difficult for the modern reader, a lot of them were saying, it seems so much more religious the way we used to be, because you had a temple, you had animal sacrifices, you had all the Old Testament law prescriptions for worship that Moses was given through angels from God.

We had a temple to go to, we had physical sacrifices, we had a high priest in this wild, beautiful garment, and now we meet in caves, we meet in homes, and except for water baptism, when you become a Christian, and except for repeatedly taking the Lord's Supper communion, there's no ceremonialism. It doesn't seem as religious. So some of them were tempted to go back from where the Lord has brought them from.

The book of Hebrews is a book that tells the Christians there, we have so much more in Jesus than we had in the Old Testament religion of the Hebrew people. In fact, that religion was just a picture, or as Bible commentators use this word, type, T-Y-P-E. They were types, or symbols, or foretellings of Christ.

He would be the fulfillment of all that stuff that was going on in the Old Testament. God was only preparing people for the coming of his son. So the book of Hebrews, which by the way is the mystery book in the New Testament when it comes to knowing who the author is, it does not say who the author is, so there's no telling who wrote this book.

For years or centuries, people thought Paul wrote it, but modern scholarship discounts that. It's a different style of writing. Paul always used his name when he wrote a letter.

We don't know who it is, but it's inspired by God, and it's part of the canon of scripture. So at the beginning of this letter, written by this unknown person of authority and leadership, he goes and starts to prove that Jesus is greater than all the prophets. Prophets were big time people in the Old Testament, Isaiah, Jeremiah, but the letter starts with God in different ways and in different times in the past spoke to us through the prophets, but now in these last days, he has spoken to us through his son.

Jesus is the final word that God has to say to the world. There is no word beyond Jesus. When you have Jesus, you have everything.

And it points out, this letter, that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, that when you study him and look at him, that's who God is. The picture of God that we get from the creation creates awe that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. The picture of God that we get if we look at the law, the law of God that he gave Moses, that reflects God in a way, just like creation reflects his power, but the law only creates fear because none of us have obeyed it.

It reflects God's holiness, but when you read the law, you want to, as Martin Luther said, you want to run from God rather than run to God because you see how undone you are, how sinful you are. So God wanted us not to try to patch this verse with that verse and create a picture of God that was skewed, so he sent his son. And when you see Jesus and you study Jesus and you want to know anything about God, you look at Jesus and that tells you, oh, I'm so happy that our savior is Jesus Christ.

So after proving that Jesus is greater than the prophets, he proves that Jesus is greater than angels. Angels were in the Old Testament, they were significant beings sent from heaven as messengers, but the writer says, no, but Jesus is greater because he's the son of God. They are just fiery messengers that God uses.

Then he goes and he proves that Jesus is greater than Moses. Moses was the man, he was the main man to the Jewish people in terms of their religion. And the writer proves, no, Jesus is greater than Moses, like the one who builds a building is greater than the building because through Jesus, the whole world was created.

So after dispelling all of these notions, he begins to give warnings and encouragement, and then he leads actually to the most important part of the whole letter. This letter is different in that later on this week, we're going to read about faith in chapter 10 and 11, but the major lesson of Hebrews is not at the end, like you would see in a school book, but the major lesson is right in the middle of the book. And then it's mentioned later on, we're going to touch on it now.

We're going to get to the whole crux of the matter. And the crux of the matter is this. He says that not only is Jesus greater than prophets and Moses and angels, he says, don't feel bad that you don't have a physical high priest.

Now, what did priests mean? Not to you, not to me. Some of you might have a Catholic background. Priests mean something to you, but what it meant to the people he was writing to, that's the only way you can understand scripture.

So when you said priest and high priest to the people, the Jewish people, it meant the one who is the mediator and the go between, between a holy God and sinful men. In the old Testament, you didn't go and worship yourself and come into God's presence. No, no, no.

You brought your sacrifice. You gave it to the priest. No one ever experienced God's presence except the high priest.

And that one time a year on Yom Kippur, he would go into the holy of holies and offer a sacrifice for all the people. So God on purpose kept a distance and said, no, I am holy and you are sinful. And I can't fellowship with you for now, offer these blood sacrifices of animals, which cause atonement, but still keep your distance from me.

