

TBC – 6/1/03 p.m.

## THE THRONE OF GRACE

Hebrews 4:16

**Intro:** This is another of our *Bible Verses Everyone Should Know*. When we put out this little memory verse booklet, we did not mean to imply that the verses in this book are the only verses that everyone should know. There are many, many more that we all should know. This was just Book 1 of what could be any number of books. But we felt that this was a good assortment of the many verses we all should know. But many more could follow.

Of course, one thing that every Christian does is to pray, and so no group over verses would be a true sampling without some verses on prayer. There are other verses in this book on prayer, but tonight we are going to consider Heb. 4:16.

Coming as it does in the book of Hebrews, which is an epistle, or book, about the present ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ as our great High Priest, we should not be surprised to find in looking at the verses which precede this, that Heb. 4:16 is connected with the priestly ministry of Christ. Go back just two verses and you will see what I mean. The word “therefore” encourages us to do that. (Read Heb. 4:14-15, and then verse 16.)

Then look back to the third of three reasons that are given in chapter 2 for the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ: Heb. 2:17-18.

Then read Heb. 3:1. After that please turn to Heb. 8:1. Up to that point the writer of Hebrews was seeking to establish the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is a great High Priest for all believers, and for the second of four times he mentioned that our Lord is at the right hand of God of the throne of God in heaven. Cf. Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

And a great deal of emphasis is placed upon the value of our Lord’s ministry in heaven in Heb. 7:25.

The OT priests were not able to continue in their priesthood because of death, but the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ is permanent because even though He also died, He now “ever liveth,” that is, He not only shall not die, but cannot die, and so He holds His position forever, as a Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Now with this back ground let us read Heb. 4:14-16 again.

So the word “therefore” asks us to review the first part of this epistle to the Hebrews so that we will see one very important *consequence* of the whole ministry of Christ on earth, leading to His terrible death on the Cross, His glorious resurrection which was followed by His ascension back to the Father where He is now seated as our great High Priest, interceding for us, awaiting the day when He will return in glory and the beginning of the Eternal State.

And so, because He is there at the Father’s right hand, and we are still here in this passing, evil world, we are exhorted to go to this Throne of Grace where we can obtain, or receive, mercy, “and find grace to help in time of need.”

Let us look first at the expression:

## **I. “THE THRONE OF GRACE.”**

Even though you and I have never lived under a monarchy, we know from history, but especially from our Bibles, that a throne carries with it the idea of sovereignty. It suggests authority. It suggests power. And since this is the throne of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, it speaks of absolute sovereignty, absolute authority, absolute power. It is God Who rules in the affairs of men and nations. No person who has ever lived has been excluded from the power. Not everybody has been, or is being submissive to the power, but nevertheless they are under the power of God and the power of Christ. Many are going to find when it is too late that they have to face that God and that great High Priest. In our study of the book of the Revelation we had these verses in at the end of chapter 6:

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Rev. 6:12-17).

For those people in that day the throne of God will be a throne of judgment, and all of the brave boastings of sinful men will suddenly come to a close.

But for us it is “a throne of grace.” That means that it is a throne where gifts are dispensed. And they are all gifts. Do you remember that when Jerry Bridges was here he said that when Christ died on the Cross, He paid for every answer to prayer that we will ever receive? That is what is meant by the term, “the throne of grace.” For those of us who are saved by the grace of God, His throne has become for us a throne of grace. And not even the Devil, nor all of the demons on earth, nor all the haters of God who live on the earth at any given time, can stop Christ from interceding for us, nor can they stop God from dispensing to us out of the abundance of His mercy and His grace.

Our unworthiness to ask and to receive is indicated by the fact that it comes from “the throne of grace,” God’s grace, God’s amazing grace, God’s inexhaustible grace.

But let us think about what we are promised:

## **II. MERCY AND GRACE.**

This takes us back to verse 15 and the expression, “the feeling of our infirmities.” This means that He is able to sympathize with us in “the feeling of our infirmities.” Our infirmities are not only physical, but also moral. We are not prepared to stand before temptation in this world. If we are left to ourselves we would do nothing but fall. The Lord Jesus Christ knows what it means to be human. Being without sin, he was able to be repulsed by sin and sinners in a way that we never can. He is well acquainted with human frailty. The Lord has experienced death in a way that you and I will never have to experience regardless of the way we die.

At the throne of grace we “obtain mercy” and “find grace” to help in time of need. “Obtain” is a translation of the Greek verb *to receive*. God’s

mercy is readily ours, but we need to “find” the grace that we need. That suggests that for our edification we may have to spend some time at the Throne of Grace before our needs will be met. But God knows, and our Lord Jesus Christ knows, just how and when to dispense grace to us.

Next let us look at the last four words of the verse:

### **III. “IN TIME OF NEED.”**

This means *at the opportune time, at the very time that it is needed*. It often seems to us that God is waiting too long, or that we are not at the right place in the right time. But that is when we need to remember that God and Christ are the Ones Who are on the throne. They are in complete control of all circumstances, and of all of the people who may be involved. He is never late!

Think of Abraham when he got into the land and found a famine. Think of Martha and Mary when their brother Lazarus got sick and died. The Lord is just as aware of the clock and the calendar as you and I are, and He is more prompt than UPS or the USPS can be.

But I have purposely saved the first part of the verse to deal with it at the last. What do we need to do?

### **IV. “LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY TO THE THRONE OF GRACE.”**

The verb “come” is a present subjunctive, first person plural. In English the subjunctive mood is used to speak of that which is contingent, possible, desirable, but doubtful. In the Greek it is the same. The present in Greek speaks of continuous action.

Now the point seems to be that there is no doubt about obtaining mercy and finding grace; the doubtful part is whether or not you and I are going to come. How gracious is the writer. He says, “Let us.” It is as if he was saying, “You need to go, and I need to go; let’s go together.”

**Illus:** Lucille and Patricia at their piano recital.

But there is another word that I must mention before I close. It is the word “boldly.” Boldness to us is when a person is too pushy, one who

takes unto liberties, one who is rude, impudent, demanding. That is not at all what this word means in the Greek. It means to come in absolute confidence, and to feel perfectly free and unreserved in humbly telling the Lord what your need is. You may not be able to tell your need to your closest friend, but you can pour out your heart before the Lord, and, if you are slow in coming, the Lord will never rebuke you for not coming sooner because He will be so glad that you have come at all.

**Concl:** We pray to the Father, but when we pray in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, it means that our Lord delivers the message. And they want us to pray even though they know all about our need before we may our appeal at the Throne of Grace.

Do you want me to tell you what is wrong with me, and possibly what is wrong with you? Do you know what it is? This is our problem: *We don't pray enough. Sometimes we only go to the Throne of Grace after we have exhausted every other possibility of help. Our heavenly Father on the Throne of Grace wants us to come to Him first! And He wants us to pour our hearts to Him.*

That is why we are told, "Pray without ceasing," and to "continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." If you have some need that you haven't brought to the Lord, telling Him all about it and how it has affected you, then before you go to bed tonight, go to the Throne of Grace. That is where you and I will receive mercy and "find grace to help in time of need."