

Articles and Sermons :: We MUST Draw Near**We MUST Draw Near - posted by ArthurRosh, on: 2012/1/5 21:17**

INTIMATE INTERCOURSE WITH GOD

We MUST Draw Near

PSALM 65:4

Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts!

It was thus with the priests in Israel. In the record of their consecration we read: "And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands" (Lev. vii. 24). Those who belong to God may, and indeed MUST, live in nearness to Him; they belong to Him. This is illustrated in the case of our Lord, our Great High Priest, who "through his own blood entered, once for all, into the holy place." It is the same with every believer, according to the Word: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, LET US DRAW NEAR, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Heb. x. 19, 22).

The word "enter," as used in this verse, is the peculiar word used of the approach of the priest to God. In the same way, in the Book of Revelation, our right to draw near as priests is declared to be by the power of the blood. We were "Redeemed from our sins by his own blood" who "has made us kings and priests unto God . . . to him be the glory for ever" (Rev. v. 9, 10). "These are they . . . who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple" (Rev. vii. 14).

One of the most glorious blessings made possible for us by the power of the blood, is that of drawing near the throne, into the very presence of God. That we may understand what this blessing means let us consider what is contained in it. It includes:-

I. THE RIGHT TO DWELL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD;

II. THE VOCATION OF OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES TO GOD;

III. THE POWER TO PROCURE BLESSING FOR OTHERS.

I. THE RIGHT TO DWELL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

This privilege belonged exclusively to the priests in Israel, they had free access to the dwelling place of God. They had to abide there continually. As members of the household of God, they ate the shew-bread, and partook of the sacrifices. A true Israelite thought there was no higher privilege than this. It is thus expressed by the Psalmist, "Blessed -or happy- is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee that he may dwell in thy courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple" (Ps. lxxv. 4).

It was because of the manifested presence of God there that believers, in those old days, longed after the house of God with such strong desire. The cry was, "When shall I come and appear before God (Ps. xlii. 2). They understood something of the spiritual meaning of the privilege, "Drawing near to God." It represented to them the enjoyment of His love, and fellowship, and protection, and blessing. They could exclaim, "Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ; thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence" (Ps. xxxi. 19, 20).

The precious blood of Christ has opened the way for the believer into God's presence; and INTERCOURSE with Him is a deep, spiritual reality. He who knows the full power of the blood is brought so nigh that he can always live in the immediate presence of God, and in the enjoyment of the unspeakable blessings attached to it. There, the child of God has the assurance of God's love; he experiences and enjoys it. God Himself imparts it. He lives daily in the friendship, and fellowship of God. As God's child he makes known to the Father, with perfect freedom, his thoughts and wishes. In this INTERCOURSE with God he possesses all that he needs; he wants no good thing. His soul is kept in perfect rest and peace, because God is with him. He receives all requisite direction and teaching. God's eye is ever upon him, guiding him. In intercourse with God, he is able to hear the softest whispers of the Holy Spirit. He learns to understand the slightest sign of his Father's will, and to follow it. His strength continually increases, for God is his strength, and God is ever with him.

Fellowship with God exercises a wonderful influence on his life and character. The presence of God fills him with humility, and fear, and a holy circumspection. He lives as in the presence of a king. Fellowship with God produces in him godlike dispositions. Beholding the image of God, he is changed into the same image. Dwelling with the holy One makes him holy. He can say, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God (Ps. lxxii. 28).

O you who are the children of the New Covenant, have not you a thousand times more reason to speak thus, now that the veil has been rent asunder, and the way opened for living always in God's holy presence? May this high privilege awaken our desires. Intercourse with God; fellowship with God; dwelling with God; and He with us: may it become impossible for us to be satisfied with anything less. This is the true Christian life.

But INTERCOURSE with God is not only so blessed because of the salvation enjoyed in it, but also on account of the service that may be rendered, because of that INTERCOURSE.

Let us therefore consider:-

II. THE VOCATION OF OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES TO GOD.

Our vocation to bring to God spiritual sacrifices is a further privilege.

The enjoyment of the priests in drawing near to God in His dwelling place was subordinated entirely to something higher. They were there as servants of the Holy Place, to bring to God, in His house, that which belonged to Him. Only as they found joy, in drawing near to God, could that service become truly blessed.

The service consisted in:-The bringing in of the blood of sprinkling; the preparation of the incense to fill the house with its fragrance; and, further, in the ordering of everything that pertained, according to God's word, to the arrangement of His house.

They must so guard, and serve, and provide for, the dwelling place of the Most High, that it should be worthy of Him, and of His glory, and that His good pleasure in it might be fulfilled.

