

Christ Superior Person – Part 3

Hebrews 4:14-16

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In Hebrews 4:11, the writer says, “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” I read that last verse because it’s the end of the section, and verses 12-13 transitions into the new section. When we were looking at the section last time, we saw first of all that Jesus is greater than the prophets, Jesus is greater than the angels, Jesus is greater than Moses, and now we’re going to see that Jesus is greater than Aaron and the Aaronic priesthood of the old covenant. The writer of Hebrews was warning them, in the section we just finished, coming to the end of Hebrews 4:11, not to be in unbelief and not enter into the blessings of the promises of God. He used an illustration of the children of Israel at Kadesh Barnea, how they failed to enter into the Promised Land—they were not being obedient to God and to His Word—that’s why it transitions into the power of the Word and how the Word can work in our lives to strengthen us in our walk with the Lord. The end of this section is Hebrews 4:11, “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” They did not enter into the Promised Land, but unbelief kept them from entering in, so he’s warning these Jews, who are in danger of leaving Christ and going back to Judaism, that through unbelief they would not enter into the life of blessing and abundance with Christ.

Verses 12-13 are well-known verses where the writer speaks about the power, the effectiveness, and the qualities of the Word of God. He says, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner,” we get our word “critique,” “of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” At the end of verse 11, he mentions that they fell because of unbelief and then immediately begins to speak about the Word of God, its power, and its qualities to ground us in our relationship with God. You cannot grow, you cannot enter into the blessings of Christ, you can’t enter into the blessings of fellowship with the Lord unless you’re properly related to the Word of God.

This Sunday we’re going to start our new series called: Great Doctrines of the Bible. Again, I’m overwhelmed with the vastness of the subject and the challenges—what to cover, what to leave out, and how many weeks to spend on each subject. I’m trying to do one subject a week. Our first subject is going to be: What the Bible teaches about the Bible, the Word of God. That is the foundation for all truth and doctrine. All the doctrine we have about God, about the Christian life, about Jesus, about the Holy Spirit, about salvation, comes to us from God’s revelation in the Word of God. When I do kind of a systematic theology sermon message, you might say, is what it’s going to be, I want to start with the foundation of our faith, that is, God’s Word; then we’re going to move to God, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, salvation, and on down the line.

I was really intrigued by this passage as I looked at it this week, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword.” I want to just point out, I’m not going to get bogged down because we covered it a bit a couple weeks ago and our text is supposed to start at verse 14, but I couldn’t resist going back over some points about this marvelous passage. There are actually four qualities about the Bible I want you to see in this passage. The first is that the Bible is a living Book. It is also called the Word of God, verse 12, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful.” Notice the word “quick” in the King James Bible. It means alive. In the old English, they figured that if you were dead, you weren’t very quick. That’s actually how they came up with this concept. It’s an old English word. If you are alive, you want to move, you want to be quick, so they used the word “quick.” It’s saying the Bible is the Word of God.

The Scriptures tell us, “All scripture is given by inspiration,” 2 Timothy 3:16, “and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” All Scripture is God-breathed. All Old Testament and New Testament Scripture is breathed out by God. Peter said holy men of God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. We’re going to talk Sunday morning about revelation, inspiration, and clarity, sufficiency, and how to interpret Scripture and its importance in our lives, and what the Bible says about Itself as it’s found in the Word of God.

In verse 12, it’s called “the word of God,” and its first quality is that it is living. Why? Because it’s the Word of the living God. Amen? He’s the true God, His Word is true; He’s a holy God, it’s His Holy Word, but I love that concept that it’s the Word of the living God. It’s interesting that God’s Word can make dead sinners alive. We’re going to see in just a moment that it’s the sword of the Spirit, the two-edged sword, the Word of God. A literal sword pierces men who are alive and kills them; the spiritual sword, the Word of God, pierces men’s hearts who are dead and gives them life. It’s the living Word and it brings life to sinners.

I was reading about Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformer, how he was studying the book of Romans and all of the sudden the Spirit of God broke into his heart and opened his eyes to the truth, “...The just shall live by faith,” and that we’re saved by grace through faith in Christ, and the Word of God, the Spirit of God working in his heart brought about salvation, the Reformation, and the transformation of the entire world, and especially us in the western world by that one individual. The Word of God started that fire in his heart and in his life and even as you go back further in John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, and John Huss. It is the Word of God that was alive and powerful and transforming their lives bringing them to salvation and bringing about a change in their lives and in their culture around them.

