

Friday, April 24, 2020

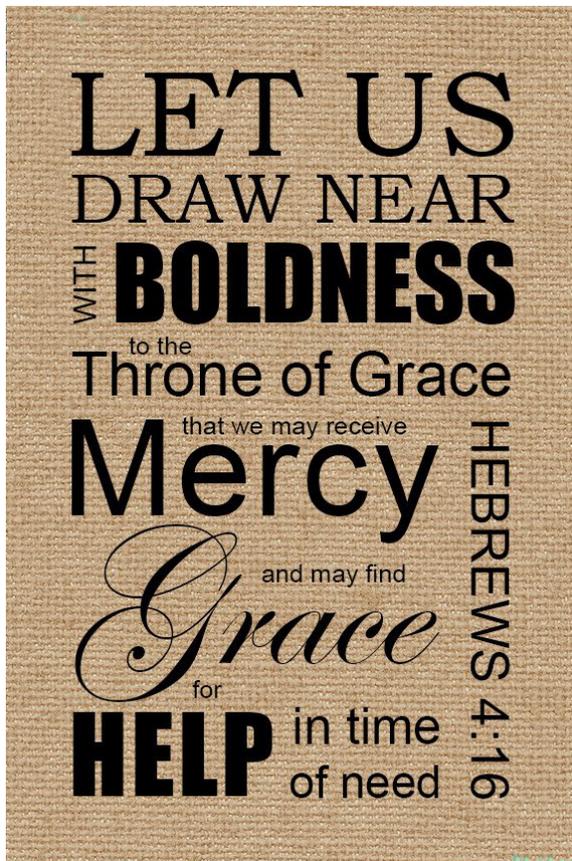
Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

HEBREWS 4:14-16(TNIV)

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ *Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

— PART 4 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*



① *“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace WITH CONFIDENCE —*

What a contrast to the old covenant! Approaching the throne of God used to be something much more intense. It was only one person . . . only the high priest . . . only in one place . . . and only once a year! The high priest would come in trepidation and fear. A contemporary Jewish rabbi, Naftali Silberberg, puts it into perspective:

“...the Torah devotes an entire chapter to the procedure of the Holy Temple service on Yom Kippur, a service that was unmatched on any other holiday in terms of length, arduousness and detail. The highlight of the Yom Kippur Temple service was **the convergence of the holiest elements of time, space, and life form**. On the **holiest day** of the year, the **holiest person** — the High Priest — entered the **holiest place on earth**, the Holy of Holy chamber in the Temple sanctuary, where he would pray on behalf of

all his Jewish brethren and secure their atonement.

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/571614/jewish/Enter-the-Holy-of-Holies.htm

George Guthrie spells out the differences:

“Under the old covenant **the only person** allowed into God’s presence was **the high priest**, who entered the Most Holy Place **once a year** on the Day of Atonement. Under that covenant the high-priestly offering on that day won forgiveness for the people. **Yet they were still locked out of the presence of Yahweh.** But **under Jesus’ high priesthood**, the people of God find a new and happy situation. **They themselves may enter the very presence of God on a continual basis, and can do so with ‘confidence’ — a word that can also be translated as ‘bold frankness’ ”...**

GEORGE H. GUTHRIE, *Hebrews* (NIV Application Commentary).

The ISV picks up all these nuances by putting it like this: **“So let us keep on coming BOLDLY to the throne of grace”!**

Guthrie beautifully renders this: “Christians, therefore, should draw near to God **with unabashed openness** since God alone is the true source of mercy and grace. Because of these provisions we can expect God will ‘help us in our time of need.’ “

So you and I can now pray with “an open outpouring of the heart. There is no suggestion of disrespect here, but simply that **we are to come to God WITHOUT HESITATION OR TENTATIVENESS.”**

R. KENT HUGHES, *Hebrews - An Anchor for the Soul*, Volume 1, Hebrews 1-9 (Preaching the Word).

I can think of another way to phrase this. That’s with the great Yiddish word **chutzpah!** One Jewish writer, Rabbi Tzvi Freeman, notes that there is *good chutzpah* and *bad chutzpah*. *Bad chutzpah* is acting with insolence, presumption, disrespect and arrogance. *Good chutzpah* is what is referred to in “...the words of the Mishnah, **‘Be fierce as a leopard’ ... this means that when you go about doing all those Jewish things that Jews do, you shouldn’t feel the slightest embarrassment before those who ridicule you.** You don’t have to call them names, you don’t have to react at all. Just keep on doing what you have to do as though they don’t exist.”

He goes on to illustrate the point: “Abraham, Moses and David all had enormous *chutzpah*. Abraham had a lot of *chutzpah*. He argued with G-d over His plans to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

Moses had a lot of *chutzpah*. He, too, argued with G-d to save His own people, even when they were undoubtedly in the wrong.

King David had enormous *chutzpah*. He couldn’t fathom how anyone could be afraid of a giant warrior who was deriding and embarrassing the Jewish nation.”

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1586271/jewish/Chutzpah.htm

And I can think of at least one other Jew who had enormous *chutzpah* — CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD! As one example, we read in Hebrews 9:12 & 24 that **“HE ENTERED THE MOST HOLY PLACE once for all by his own blood**, thus obtaining eternal redemption...[and] **HE ENTERED HEAVEN ITSELF**, now to appear for us **in God’s presence.”** Hebrews 10:12 adds **“when this priest had offered FOR ALL TIME one sacrifice for sins, HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.”** Of him Paul said “In him & through faith in him **WE** may approach God **with freedom and confidence**” (Eph. 3:12).

Thank you, Lord Jesus, our great high priest, MAN OF SORROWS, MAN OF CHUTZPAH — that because **you** entered God's presence with great boldness, now **we** can enter God's presence with great boldness! Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Pastor Doug

P.S. We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would love to pray for you! Email us at info@bethanyonline.net

P.P.S. Keep checking our "ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TODAY" webpage — we will try to post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!

P.P.P.S. And watch our **LIVE-STREAM Worship Service** this coming Sunday at 10:30 A.M. for more encouragement.