If the blood of Jesus brings us near, it is also, chiefly, that we should live before God as His servants, and bring to Him the spiritual sacrifices which are well pleasing in His sight.

The priests brought the blood into the Holy Place before God. In our intercourse with God there is no offering that we can bring more pleasing to Him, than a believing honouring of the blood of the Lamb. Every act of humble trust, or of hearty thanksgiving, in which we direct the attention of the Father to the blood, and speak its praises, is acceptable to Him.

Our whole abiding there, and INTERCOURSE, from hour to hour must be a glorifying of the blood before God.

The priests brought the incense into the Holy Place, so as to fill God's house with fragrance. The prayers of God's people are the delightful incense, with which He desires to be surrounded in His habitation. The value of prayer does not consist merely in its being the means of obtaining things we need. No ! it has a higher aim than that. It is a ministry of God, in which He delights.

The life of a believer who truly enjoys drawing near to God through the blood, is a life of unceasing prayer. In a deep sense of dependence, for each moment, for each step, grace is sought for and expected. In the blessed conviction of God's nearness and unchanging goodness, the soul pours itself out in the confident assurance of faith that every promise will be fulfilled. In the midst of the joy which the light of God's face bestows, there arises at the same time, along with prayer, thanksgiving, and adoration.

These are the spiritual offerings-the offerings of the lips of the priests of God, continually presented to Him -they having

been SANCTIFIED AND BROUGHT NIGH BY THE BLOOD-that they might ever live and walk in His presence.

But there is still something more. It was the duty of the priests to attend to everything for cleansing or provision that was necessary, in the ministry of the House. What is the ministry now, under the New Covenant? Thanks be to God, there are no outward nor exclusive arrangements for divine worship. No! The Father has so ordered, that whatever any one does who is walking in His presence, just because of that, it becomes a spiritual offering. Everything the believer does, if only he does it as in God's presence, and inspired by the priestly disposition, which offers it to God as a service, it is a priestly sacrifice, well pleasing to God. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. x. 31). "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. iii. 17). In this way, all our actions become thankofferings to God.

How little Christians recognise the glory of a life of complete consecration, to be spent always in intercourse with God!

CLEANSED, SANCTIFIED, and BROUGHT NIGH, by the power of the blood, my earthly calling, my whole life, even my eating and drinking, are a spiritual service. My work, my business, my money, my house, everything with which I have to do, becomes sanctified by the presence of God, because I, myself, walk in His presence. The poorest earthly work is a priestly service, because it is performed by a priest of God's temple.

But even this does not exhaust the glory of the blessing of INTERCOURSE. The highest blessing of the priesthood is, that at the priest appears as the REPRESENTATIVE of OTHERS, BEFORE GOD.

III. THE POWER TO PROCURE BLESSING FOR OTHERS is what gives to nearness to God its full glory.

In Israel the priests were the mediators between God and the people. They carried into the presence of God the sins and needs of the people: they obtained from God the power to declare the pardon of sin and the right of blessing the people.

This privilege now belongs to all believers, as the priestly family of the New Covenant. When God permitted His redeemed ones to approach Him through the blood, it was that He might bless them, in order that they might become a blessing to others. Priestly mediation; a priestly heart that can have the needed sympathy with those who are weak; a priestly power to obtain the blessing of God in the temple, and convey it to others; in these things, INTERCOURSE, the drawing near to God through the blood, manifests its highest power and glory.

We can exercise our priestly dignity in a twofold manner:-

(a) BY INTERCESSION.

The ministry of intercession is one of the highest privileges of the child of God. It does not mean, that in this ministry we, having ascertained that there is a need in the world, or in some particular person, pour out our wishes in prayer to God, asking for the necessary supply. That is good, so far as it goes, and brings a blessing with it. But the peculiar ministry of intercession is something more wonderful than that, and finds its power in " the prayer of faith." This "prayer of faith" is a different thing from the outpouring of our wishes to God, and leaving them with Him.

In the true "prayer of faith" the intercessor must spend time with God to appropriate the promises of His word, and must permit himself to be taught by the Holy Spirit, whether the promises can be applied to this particular case. He takes upon himself, as a burden, the sin and need which are the subject of prayer, and lays fast hold of the promise concerning it, as though it were for himself. He remains in the presence of God, till God, by His Spirit, awakens the faith that in this matter the prayer has been heard. In this way parents sometimes pray for their children; ministers for their congregations; labourers in God's vineyard for the souls committed to them; till they know that their prayer is heard. It is the blood, that by its power of bringing us near to God, bestows such wonderful liberty to pray until the answer is obtained.