And the priest was the mediator who offered the sacrifices to God, took it from the people, offered it to God, and then commended the people with blessings from God. The priest pronounced the blessing. Thank you, Lord.

So now the writer is going to complete this and that these comparison. And he's going to say, no, we have a better high priest. He didn't go in the, he doesn't go into the temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed in 70 AD.

That's why Jewish people can no longer offer any sacrifices, even though the Bible prescribes them because there's no temple to offer it in. The temple was taken away. The mosque of Omar, a place of worship for Muslims, stands on the exact spot where Solomon's temple was.

And God said, you can't offer sacrifices any place else. So very soon after this letter was written, the priest couldn't go in there anyway. But the writer is saying, we have a better high priest.

Jesus is our high priest. He has gone into heaven for us to represent us and to offer sacrifice for our sins so that you can draw near to God. It's a much better arrangement.

It's a much better covenant because you are always kept at a distance. And he relates that to the people. He says, but now Jesus is our high priest and what he's done for us, you can't even imagine.

You got to dwell on this. You got to understand this. And then he points it, he points us to a place.

And the name of this message is just simply two words, get there. Just get there. Someone says, how wonderful is that place? I can't describe it.

Just get there. Just go there. So now just look at the passage.

I want to just speak very briefly because I want to go there. I want to get there with you. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended, notice not into the temple, into heaven, Jesus, the son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

In other words, keep holding on to what I've been telling you about how great he is and what he's done. Go ahead. 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.

Let us then, and here's the whole summary of the whole of Hebrews. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence. That word confidence means speak whatever is in your heart.

It means free speaking. Literally, it means outspokenness. Not boldness like in your heart, but just come comfortable like you would to your father and speak whatever's on your mind.

Don't be afraid, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, outspokenness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Now, he's touching on this thought that Jesus coming and dying on the cross and shedding his blood for us, that's the only way we get to heaven.

No one's getting to heaven because they try hard. No one's getting to heaven because they try to live a good life. When the spirit comes in you, you will try to live a good life, but that's not the ticket to heaven.

The only ticket to heaven is by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Can we all put our hands together and just affirm that? It's the only way anyone goes to heaven, but the writer here is saying, listen, when you're on the upside of the mountain, you better remember what else Jesus has done. He's not only our savior, he's not only the sacrifice that was presented to God, his blood.

When I see the blood, I will pass over you. He's not only the sacrifice, he's our high priest. He's the one that God has raised up so that you can have fellowship and get help from God 24 seven.

Not only are you on this journey that you want to make it on the upside of the mountain, not only is heaven waiting for you, but if heaven's over there and this is your life and you're on this journey, he's saying, just remember this, we have a high priest who went and offered himself as the sacrifice, but then he sat at the right hand of God and now he lives as our high priest. He's forever living. He's praying for us.

He's trying to draw us to get help from heaven. He's trying to show us every day how much he loves us. He's trying to help us so that when your knees get wobbly, he wants to draw us and say, I have the strength so you can make it on the upside of the mountain.

In other words, don't try to get there on your own and say, oh, then someday I'm going to stumble into heaven, hopefully. No, no. Even on the upside of the mountain, Jesus says, I'm there.

I'm your high priest and I've made a way so that you can come. Not be afraid. You come to the throne of grace.

When? Anytime. 30 times a day. You can go there right now because the throne of grace is the place of prayer.

The throne of grace is another word for going to God in prayer and getting what you need from God. And the devil will try every which way to block us from getting to the throne of grace because he knows there's mercy and grace to help us at the throne of grace. So he will do everything to block a church from having prayer meetings, from you and I going to pray.

He'll keep us too busy. He'll make us too undisciplined. Or he will say, you're not good enough to pray and get help from God.

When you get your life together, then you can go to God. What do you think? You're just going to walk into God's presence? He knows what you did last week. He knows what you said to your husband or wife two days ago.

What are you going to just walk in? No. And then that sounds like the Holy Spirit. And then people don't pray.

When I get my life together, then I'm really going to pray. Then God will hear me. No, he'll never hear you.