Also, the quality of this Book we call the Bible, is that it’s a powerful book. Secondly, notice verse 12, “...and powerful.” God’s Word “is quick,” it’s alive, “and powerful.” The word “powerful” means energetic or it works, it’s working. We actually get our word energetic from this word “powerful,” so the Word is alive and it’s powerful in that it works in our hearts and in our lives to transform us. Jesus actually said in His High Priestly Prayer in John 17, “Sanctify them,” that is, His people, “through thy truth: thy word is truth.” We learn in that statement that God’s Word is

true and that it's transforming of our lives, that we are sanctified by the Word of God. We're saved by God's Word, and we're sanctified by God's Word. You might say we're also equipped for service through the Word of God as well. It's powerful.

The third quality, notice verse 12, is that it's sharp or it's a "twoedged sword." The sword described there is "...sharper than any twoedged sword." There are different Greek words used for sword in the Bible. Here, as it's used, we would call a large knife. It was a large dagger. It was the same sword that Peter grabbed and tried to cut off the ear of one of the servants of the high priest in the Garden of Gethsemane when they came to arrest Jesus. It's interesting that the sword Peter used in the flesh, trying to defend Jesus, but then on the day of Pentecost, he stood up and preached the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and three thousand souls were saved through the preaching of God's powerful Word. It's like a two-edged sword, and it's "... sharper than any twoedged sword." It's interesting that it's, "...piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner," is a critique, "of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

It's a challenge to understand what is implied or meant by the "soul and spirit," because even good Bible theologians aren't sure whether man is a trichotomy—body, soul, and spirit—or dichotomy—body, soul and spirit being one, only two parts to us and that the soul and spirit are the same, they are synonymous for one another. Either way, it's saying that the Word of God reaches deep down into the heart of a man and actually reveals his thoughts and the purpose, motive, and intentions of his own thoughts. Notice it says, "...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." God knows what you think. As a matter of fact, He knows what you think before you think it, and then He also knows why you think what you think. I don't know why I think what I think. I don't know what my motive is or why those thoughts come to my mind.

Have you ever had a thought come to your mind and you're thinking, That is so bizarre. We think crazy thoughts. We don't know why we think them, but God knows the thoughts of our hearts, He knows the motives of our own hearts, and that's why when you read the Word of God, which is alive, "and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword," it cuts deep deep down into your very heart to your conscience. When it's talking about the heart here, it's not talking about the physical organ, it's talking about your inner person. Again, this is why he calls it, "the soul and spirit...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

You read the Bible, and it convicts you. I heard of one Christian from China that said, "Every time I read the Bible it kicks me." I love that. Have you ever read the Psalms and God just jumped off the pages and spoke to your heart? Or you read a verse and it just jumped into your heart or jumped into your mind or grabbed a hold of your heart and you knew it was just what you needed for that time? The fact that God's Word is living, it transcends time and culture. Think about when the Bible was written, so long ago, yet it's so alive and powerful because it's the living, active, powerful Word of God. This is why, if we're going to go on in our walk with the Lord, not fall or come short, or in unbelief miss the blessings of the Lord, we're going to have to meditate our minds and our hearts in the Word of God and be transformed by this Book.

It's also a sharp Book used to convert sinners, used to build up and sanctify the saints, and it was used by Jesus. He used the sword of the Spirit. Remember when He was being tempted by the devil, Satan, in the wilderness and all of the three temptations that Satan brought against the Lord? How did He answer him? "It is written." Jesus used the Scriptures to defeat the devil. The living, powerful Word of God is used to save sinners, to sanctify the saints, and to resist the devil. God has given us His Word, and if we hide His Word in our hearts, the Bible says we will not sin against Him. We'll use that to answer all the temptations that we deal with.

It's also a penetrating Book. We sometimes forget verse 13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight," basically saying that God knows our hearts, knows us intimately. Remember Psalm 139, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." We're, "...naked and opened" by the Word of God revealing to us our sin. It says, "...unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." The Bible exposes our sin and our thoughts and the intents of our heart; and it also enables us to live holy, godly lives.