Oh! if we understood more perfectly what it really means to dwell in the presence of God, we should manifest more power in the exercise of our holy priesthood.

(b) INSTRUMENTALLY.

A further manifestation of our priestly mediation is that we not only obtain some blessing for others by INTERCESSION, but become the INSTRUMENTS by whom it is ministered. Every believer is called, and feels himself compelled by love, to labour on behalf of others. He knows that God has blessed him that he might be a blessing to others; and yet-the complaint is general that believers have no power for this work of bringing blessing to others. They are not, they say, in a condition to exercise an influence over others by their words.

This is not to be wondered at, if they will not dwell in the sanctuary.

We read that " The Lord separated the tribe of Levi-to stand before the Lord-and to bless in his name " (Deut. x. 8).

The priestly power of blessing depends on the priestlike life in the presence of God.

He who experiences there the power of the blood to preserve him, the helpless one-will have courage to believe that the blood can really deliver others. The holy life-giving power of the blood will create in him the same disposition as that in which Jesus shed it-the sacrifice of himself to redeem others.

In intercourse with God, our love will be set on fire: by the love of God, our belief that God will surely make use of us will be strengthened; the spirit of Jesus will take possession of us, to enable us to labor in humility, in wisdom, and in power; and our weakness and poverty become the vessels in which God's power can work.

From our word and example blessing will flow, because we dwell with Him who is pure blessing, and He will not permit anyone to be near Him without being also filled with His blessing. Beloved, is not the life prepared for us a glorious a blessed one?

The enjoyment of the blessedness: of being near to God ; the carrying out of the ministry of His house; the imparting of His blessing to others.

Let no one think that the full blessing is not for him that such a life is too high for him. IN THE POWER.. OF JESUS' BLOOD we have the assurance that this-, "DRAWING NEAR" is for us also, if only we wholly yield ourselves to it. For those who truly desire this blessing I give the following advice :-

i. Remember that this, and nothing less, is designed for you. All of us who are God's children have been brought nigh by the blood. All of us can desire the full experience of it. Let us only hold this fast the life in INTERCOURSE with God. The Father does not wish that one of His children should be afar off: We cannot please our God as we ought if we live without this blessing. We are priests, the grace to live as priests is prepared for us; free entrance into the sanctuary as our abiding place, is for us; we can be assured of this, God bestows on us His holy presence. For indwelling, as our right, as His children let us lay fast hold of this.

ii. Seek to make the full power of the blood your own possession in all its blessed effects. IT IS IN THE POWER OF THE BLOOD THAT INTERCOURSE is possible. Let your heart be filled with faith in the power of the blood of RECONCILIATION. Sin has been so entirely atoned for, and blotted out, that its power to keep you away from God has been completely , and for ever, taken away. Live in the joyful profession that sin is powerless to separate you one moment from God. Believe that by the blood you have been fully justified, and thus have a righteous claim to a place in the sanctuary. Let the blood also cleanse you. Expect from the fellowship that follows, the inner deliverance from the defilement of sin which still dwells in you. Say with the Scriptures " How much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse YOUR conscience to serve the living God." Let the blood sanctify you, separate you for God, in undivided consecration, to be filled by Him. Let the PARDONING, CLEANSING, SANCTIFYING power of the blood have free course in you. You will discover how this brings you, as it were, automatically near to God, and protects you.

iii. Do not fear to expect that JESUS HIMSELF will reveal in you the power of the blood to bring you nigh to God.

The blood was shed to unite us to God.

The blood has accomplished its work, and will perfect it in you.

The blood has unspeakable virtue and glory in God's sight.

The Mercy Seat sprinkled with blood is the chosen place of God's abode and is His throne of grace. He draws near with joy and good pleasure to the heart that surrenders itself entirely to the efficacy of the blood.

The blood has irresistible power. Through the blood Jesus was raised up from the grave, and carried into heaven. Be assured the blood is able to preserve you every day in God's presence by its divine life-giving power. As precious and all powerful as the blood is, so sure and certain is also your abiding with God, if only your trust is steadfast. "Washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb-therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple." That word about the eternal glory has a bearing also upon our life on earth. The fuller our faith and experiences: of the power of the blood, just the closer the INTERCOURSE, and the more sure the abiding near the throne: the wider the entrance to the unbroken ministry of God in His sanctuary; and here on earth just the greater the power to serve the living God just the richer the priestly blessing which you will spread around you. O Lord! may this word have its full power over us now, here, and hereafter!

- Taken from "Cleansed by the Blood to Serve the Living God or Intercourse Through the Blood" by Andrew Murray.

Father in heaven, teach us how to draw near to You, and You will teach us, for the glory of Your Son Jesus. Amen.