

The Provisions of Salvation

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[0:00] Take your Bibles, and open them to Hebrews chapter 4.

The final sermon in this series will be verse 16.

So let me start with verse 12, Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12. For the Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

There is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him, to whom we must give account. Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin. And then verse 16, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

[1:33] All right, now that's going to be our focus, verse 16, but this being the final message in this series, a series that I've entitled The Bold Approach, which again is keys off of the primary verse, the main verse, which is the last one in that kind of block of verses, verse 16, the bold approach.

That key passage again being, let us therefore come boldly or confidently to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in time of need.

And what we've been focusing on in this short series for the past several weeks have been some realities, really better put, spiritual realities.

And these spiritual realities, I've said, open a way, kind of really even more than that, they compel us to go to the very throne of God, to the very throne of grace, and to do so on a regular basis.

And so these verses, I think, compel us to do that. What are these realities? Well, let's review and look at the other three that we've already spent some time on, just to bring us up to speed, and then we'll look at the fourth and final one.

[2:50] The first reality, again, is found in verse 12. And in verse 12, the Word of God is key, front and center, the Word of God. And what is it? It's living, it's powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and it pierces, it pierces even to the division of soul and spirit, verse 12 tells us, and joins in marrow, and it is a discerner.

All of these descriptions of the power of the Word, and what the Word is able to do, piercing, discerning, discerning our thoughts, discerning our intents, the intents of our heart.

And so, we're compelled then, here's what I'm arguing, what I think Scripture is arguing, and we are compelled then to run to God's throne of grace because of the probing of Scripture.

That was the first thing we looked at several weeks ago, probing of Scripture. And that's the nature of Scripture. I'm sure you've discovered that. It probes our hearts, our minds, our very being, and that's the power of Scripture.

Scripture, God's Holy Word is able to literally cut and probe even to our most inner being. And when it does, when it does that, and it does that all the time, when it does, it reveals what is there.

[4:20] This is the whole point. It reveals what is inside of us. And when it does that, then I must go to God with it. So, we're compelled then to go to God's throne of grace to receive mercy and grace for the help that we need.

So, the probing of Scripture. The second reality is the presence of sin. That's the next thing that I believe this passage focuses upon.

And it's found in verse 13. And there is no creature hidden. No creature hidden. That's you. That's me. That's all of you. We're not hidden from His sight. But all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Now, that's pretty important, very significant verse of Scripture. And a very strong statement that we better take not only literally, but take very seriously.

We simply cannot hide a single sin. We can't hide it. I don't know why we think we can. We can't hide it. We cannot even hide a simple thought. And we have those too, don't we?

[5:30] Can I get a witness? Alright, no testimony. Just an amen. You're fine. We can't hide any sin. We can't hide even a simple thought. We can't hide a simple motive. We don't even know our motives all the time.

God does. We can't hide them. We can't hide them from God. We just simply cannot do it. Because all things, all things are naked and open to Him. Now, we can and often do try to redefine our sin and call it something else.

We do that all the time. And we can attempt to hide it. And we do that quite often too. And it's silly us to think that we can hide it from God.

But we do try that. We can even try to excuse it and to explain it away. You know, as it being someone else's fault. Or, you know, it's just the world's fault.

It's just my environment. Or it's just some, you know, just somebody else but me. Or we can forget all about our sin. Which we also try to do that too, don't we? Out of sight, out of mind.

[6:33] We think that works for sin. But it doesn't work. It will never, ever be out of sight and out of mind with God. Never. Until, I say never, until we come to Him with it.

And we confess it. And we have it covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. Alright, so the presence of sin. Probing the scripture. And then last, not last Sunday, Sunday before, we looked at the pity of the Savior.

Here's the third reality. The pity of the Savior. And we found that in verses 14 and 15. Seeing that we have a great high priest who has passed into the heavens.

Through the heavens. Jesus, the Son of God. That's our great high priest. And seeing that's the case. This is what the scripture is saying. Then let us hold fast our confession.

But we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses. Or King James cannot feel our afflictions.

[7:38] Well, that's not King James. Well, whatever it is. Here. It's not touched. There it is. Touched by the feeling of our afflictions.