We come to verse 14, which starts a very long section. I don't want to get bogged down in outlining it again, but it goes from Hebrews 4:14-10:18. This is the main body of the book of Hebrews, and we're going to be introduced to that mysterious man of the Old Testament called Melchizedek, we won't get into him in depth until we get to Hebrews 7, but we'll be introduced to him tonight in this text. Basically, we have the priesthood of Christ, that Christ is better than Aaron and the Levitical system of the old tabernacle or the old covenant.

In verses 14-16, we have that He is a better Priest. Follow with me, "Seeing then," so he comes back to his theme, "that we have a great high priest," not just in Christ a High Priest, but notice the word "great." He's the, "great high priest, that is passed into the heavens," literally that would be translated passed through the heavens. There are basically, three things described as heaven in the Bible, the atmosphere above the earth where the birds fly, that's heaven; the outer space, the stars, moon, and sun, which is the heavens above; and then there's the dwelling place of God, which is called the third heaven by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12.

When Jesus ascended, and that's what it's describing here, He "...passed into the heavens," and then went to His heavenly abode, is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for us as our "great high priest." He's "passed into the heavens," and then describes Him as, "Jesus the Son of God," and this is what we're supposed to do, "let us hold fast our profession," not our salvation, that's not in jeopardy, but "our profession," or our testimony, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Notice again the clear reference to Jesus being impeccable. He was without sin because He could not sin. He was a pure, holy, Son of God.

Here's the second command, verse 16, "Let us therefore come," if you do mark or highlight your Bible, verse 14, "...let us hold fast our profession," and in verse 16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of

need.” Again, one of the reasons why I wanted to slow down just a little bit tonight because we come to this marvelous, marvelous passage not only on the Word of God being alive “...and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword,” which, by the way, is why at this church we are committed to reading the Bible, committed to preaching and teaching the Bible, and every facet of our ministry here at Revival Christian Fellowship that we are a Bible church and that’s central because we believe the Bible is the Word of God that brings us salvation, sanctification, and equips us for service.

We also have “...a great high priest,” go back with me to verse 14. Why is this subject introduced, and many times we as Christians would think, Why would we come out on Wednesday night when it’s freezing cold, and it had been snowing. You know, we had to tromp through the snow to get here. You probably had to chain up your car to get here. Isn’t that crazy? The people in Minnesota would laugh at us. People were out dancing out in the snow which lasted five minutes before it evaporated. Why would we study about this priesthood of the old covenant now as we are Christians of the new covenant? Let me tell you why he brought it up in the text. These were Jewish Christians who were beginning to question whether or not they should continue to follow Jesus Christ. They were being persecuted for following Christ, and they thought it would be easier if they just went back to Judaism and the old system, so the writer of Hebrews is trying to encourage them not to go back but to go forward. He does that by showing them that Christ is better than the old covenant, that it’s a better priest than that of the Aaronic Priesthood of Levi. That’s why he was talking to them.

They would think, “I’m a Christian. I’m following Jesus, but I don’t have a priest any longer. How do I come directly to God?” They may not understand that Jesus Christ is actually our High Priest and gives us access to God the Father, and that Jesus being Messiah, which they understood, was from the tribe of Judah, which was the Messianic tribe, but the priesthood was from the tribe of Levi, so in their minds they’re thinking, I’m getting shortchanged here. This isn’t good. I don’t have a priest anymore. I don’t have anyone to mediate before God for me, so I think I’m going to give up Christ and go back to Judaism. He’s warning them not to do that. He’s warning them that Christ is superior to that of Aaron. He says, “...we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens,” so they don’t have to be discouraged, disappointed, or think that they are getting shortchanged.

There are some today who come to know Christ and are born again and have a personal relationship with Christ out of Roman Catholicism. Anytime I mention Roman Catholicism, somebody gets upset with me; so don’t shoot the messenger tonight, just listen to me. In Roman Catholicism they have a priesthood. They go to confessional, they go to mass, they celebrate the Eucharist, and they feel like they have a tangible individual, a human, that is a mediator for them or an access to get to God and they can’t go directly to God or talk to God themselves, that they need to have an earthly priest. First of all, in the New Testament there is nothing about being a priest in the sense of a pastor or an elder, a bishop, or an overseer. In none of the passages are they referred to as priests. All Christians are referred to as priests, and that we actually can come into the throne of grace and can intercede for others, and we can represent God to them and represent them to God in prayer.