You come through Jesus Christ. You come believing in Jesus. You come understanding what the throne of grace is about.

So let's analyze it as I close. Notice for believers in Jesus, it's not a throne of judgment. It's a throne of grace.

You know where God wants all of you and me to go in about 10 minutes? He wants us to come to the throne of grace. The writer says, therefore, because of what Jesus has done, wouldn't this be a waste? He's gone into heaven, offered his own blood as a sacrifice. He's wiped away all your sins.

There's no more record of your sins. There is not one record of anything you and I have ever done. Praise God.

Come on. Can we say praise God to that? This is, in the Old Testament, what the blood of animals could never do. The people always in their heads were worrying, oh, what I did, God knows what I did.

I walk in there, he's going to zap me for what I did two months ago, two years ago, two decades ago. He's never forgotten. And that made them fear.

And now Jesus has gone and says, no, you come in boldly. You come in like a child to their father. You come and walk right in because the blood of Jesus has cleansed you and covered you.

And when you talk to your father, he just wants to help you. Come on, let's say amen. He wants to receive you.

See the battle here, what the writer's trying to do is saying, look, he saved you. He washed away your sins, but now he wants to show you the power of communion, the power of fellowship with God. He wants to show you the strength you can get from coming and talking to God.

But the devil, the enemy of our soul sets up all these obstacles in our mind. I can do it on my own. I don't need God's help.

So the writer is showing through different ways. No, don't miss out because you have our priest, he says. For now we have, we have, I have a priest.

You have a priest. I say this carefully. You own him.

He's your priest. He's my priest. He doesn't live for sinners as a priest.

For sinners, he's a savior, but for believers, he's already our savior. He's our priest. We can go right into his presence and we can say, I have access, not because of who I am, not because of how I live.

No, that's the reason I'm coming because I need help. And Jesus makes a way where we can be welcomed by the father. Beware of all the devices the devil will use to try to block you from coming boldly to the throne of grace.

This is the great battle going on in the world among Christians, because without the throne of grace, we remain weak, immature, struggling. At the throne of grace, everything we need is waiting. Now, it's noticed we have a high priest who has gone not into a temple, into heaven to make a way for us.

He's made a path so that we can go in under his skirts, shall we say, under his merits, his righteousness, not my righteousness. God never hears a prayer because you've been good. Oh, how many times have I lived under that cloud? God won't hear me because I haven't been good.

But the Bible says there's none good, no, not one. So then who's going to get a prayer answer? Nobody. Oh, but yes, through Jesus, we can come boldly to the throne of grace.

Now, what does grace mean? And I close. Grace means the outflowing of God's love. Grace is how love is shown.

You know, the other day, I had some money, and I gave it to someone I loved. They didn't earn it. They didn't ask for it.

They didn't, quote, deserve it. It was an act of grace. When you love people, you want to help them.

How many say amen? Amen. Oh, but see, there's where some of us have been raised. You're struggling with that, somebody here.

God loves us, so all he wants to do is help us, not punish us. He already punished Jesus for our sins. Why would he want to punish you? He draws us to a throne of grace, which is love.

Grace is God pouring out gifts freely, undeserved. Here's some definitions of grace that have helped me. First of all, the classic one is unmerited favor.

You don't merit it, you don't earn it, and God says, I'll still do it for you. I'll still bless you. I know, but I'm not... I know, I got that.

But I love you so much, I'm going to give it to you. Oh, how many are happy? He's a God of grace. Because when we need something, the devil will make us look in.

Look at me. Look at me, everybody. Watch me here on the webcast.

When you come and you need something from God, immediately Satan will make you look in. Do you deserve it? What's going on in here? Am I worthy? The minute you look in, you're chop me. You have to look away.

You have to look at Jesus. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. How much more will God give us everything we need now that we're his children? When you weren't even serving him, he gave Christ to you.

He shed his blood for you. You didn't even know him. You hadn't been born.

How much more now that we're in his family when we come to him? He doesn't want to scold us. It's a throne of grace. He wants to help us.