He's touched by them. He sympathizes with them. And he was on all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. And really, for me, I think the most compelling reality of the Christian faith that drives me to the throne of God on a regular basis is this truth.

That we have someone there who was here. He is, the Bible says, touched by the feeling of our weakness. All right.

So the pity of the Savior. The last of these four realities, we will have us focus, as I've already said, on this final verse in the text.

Verse 16. And verse 16 again says, let us therefore. Or therefore, what? Based upon everything that has been said here in this passage.

[8:44] Therefore, let us do what? Come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain something. To obtain the mercy and to find grace to help in time of need.

Four realities. The probing of Scripture. The presence of sin. The pity of the Savior. And then now this fourth and final one. The provisions of salvation.

Now notice I said provisions. Plural. Now I said that because I'm not talking here about the provision of salvation itself.

That's not what's in focus here. Jesus, through His sacrificial death upon the cross and through His supernatural resurrection, has provided salvation to all who will believe on Him.

Absolutely. Amen. But I'm not talking about that. I'm not talking about salvation provided. But rather, what we're talking about here is what salvation provides.

[9:50] Alright? What it provides for each and every one of us who have that salvation by His grace. And so verse 14, or excuse me, 16 of chapter 4, describes, I think, three very important provisions of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

Three very important provisions. First of all, this is a clear invitation. There's an invitation here. Actually, it is a plea.

I believe it's a plea. It's the provision of a plea. An invitation. It's the number one plea. That's one of the three important provisions of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

A plea. And what is the plea? Seven. Come. The plea is come. Now, Paul's doing the writing here. Excuse me, Tom.

He's the author here. And by his pen, or whoever the author was, by the author's pen, let's put it that way, the invitation is extended very clearly. But, it is God's invitation.

[11:03] It's God who's issuing the invitation. The plea comes from the Almighty. And He says to us, come to my throne of grace. So, there is a plea.

And, really, when you think about it, isn't it an awesome thing to consider that the God of all creation, of all the universe, the one true, only true, living God, the all-knowing, ever-present, absolutely powerful, sovereign God, the God who needs nothing, and really, the God who needs no one.

It is an awesome thing to consider that He pleads, then, with us sinful creatures to come to Him. That's a pretty awesome thing. But, He does.

In fact, the Bible is full of examples where God invites mere mortals to come to Him. Let me give you a few examples. For example, to come to Him for salvation.

Well, that's not our subject here. Genesis 7-1. And the Lord said to Noah, come into the ark. The ark is a picture of salvation. It's a symbol, illustration of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[12:17] And the Lord said, come, Noah, come into the ark. Come in you and all your household, because I've seen that you are righteous before me in this generation.

Come. There's an invitation, a plea. Isaiah 1-18. Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be like scarlet, though they shall be white as snow, though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Matthew 11-28. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. That's salvation. It also, I believe, is an invitation, a plea for times of discouragement.

We have an example of that here. In fact, a number of them. Here's just one of them. John 21-12. And it's after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And his disciples are discouraged, kind of confused.

They don't know really what's going on yet. And you know, remember, they go out fishing. And then they see Jesus there on the shoreline. And, excuse me, that's not the one.

[13:29] Yeah, that is the one. And he says to them when they come, come, he says, and die. What a cure for their discouragement.

I mean, they didn't know what was going on. They weren't sure. This is before Pentecost. Jesus, their master, their Lord, is dead. They've seen him alive, but now what?

So there's a bit of discouragement. They've been locked up inside of a room. For fear. So they finally go fishing. And then Jesus invites them to have breakfast with him.

Literally. He says, come and die. They just almost feel the tension. The tension of discouragement. Just kind of, just relax. Come and die. Also, during storms of life, we have this plea to come.

[14:27] Matthew 14-29. After Jesus came to his disciples walking on the water. Remember, they were out in that storm. Jesus comes out walking on the water. Peter, remember, he says, bid me come to you.

And he said, Jesus said to him, come. Come. And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. And we know a few things that happened after that.

But ultimately, the idea is that Jesus is revealing himself powerful, all powerful. In fact, his power is above the storm. The very thing that threatened to be over their heads was the very thing he was walking on.