The Bible actually teaches the individual priesthood of all Christians, that we have access to God, but it also teaches that Jesus Christ, even though He is the sacrifice for our sins, that He is our High Priest, seated at the right hand of God the Father, and that He actually goes within the veil for us and takes then His sacrifice to the Father and He is the Mediator between God and man. If you feel like you're shortchanged becoming a Christian or even a Protestant Christian, you have Jesus Christ who can take you directly into the presence of Christ, access through Him through His blood. You don't need to go through a man, a priest, a pastor, an intermediary, you can come directly to God through Jesus Christ; and you don't need to use the saints either.

Notice verse 14, "Seeing then we have a great high priest," that phrase says "we have." That's a present possession. We have Christ, and it will not change, who is always and forever our Great High Priest. This, "passed into the heavens," speaks of His ascension when He went from earth to heaven bodily, so He's exalted at the right hand of God the Father. Many times we stop with the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and we don't think about the ascension. Then, we may stop there and we don't think about the exaltation, we stop there. Jesus has not only risen from the dead, He has ascended back to heaven and He's exalted at the place of honor, the right hand of God the Father. He's alive right now to give you access to the throne of grace. Amen? There's no need to go through a priest or wait once a year for a high priest, but we can go right directly to God. How marvelous that is!

Jesus is superior because of His position, verse 14, because He's at the right hand of God the Father, and He's also superior because of His person—He is also the Son of God. When he says, "Jesus the Son of God," Jesus, which is Jehovah saves or Joshua of the Old Testament, is His human name, but it conveys that He is the Savior. When it says, "Jesus the Son of God," it speaks of His divine nature. It indicates His dual nature. This is why Jesus is our High Priest, He is both man and God. I know you hear me say that a lot, but it's so important to understand. He's both fully God and fully man. Some say it's better to say: truly God, truly man—sinless man, but full, genuine, authentic manhood, His humanity. He's "Jesus the Son of God," never a Son of God, but "...the Son of God." It speaks of His deity.

Notice it says, that in light of that, we need to "...hold fast our profession." He's trying to encourage them not to go back, not to let go, not to give up, not to slack. He's not saying that you're going to lose your salvation, he's says you're going to lose your testimony. You're going to lose your "profession." This is a confession or declaration of following Christ. You're going to ruin your testimony. It's interesting that he doesn't say there, "Don't go back or give up, or you're going to lose your salvation." He didn't say that. He said you're going to lose your "profession."

I believe that once we're saved that we're kept by the power of God unto the day of redemption. I believe that we're sealed with the Holy Spirit and that no one can break that seal. Do you know that every Christian is sealed by the Spirit? We don't hear that talked about a lot. We're indwelt by the Spirit and we're sealed with the Spirit until the day of redemption. No one can break that seal, and nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. It's

not holding fast your salvation, which some people think that's what you're doing. That's a frightening thought to me, that my salvation is dependent on me holding onto God?

You know, one of the things I love about being a grandfather, you get to have kids over again a second time. If I knew how much fun they were, I would've had them first. I get so excited when they put their little hands in your hand, and you can walk them across the street or through a shopping mall. You feel their little hands grabbing a hold of you or grabbing onto you; and when there's danger around and you have a little one with you, what do you do? You hold them tighter, bring them closer. I'm so glad that Jesus is holding me. It's not a matter of me trying to hold onto Him. In the book of Jude it says, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." I love that. In 1 Peter 1:5 it says, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