My grandson Levi, who's five years, seven, eight months, or whatever he is, and I love him, and when he comes to me, when he comes to me, even if he's been naughty, he's been bad, yes, his mother and dad correct him. Yes, I sometimes will say that you shouldn't do that because for his own good, you want to correct him. But what's in my heart, just how can I help you? What can I give you? What can I do for you? How can I protect you? That's all God is thinking about today.

He says, come to a throne of grace because I want to put my arms around you. Come close to me. I want to help you.

Let me finish it. So what do we get at the throne of grace? Mercy and grace. That's all that comes when you go to pray.

That's all that's flowing. If you're looking for something else, you're going to miss it. That's all at the throne of grace.

All God has is mercy and grace at the throne of grace. Jesus made a way that if you have to go 30 times a day, some people I know and I've read about in history, they just about lived there. And they were so godly and they had such an influence on the world because they felt their need of God so much, they hardly ever left the throne of grace.

They prayed without ceasing, which doesn't mean praying all the time, but keeping an attitude of prayer, always looking, I need mercy, I need grace. Always being conscious of God. Some of us visit just on Sunday.

How are you going to live a life if the only time you commune with God is in a Sunday service? How could you possibly make it through New York City in 2015? With all the snares of the enemy, you and the webcast, how could you go to church or even watch this program and say, oh, that's it, that'll keep me? No, no meeting will keep you. God will keep you. God will keep you as you keep going to the throne of grace.

Come on, let's say amen. Notice the day, the day that the Hebrews talks about today, as long as it's called today, everything is conditioned on only one day, today. Why? Because yesterday's gone and who knows about manana? Who knows about tomorrow? Do you know that you'll be alive? You think any of our brothers and sisters in South Carolina, you think any of them thought that was the last day of their life?

This fiend sat in there for an hour in a Bible study and then started to do away with them.

Nobody knows the day of their last breath. No one knows. So when do we come? When is this promise for us? Today.

Today. Do you need mercy? It's available today. Don't say tomorrow.

You might not make it tomorrow. Come today. When do you need grace? When do you need help? Are you running out of strength? Yeah, you know, one day I got to really, no, no, you got to come today.

He has everything you need, strength. Mercy is not giving you what you deserve. That's what these beautiful saints in South Carolina have showed us.

They spoke into that guy and said, no, we should hate you, but we won't. That's mercy. So the writer knows how weak we are.

And he says, we have a high priest who, although he's the son of God, he also was man. You see the high priest in the old Testament, he was just a man and he felt his own weakness and he had to offer a sacrifice for his own sin. But he knew very little about heaven, but we have a high priest who's the son of the living God.

And yet to be a good high priest, he also was a man. Why? So he could feel what you feel. He could go through what we go through.

The Bible says he was tempted in every way that we were tempted. He knew people hating him. He heard gossip about him.

He heard vicious things said about him. He knows what it is to be hung on a cross and having people shout, crucify him, crucify him. So he knows the human condition.

So when you and I go to the throne of grace, we don't have a high priest who says, I don't even know what you're talking about. He understands. You know, if there's a rich king in a kingdom and they bring a pauper to him and they say the pauper is going through a lot, the king can't understand what the pauper is going through.

Why? He's a king. He's lived on a throne. He's lived in a palace his whole life.

How would he know what a pauper goes through? But Jesus was a pauper like us. Jesus lived here on earth so he would be a faithful high priest. So when you go to him, you don't find an austere attitude.

You find mercy, compassion. He loves, he forgives, he accepts. I know, but I'm so sorry.

I know it's don't worry. Just you confessed it. I love you.

You're accepted. I'm going to wrap my arms around you. Haven't any of us failed as Christians and run to the throne of grace? Is there anybody here who can identify with me? Haven't you ever messed up royally? Felt like you didn't want to go.

You were afraid to even come into God's presence, but when you did, instead of yelling, he put his arms around you. How many have had that experience? Lift up your hands. See, that's the throne of grace, mercy and grace giving what we need at the very moment we need it.

That's what that last word means. And I'm done. Not only do we receive mercy, which shows that we all stumble.