And so, it's an invitation to come to him during the storms of life. Also, we can say, when power is needed for service, when we need to serve, our serving the Lord, and we need his power, we need strength and wisdom and discernment.

And Mark 1.17, And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. I will make you to become.

[15:36] They would rely upon his power. He would empower them. He would not only call them, but empower them to become fishers of men, to serve him in ministry. And then, I think I would add to that, the rapture of the church.

In Revelation 4.1, The Bible says, After these things, I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.

I think it's a picture, a vision of the rapture of the church. Alright, so, first, the plea. Come. Come to my throne of grace.

Second, there is a promise. There is a promise. And the promise is, I think I can divide it with this word, and that would be freedom.

A freedom. It's a promise. He said, Come boldly to the throne of grace. Come boldly.

[16 : 41] Now, I'm calling this a promise. And really, there are several wonderful truths, I think, suggested by this word that is translated boldly. In the first place, it speaks of our access to that throne.

If He said, Come, then there must be something to that. We must then have access. I mean, God would not give a plea to come to His throne if there were no access for us to come.

And so, it implies access. But now, the access is conditioned, of course, upon a right relationship with God. Not anybody can come.

That is, the person who tries to come to God, come to His throne, on the basis of their own, of a person's own character and goodness, then the way is shut for that person.

If that's how you're going to come to God, if you're going to come or attempt to come on the basis of your works of righteousness, then you're not going to be able to go. You'll not have access.

[17 : 48] If you're going to come on the basis of some religious affiliation, you know, I'm a Southern Baptist, Lord, you know, I should have access. Or I'm a member of a High and Heart Baptist Church, you know, a beloved church, and so I have access.

If you're going to come on that basis, then you can forget it. There's no access on that basis.

Access to God is through Jesus and through Him alone.

Access to God is also not granted just because you call yourself a Christian. I mean, there are a lot of people in this country who call themselves Christians. There are a lot of people around the world who would number themselves, group them together, group themselves together with Christians and call themselves Christians.

And yet Jesus said, not everyone who calls me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. He said in Matthew 7, 21, many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, and then I will profess to them I never knew.

So just try to come to God on the basis of your own self-worth or your works, that will work. And just coming in name only because I'm a Christian, that's not necessarily the way.

[18 : 57] In fact, I have heard people refer to Jesus as the Lord, haven't you? And yet their lives don't give any testimony of actually knowing Him. In fact, I remember several years ago, in fact, this man is dead now and I don't know that he's in heaven, I really doubt it, but it was a news commentator, Peter James.

And I heard him give some kind of report, maybe it was about a holiday, I don't remember what it was, but he referred to Jesus as the Lord. Now that's very interesting, but the way he said it, it didn't sound to me that he meant it in the way that I would mean him.

You know, I don't know that he was his personal Lord or personal Savior. And so just in name only and just calling him Lord or calling yourself a Christian is not going to guarantee access to the throne of God's grace because access to the throne of grace, God's throne of grace, comes through the blood of Jesus.

And those then who trust in his atoning work on the cross are the ones who can come with complete boldness, complete confidence unto God's throne of grace.

The Bible says in Romans 5, 2, By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

[20 : 23] We have access by faith into his grace wherein we stand. Or how about Ephesians 2, 18? For through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father.

Or how about Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 12? In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. By the faith of him.

So, boldness means access. But it also means acceptance. acceptance. You know, the idea of access to God which is a marvelous wonderful thing.

And also the idea of acceptance. What was a foreign thing in Paul's day would have been a foreign thing for anyone reading Hebrews and reading this passage because most ancient rulers were not accessible.

and you had no acceptance if you were to come unannounced or uninvited. You can go back to the Old Testament to Esther's day. Remember how Esther was how Mordecai pleaded with Esther to go before the king and to plead the case of her people the Jews to spare their lives.

[21 : 45] And yet she could not go because he had not raised his scepter to her. And you just couldn't come uninvited into the throne room of King Xerxes.

If he raised a scepter then you could come but if he did not and you came anyway then you would be executed. It would be certain death and you know the rest of that story.