I was reading Jerry Vines, an old Southern Baptist preacher, on this text. He likened our being, "...kept by the power of God...unto salvation," to Noah and the ark. I thought it was pretty cool. He said, "When Noah built the ark and his whole family went into the ark and God shut the door, and the rains came down and the floods came up, and the ark was floating in the water, Noah didn't put nails in the side of the ark and tell them to hang on, and if you didn't hang on you're going to get thrown overboard and would be lost. No, God brought them safely into the ark, God shut the door of the ark, and God protected them through the storm in that ark." That ark is a picture of Jesus Christ. He is our ark of safety, our ark of protection. When you're in Christ, there's no condemnation; you're safe in the storms of life. It's not you hanging onto Him, but He's hanging onto you. Now, should we, "...hold fast our profession"? Yes, we shouldn't go back. We don't want to lose our testimony, and we don't want to lose fellowship with Christ. We don't want to dishonor Him or bring shame to His name, but we're not trying to keep ourselves saved. We're saved by grace, we're kept by grace, and we're going to go to heaven by the grace of God. That should be a motivation to holiness and godliness and worshiping and thanking Him, not seeking to be a sinful Christian, on the contrary, we should be seeking to live holy lives.

Notice he says, "For," here's the rationale. Why should we, "hold fast our profession," of faith? "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Whenever you find a "For," so many times at the beginning of a verse, it many times indicates the ration or the outflow or the reason for the verse that went before it. So, why should we "hold fast"? Because we have a priest which can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He puts it in the negative. He says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," he's trying to convey the idea that He can sympathize. The word "touched" literally we get our word sympathy from that. It speaks about the fact that because He was a man and became our High Priest through the incarnation, that He can sympathize with us, He can be touched with feelings of our infirmities and, "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

This is a marvelous, marvelous truth that can go unnoticed in the passage, but it's basically saying that because of the incarnation and—listen to me very carefully—in the incarnation,

deity and humanity were fused together for all eternity. It means Jesus, right now, is the exalted God-Man in heaven. He's in a glorified human body in heaven. He is the prototype of our future resurrection. How marvelous that is! Jesus actually goes before us, and, because of that, God in heaven understands your weakness. Jesus understands your sorrows. Jesus understands your disappointments. Jesus understands your struggles. If not, we wouldn't be able to understand how God could know what I'm going through, He's never been a human, He's never been a person. How could God, living out in the cosmos of heaven, understand my hardships, my difficulties, my weaknesses? He left heaven, was born on earth, lived a sinless life, and was tempted in every way we are yet He didn't yield to the temptation. When He was tempted, His temptation was authentic and genuine, but it didn't come from a sinful nature like it does for us.

It's very possible that these temptations, "...was in all points...like as we are," refer to the three categories that Satan tempts us: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Remember when Jesus was tempted by the devil? He said, "If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread. You're hungry, aren't you? Turn them into bread," the lust of the flesh. The same thing that he did in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, "It's good for food, eat the fruit." Then he took Him to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth, "They're mine. I can give them to whomever I wish. If You fall down and worship me, they're all Yours. This is why You came, to redeem the world, I'll give it to You," the lust of the eyes. Then, he took Him to the pinnacle of the temple and said, "Throw Yourself off," got really subtle and tempted Him by using Scripture himself, "...for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee...bear thee up, lest...thou dash thy foot against a stone." Jesus actually, then answering again with the Word of God, said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," the pride of life. "I'm not going to bow down and worship you." So, "...was in all points tempted."

The fact that Jesus was tempted and never sinned means that He maxed out the temptation. By that, what I mean, when Satan tempts you, if you yield to the temptation, the minute he starts to tempt you, then you don't know the intensity of the temptation. Those who resist temptation know the intensity of temptation. Someone said, "I can resist anything...but temptation." It's like boxing. I heard the analogy that if you got in a ring with the number one, world heavyweight fighter, and were knocked out in the first seconds, which is what would happen to me—I didn't have to take much punishment, right? one big blow and I'm down. If you got in with a heavyweight fighter and went all 15 rounds, you stood the whole match, you'd know the full wrath of that fighter, so Jesus actually experienced the full power of that temptation because He never surrendered and never yielded and the reason now is that He is able to help us when we are tempted. He's able to sympathize with us and He's able to energize us and help us in our moment of temptation. When we cry out to the Lord, "I'm being tempted," He understands. He sympathizes and He also energizes and helps us to resist that temptation. So, he says we have a high priest who sympathizes with us, "...but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." That's His perfection.