You don't need mercy if you're sinless, but there's nobody sinless, but Jesus. So we keep coming for mercy, pardon, acceptance. Actually, the word means compassion and pity.

Actually, the throne of mercy, we might receive mercy. It speaks of having pity. Oh, I'm so happy God pities us instead of just judges us.

When you're a child of God, when you come to the throne of grace, he doesn't go, what did you mess up again? He goes, no, I understand how weak you are. I lived on that earth. I was the son of God, but I know how weak you are.

I know the battles you fight out there. Not going to yell at you. I want to help you.

I want to clean you up. I want to get you back on the right track. And just at the right moment, he gives grace.

That means gifting, strength, help at the moment, just in the nick of time, as one translation has it, just when you need it. So that tells me I got to keep going to the throne of grace because I need new stuff every day, every hour sometimes. How many have found that every day has a new challenge, right? And you thought you got through yesterday and praise God I got through yesterday.

Whoa, what's this now? Oh, I'm going to where I need to go. I'm going to the throne of grace. Lord, I know you love me.

Forgive me for anything I've done. I want to keep an open heaven, a right relationship with you, but Lord, I need help. You know what the worst days are for Christians? All the days that they never spent time at the throne of grace.

Bible study is excellent. Coming to church is such a good thing to do. Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves as is the habit of some.

This letter tells us that very sentence, but church doesn't cut it. You got to get in the presence of God. You got to receive mercy and grace.

He's waiting. Just think of that. He's waiting.

That's like too much to believe. We're afraid to go, but he's waiting. He's saying, come.

I see the guilt. I see the condemnation. I'll fix that.

Just come. Come into my presence. Talk to me.

Talk freely. Don't use King James English. Don't ever pray like you heard growing up in church.

Don't ever be unnatural when you pray. Just tell him, talk to him, and then tell him what you need today. Maybe there's somebody here, you're hanging by a spiritual thread.

You look fine. You look good, but you're hanging inside by a thread. He's saying, you don't have to hang.

I got all the strength you need. I want to give it to you, obviously. I died for you.

You're my child. Let me give you what you need. Let me give you the mercy and the cleansing and the reinforcement and the acceptance and the love that you need.

It's all at the throne of grace. All at the throne of grace. Jesus died, yes, that we'll go to heaven, but on the upside of the mountain, he said, when it gets hard, just keep coming, coming, coming.

I'll never yell at you. I'll never yell at you. I'll never yell at you.

I'll never cast you away. I'll never say, yeah, you're too dirty or you've too messed up. I don't care how many times you've done it.

I once ministered to a woman. What a battle she had. She had seven or eight abortions.

Then the light went on and she received Christ and all how the devil tormented her. Just what God's going to help you after you did away with seven or eight baby. What a battle.

But then the breakthrough came and she realized that the blood of Jesus and the grace of God is bigger than no matter whatever you've done. Come on. How many times you've done it? Let's just clap like this to the Lord.

Everybody, let's just clap. Throne of grace, throne of grace. Every eye close, every eye close.

Lord, we pray today, starting with me, that we will not just preach sermons about the throne of grace, listen to sermons about the throne of grace, but that you will strengthen us so that we will come boldly time after time, after time, after time, after time. Not because we're supposed to, but because we have to, because we feel our need of mercy. Don't let anybody leave this building full of condemnation and guilt.

You're our great high priest and you give us free access into the throne room of God. Grant us grace that we need today, just for today, just for today and into tomorrow. That's all we're asking for.

Now, what tomorrow might bring and what's going to happen, we're going to come back, keep talking to you, Lord. We're going to just keep up a steady stream of visits to the throne of grace. Teach us to live real close to that place.

Don't let any of us drift away where we lose the inclination to run to you. Don't let the spirit of this world so warp us that we have no time or we don't feel our need to talk to you at the throne of grace. Because everything we need, you have.

Everything we need, you have. The world tells lies, but what we really need, you have. We're so happy you give it to us, even as many times as we come and ask.

We thank you for this service. We thank you for the graduates. We thank you for every father.

We thank you for every brother and sister here. Help us to hug each other and love each other now in Jesus name. And everyone said, turn around and hug somebody.

Bless somebody.

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