So that's just the way it is. The way it was. The way it has been throughout history and still today. I mean you just try to go into the Oval Office uninvited.

I don't think you would get anywhere close. In fact I don't think you would get through the gate without an invitation and some security clearance. A lot of that probably.

But through faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior we not only have access to God and his throne of grace but we also have unconditional acceptance.

[22 : 42] And so we ought to just consider Hebrews 4.16 our written invitation to come to the throne of grace. Paul said in Ephesians 1.6 to the praise of the glory of his grace by which he has made us accepted in the beloved.

It's a marvelous verse. Let me tell you something else about the word boldness that the word boldness points to. In fact I would say that Paul probably means this more than the other two things. Access and acceptance. And that's what I want to call accommodation. Accommodation. He's accommodating us. In that when we come to his throne of grace he has granted accommodated us to give us freedom to speak openly and honestly to him.

It's not just access to his throne. It's acceptance. But it's not just acceptance to be there. But it's also an accommodation to say what's on our heart.

Whatever may be there. And you know really the Greek word here that is translated boldly or confidently in some versions of the Bible is a word that carries the idea of a freedom of speech.

[24 : 04] That's the whole idea behind this very interesting word. And that is interesting. Let us therefore, we can say it this way, let us therefore come with great freedom of speech to the throne of grace.

That's an interesting thought. That sheds a whole new light on this whole thing. Come with freedom of speech. Did you know that with Jesus as our great high priest and with Jesus who even now is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, Jesus who sympathizes with our weaknesses and our failings, did you know that we can speak freely to God the Father because of Him?

And we can tell Him things we would tell no one else. And we can be honest about our pains and our hurts and our worries and our doubts and our points of anger and disappointments.

We can tell Him all of that. And we can tell God about our questions. Do you have any? You'd like to ask Him? I do. Do you? Sometimes things happen and we have questions about them.

We can come down. It doesn't mean God's going to give us the answer on it. But He's not going to turn us away because we've asked some impetuous question. Or that somehow our question is going to threaten His authority.

[25 : 19] Sometimes we don't like our kids asking His questions because it's kind of an affront to our authority. Well, never mind. Just don't do it. But to God, He doesn't turn us away.

So you can ask Him all good questions. You can tell Him how you don't understand why life is so hard at this particular juncture. Or sometimes life is unbearable. You can lay all that out.

And we also, by the way, this is very important, have the freedom to speak about our miserable failures to Him. We can tell Him all about our sin and our temptations and our lack of faith.

And we can lay all that out for Him and throw Him a grace. So He accommodates us to be able to speak freely to Him at His throne of grace.

And listen, you know, God is not very impressed with our flowery kind of prayers. I don't know where we get the idea sometimes that we've got to use certain words when we pray, like thee and thou.

[26 : 21] I mean, that's just one example. Not only that, but I mean, just crafting our sentences, you know, together in our prayers so they sound kind of very religious and very spiritual. God's not all that interested in that.

He's not interested in some pious kind of prayer. And don't think that He is somehow swayed by those things. Don't think that somehow you can persuade God because you're a good

communicator in prayer, you know, using all the great words and high-sounding and high-spiritual words.

He sees through all of our attempts to cover up really what's really on our minds and on our hearts. You think you can hide that from God? But no, you can lay it all out for Him.

And there's no reason to try to hide it or to somehow try to use words that will soften it in some way. Just be honest and open with Him.

And in a very real sense, God's acceptance, I think, that is in a communion kind of sense, not acceptance according to our salvation, but a communion, acceptance in communion, that His acceptance of us on that basis is only hindered by our unwillingness to speak freely everything that's on our hearts, to lay it all out for Him.

[27 : 44] I was reminded of an old, old hymn that we used to sing years ago, and I don't know how long it's been since I've heard it. Maybe some of you remember it. It is, Tell it to Jesus.

Do you remember that hymn? Tell it to Jesus. And that kind of captures this idea of whatever it is. Tell it to Him. Alright, so the plea, what is it?

Come. Come to the throne of grace. We need to come. And then the promise, freedom. We now have access and acceptance there, but accommodation.