Verse 14 is His position, verse 15 is His perfection, and then verse 16 is His provision. Here's

the second command, "Let us therefore come," so "...let us hold fast our profession," then, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." That word "come" means drawing near. Because Jesus is our "great high priest," because He's sympathetic, and we're going to learn in Hebrews 5 that every high priest had to be taken from among men so they could be sympathetic and compassionate toward men, that's why Christ had to become a man, but we find here that we "...come boldly," or draw near with confidence, "unto the throne of grace." Notice that "come boldly." That word "boldly" means to have confidence of speech. It doesn't say we come cocky. It doesn't say we come ordering God. This Word Faith positive confession concept that we tell God what to do, we order God around, is blasphemous. We come humbly, but we come with confidence. It's talking about boldfaced speech. It's talking about the fact that you can own up your heart and bear your heart to God in honesty and humility and brokenness at any time. That's what it means to come into, "the throne of grace."

Notice it's a "throne of grace." We come with confident speech, and we come to a throne that's a "throne of grace." The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. We have a throne not of wrath or judgement, but it's a "throne of grace." Isn't that great? God's undeserved, unmerited favor. Notice, verse 16, "...that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." I love that. If you're like me, I need God's grace and God's mercy.

When I was in Florida this last week, we were preaching there with a group of pastors, I was out there, and Pastor David Guzik was preaching on the mercy of God. It just overwhelmed me. It was one of the best sermons I've ever heard on the mercy of God. He was talking about many facets of mercy, but he was saying we're only recipients of mercy because we're sinners and we deserve wrath. Mercy is undeserved favor. It's something that God doesn't give us what we deserve, so when we say, "God, be merciful to me," we have to come with the concept of me, a sinner. Remember the story that Jesus gave about the two, the Pharisee and the publican, that went to the temple to pray? One stood and prayed with himself, "God, I thank You I'm not like other men. I fast twice a week, give tithes of all that I possess," and Jesus said another man came and beat upon his breast and just said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Jesus asked, "Which of those two went home justified?" Obviously, the man who said, "Be merciful to me a sinner." Mercy presupposes that we are sinners in need of mercy because we are due the judgement, the wrath, the penalty of our sin. We pray for mercy, "God, be merciful to me," and it's such an awesome thought that so many people when they came to Jesus and prayed for healings, they actually said, "Have mercy on me, thou Son of David. Have mercy on me."

I love the story of blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus. He sat at the highway side begging and cried out, "Jesus! Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" It caught the Lord's attention and He stopped and said, "Call that blind man." Before Jesus stopped, the crowd was saying, "Shhhhh! Be quiet. He's not got time for you. Silence, blind man." It says he screamed all the louder, "Have mercy on me!" It caught the ear of Jesus. Aren't you glad He's merciful? Do you know what it means to be merciful? It means that He has tender mercies. It's tied in with the same concept of being compassionate or caring for you. When God shows mercy to you in

your plight and in your misery, it's because He loves you and He's compassionate and He's kind. But it presupposes that we are due judgment and we are in need of mercy.

Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve, mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve, and we make such a big deal out of grace, and rightfully so, but we should also magnify the mercy of God. If it weren't for God's mercy, we would all be in hell right now; and He would be perfectly righteous and just in doing that, so don't you ever get the idea that you deserve anything from God. God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and God's mercies, the Bible says, are new every morning. Amen? I love the fact that, "the throne of grace," is accessible to me, is a throne of mercy because I need mercy, I'm a sinner; and I, "...find grace to help in time of need," that is God's appointed time.

David prayed after his great sin with Bathsheba. In Psalm 51 he said, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleans me from my sin," he cried out in Psalm 51 for the mercy of God. How important to see yourself as a sinner in need of God's mercy and God's help. "...in time of need," means God's appointed time.

It's very simple, but very simply profound, and I'm going to stop right here. Don't freak out. I'm not going to go into Hebrews 5. We'll stop right here because I want to end on this note of God's mercy. We all need God's mercy, and we all need God's grace. If you have believed in Jesus and trusted Him and been born again, you're a child of God, you can come anytime 24/7 into the throne of grace and find mercy and grace to help you in your hour of need. Whatever your need is tonight, tell it to Jesus. Get alone with Jesus. Pour out your heart to Jesus. Cast your cares upon Jesus, He cares for you. When your soul is in distress, think about His faithfulness. Let's pray.