He accommodates so that we are free to tell Him all that is on our hearts. And then one more, the provision. The provision, and that provision is help.

And that's what we need. I mean, nearly every day of our lives. In fact, if we were honest, it would be every day. We need God. We need help. So look again at the verse.

[28 : 40] Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace that, that what? That we may obtain grace, or mercy rather, mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

And, you know, it's all really very simple and very logical when you put all this together. God pleads with us to come to Him. and on the basis of faith, faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, He promises complete freedom to tell all that's on our heart.

And from His throne of grace, He then provides the help that we need. And the substance of that help is described by two very familiar words.

They're theological words. Those words are mercy and grace. Now, those two words are just packed full of meaning and application. But that's how He describes the substance of this help that we need, that we can get when we come to His throne of grace and we come confidently.

Mercy and grace. Now, we can think of it this way. Mercy speaks to the taking away of something. Grace, on the other hand, speaks to the giving of something.

[30 : 05] Alright, so first of all, mercy, if we were to consider it from the perspective of the lost person, there is mercy from God when you come to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith and mercy is God taking away the penalty of sin, taking away judgment, guilt, condemnation.

As far as the east is from the west, that's how far mercy removes our sin from God. But mercy, though, applied to the saved person and that's how we need to consider it here because the Bible is speaking to God's people here, to you, to me.

And so what about mercy for the saved? Well, there's mercy for the saved as well. We need mercy to take away a lot of things. Trouble, hurts, pains, sufferings, trials, persecutions.

We need God's mercy to take these things away. God allows, by the way, these things into our lives. He allows those things, I think primarily, to knock out the support systems that we've built up for ourselves that keep us from trusting God completely.

So God allows those things into our life, but mercy, we can plead mercy to have those things taken away or to plead mercy for God to spare us some things that we may face.

[31 : 28] So that's mercy. So that we keep God always, trust Him always. Now, it is at the throne of God's grace that we receive mercy.

And mercy removes trials, temptations, and sufferings, and persecution. Mercy removes these things, that is, when they have completed their perfect work.

So we're to be patient and faithful and wait upon the Lord. But then there's grace. Grace, right?

Now, mercy takes something away. Grace gives us something we need.

Mercy is the removal of what we deserve, and grace is the addition of what we could never deserve. Alright? That's how we ought to distinguish the two. Now, how about grace for loss?

Well, that's an easy one. Grace gives salvation. We're saved by grace through faith. But what about the saved?

[32 : 26] Do the saved, do Christians need grace? You bet we do. And we need God's grace every day, and we need it for everything we do. Every single thing.

And so we know what saving grace is, but what is the kind of grace we need as believers, as Christians, those who have already experienced the saving grace of God.

What kind of grace is that? Well, let's define it this way. Grace is the dynamic quality of the life of God operating freely in our lives.

functioning, working freely in our lives.

And grace, then, gives us what we need for every situation in life. Grace gives us the desire for the things of God. Do you desire God?

[33 : 34] Do you want to desire Him more and the things of God more? Grace is what gives us that desire. And grace gives us the desire to do what is right as well. Grace also gives us the power to do what is right.

Okay? God would not give us the desire to do what is right without at the same time giving us the power, providing for us the power to do what is right. Grace, then, enables us to obey God.

And how much we need God's enabling His power to do that. Here's another definition of grace.

grace is the desire and power to obey God.

Philippians 2.13, where the word grace does not appear in the passage, that's the subject. The Bible says, for it is God which works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure.

that's a great passage. And that's what God's grace does to the believer. God's grace, again, is that dynamic power, life of God operating in us in order, enabling us to do what, to obey Him and so forth.

[34 : 52] And that's what Philippians 2.13 is saying, for it is God that works in you both to will, that's desire, both to have the desire to do what pleases Him, but also to do, the will and to do, to will and to do, to desire and the power to do what always pleases Him.

Philippians 2.13. Now, if that's what grace is, and I believe it is, and if that is what grace does for us in my life and your life, then we need to dump a truckload of it every single day and we're together.

where do we get it? Where is it available? How do we get it? Come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help the time of day.

Thank you.