

**“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” – Hebrews 7:25**

**I. THE PRIVILEGE OF INTERCEDING BEFORE THE THRONE**

A. Because of Jesus’ continual intercession, we now have the ability to live before the Throne. In righteousness, we should be consumed because of our sin, but instead we can stand before Him and actually engage in dialogue with Him. He actually listens to us and we have the ability to hear the thunderous voice that terrified the Israelites at Sinai (Deut. 5:23-26). *This is a phenomenal privilege, which is why everything in this fallen age is calculated to cause us to not appear before the throne.*

1. Standing before God terrified the Israelites, which is why they pleaded with Moses that he would be an intercessor for them.

*“So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. <sup>24</sup> And you said: ‘Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives. <sup>25</sup> Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die. <sup>26</sup> For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? – Deut. 5:23-26*

2. When we see God’s majesty, we are left undone, unable to speak ourselves and terrified at His voice. Isaiah faced this very predicament when He saw Jesus on His throne (Isaiah 6:5). The Israelites sought an intercessor in Moses so that they would not have to endure the great conflict in their souls of drawing near to God and hearing His voice.

3. Moses was a picture of Jesus, and yet Jesus is far greater than Moses (Heb. 3:3-6). He does not just go to God on our behalf; He goes to God so that we can approach. Every moment He stands in a wonderful, terrible place satisfying the tensions of God’s just wrath against sin and His desire to commune with men. *He bears the full weight of the holiness of God through His blood and His sacrifice so that we can approach.* This is a very real thing that He does moment by moment. If, for one moment, His blood stops interceding for us we stand ready to be consumed by God’s holiness.

*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, - Heb. 10:19*

*to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. – Heb. 12:24*

*Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. – Heb. 13:12*

*Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, - Heb. 13:20*

4. The full power of His blood is required for both sides of intercession. It is required for us to appear before Him without being consumed. It is also required for us to actually hear His voice.
  - a. Because of the blood we can stand before Him with the privileges of a son and it is God’s delight to hear our voices. The fact that the Creator would listen to a finite, fallen creature that deserves judgment should actually blow our minds. The fact that He would enjoy this is unfathomable. The desire of His heart is to hear our voices and this alone should be enough to move us to prayer.

*You who dwell in the gardens, The companions listen for your voice – Let me hear it! – Song of Solomon 8:13*

- b. We offer prayers far too glibly. Would we be so casual if the President gave us 5 minutes of his time? The idea of the Creator allowing us to speak to Him and ask Him to do things is beyond all comprehension. This privilege is so significant, that it required the blood of God’s Son to open the way for us to be able to speak to God.
    - c. The blood also allows us to hear God’s voice and not be destroyed. While His voice is still as majestic and terrible as it has always been, we also gain access to hear the still, small voice of intimate communion. It is the blood that enables us to hear His voice so tenderly.

B. *The wrestle against you persevering in the place of prayer is not accidental, nor is it the result of boredom alone.* The boredom that you feel at times is a calculated tactic of the enemy warring against keeping you from the place of prayer.

1. One of the primary goals of the enemy is to keep men and women from the place of prayer and he is very intentional and strategic about it. There are a lot of other elements of Christian life that the enemy can tolerate, but he will oppose vibrant prayer with every power he has. There are at least two reasons for his opposition:
  - a. *When men do not pray, God does not get the intimacy that He desires with men and men do not have the access to the living God that the human spirit cries out for.* The enemy’s anger against both God and man is one of the primary motivations he has for keeping men from the place of prayer.
  - b. God has orchestrated His kingdom on the earth so that men exercise government in the place of prayer. In the place of prayer, we are able to actually participate in God’s government by asking Him to do the things we know He wants to do. God gave the earth to men in the beginning and therefore it has real authority when men to whom the earth was entrusted ask God to do things on the earth. *Satan’s primary opposition on the earth comes from praying men.*

2. The enemy will do everything possible in his power to keep men from praying. He desperately does not want men to take advantage of the blood and utilize all of its benefits. He wars against men so that they will not enter into the full benefits of the blood.

## II. THE HEAVENLY TABERNACLE

- A. The author of Hebrews did not just record Jesus’ intercession so that we would be aware of it. He intended that we would respond to this great work of intercession. This understanding should provoke us.

1. Moses was very clear to record that the entire tabernacle in the Old Testament was a type and shadow of a very real temple that exists in the heavens. It only had glory because it was a copy of another very real temple. In particular, there is a real mercy seat of which the mercy seat in Moses’ tabernacle was only a copy. John also saw the real tabernacle and elements in it repeatedly in Revelation (Rev. 7:15; 11:19; 14:15,17; 15:5-8; 16:1,17).

*Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him. – Numbers 7:89*

2. Just as Moses recorded the ministry of the priests in the tabernacle on earth, the author of Hebrews is describing the priestly ministry of Jesus in the tabernacle in heaven. *We must understand that this tabernacle is real and His ministry there is real and His ministry has the same purpose as the ministry of the Levitical priests had – to allow men to meet God.*
3. The mercy seat in Moses’ tabernacle was stained with blood from years and years of offering atonement for the people.
  - a. These bloodstains enabled the high priest to encounter the glory resting above the mercy seat when he entered the holy of holies once a year.
  - b. Just as the Levitical high priests sprinkled blood on the mercy seat so that they could encounter God and minister to Him, so too Jesus sprinkled His own blood on a real mercy seat in heaven *so that other men could come near as priests, experience the glory and hear the voice of God speaking above the mercy seat.*
4. For thousands of years men were separated from God. God spoke to men only in limited ways and times. Moses clearly recorded that God’s voice was heard above the mercy seat, and now the author of Hebrews is telling us that we can stand, not before the mercy seat on earth, but before the actual mercy seat in the heavens and commune with God. This is a phenomenal privilege.
  - a. *The High Priest approached the mercy seat on earth trembling in fear of death, but we can approach the heavenly mercy seat trembling, but in confidence that the blood sprinkled there will allow us to meet God and not die.*

- b. Moses heard God’s voice above the mercy seat in an earthly tent. We can speak to God at the mercy seat that is before the throne and stained with Jesus’ own blood.
5. Jesus paid the very dear price of putting His own blood on the mercy seat because of God’s intense desire to commune with men again that He might hear our voices and we might hear His voice above the mercy seat.
- a. Our separation from God because of sin was very real. God’s desire to commune with us was even greater than His hatred of sin. That desire caused Jesus to shed His own blood.
  - b. Jesus’ blood is actually speaking above the mercy seat crying out to men that the way to communion with God is open above the mercy seat. His blood sits on the mercy seat right now creating a new and living way so that we can appear before God in the place of prayer. It is a living way because the *blood on the mercy seat is alive and actually speaks so that we can speak before God*. Jesus’ blood is a living way giving us access to God and making atonement so that we can experience the presence of God without experiencing the wrath of God against sin. Life is in the blood and His life is in His blood on the mercy seat interceding for us so that we can appear before the very throne of God.

***For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul...for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. – Leviticus 17:11-14a***

***To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel – Hebrews 12:24***

***Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh – Hebrews 10:19-20***

- c. God’s desire to hear our voice is so strong that His own blood is making a way for us to speak before Him. This is God’s desire to meet us in the place of prayer. This is also why the enemy so violently fights men entering the place of prayer.
6. Ever since the fall, men have been blocked from appearing before the throne except for very limited ways. The way is now open because Jesus is making a continual intercession. With this confidence, the author cries out, “*Come boldly to the throne of grace!*”
- Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in time of need. – Hebrews 4:16***

### III. THE CALL OF INTERCESSION

- A. Not only does Jesus’ intercession call us to appear before God, it also calls us to take on the character of an intercessor. If Jesus placed such a high value on being our intercessor forever, then we should likewise enter into the place of intercession for others.
1. If He is an intercessor forever, then we should also live as intercessors.
  2. The life of Moses is one of the best Biblical examples of an intercessor. Moses’ continually stood before God as an intercessor for the people even offering his own life in exchange for the people. Studying the life of Moses as an intercessor is a very valuable exercise and reveals the life of an earthly intercessor. Paul also expressed the same life of intercession with regard to his own Jewish kinsmen. Abraham’s life of intercession is also revealed in his petition for Sodom.

*And Abraham came near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Supposed there were fifty righteous within the city...Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”...Then he said, “Let not the Lord be angry and I will speak once more: Supposed ten should be found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.” – Genesis 18:23-25,32*

*Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin...Yet now, if You will forgive their sin – but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.” – Exodus 32:31-23*

*...I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh – Romans 9:2-3*

3. In both Moses and Paul, we see that the heart of an intercessor is the one who will stand in the gap and lay down their own life for others that do not deserve it. *This willingness to give one’s life for another is the reality of what it means to be an intercessor.* This is why Jesus is described in Hebrews 7:25 as the eternal intercessor. He did not just enter into this place with all His heart, He experienced it completely in His death as our substitute.
  - a. This is why it is such a serious thing not to fully respond to the work of an intercessor on your behalf. When we do not respond, it means we do not value the life laid down for us. *When we do not appear before the throne it is because we do not fully value the life of Jesus that was given for us so that we might receive access and mercy rather than justice.*
  - b. We are called to live this same life of intercession and to put our own lives in the gap for others. Intercession is more than just speaking words. It is expressed in the way we consider our own lives with regard to the purposes and people of God.

- B. Like Jesus, Abraham, Moses, and Paul, an intercessor uses their favor before God on behalf of others. Moses risked his favor with God to intercede for the Israelites. This is intercession according to the heart of God.
1. God’s own heart is self-sacrificing. This is graphically illustrated for us in the death of Jesus on the cross. His death was not only an act of atonement; it was also a demonstration of what God was like. *When Jesus’ body hung exposed, it was God being exposed as He in fact He is before all men.* An intercessor will have this same heart posture of trading their life for the lives of the object of their intercession.
  2. Our favor before God is to be used for the benefit of others. Again, Jesus is the ultimate example of this. Jesus had the favor of the Father above all others as His Father’s daily delight (Prov. 8:30) and yet He willingly lowered Himself for the benefit of others (Philippians 2:5-11).
  3. An intercessor boldly uses their favor before God on behalf of others. This is how both Paul and Moses challenged God on behalf of the Israelites. Moses challenged God to cut him off rather than cut off the nation of Israel. Moses had favor with God and he both used it and risked it to secure mercy for the Israelites.
  4. An intercessor knows that God delights in mercy. This is what gives the intercessor confidence to approach God’s throne. The intercessor is actually expressing the desire of God’s own heart when they offer themselves to secure mercy for others. God delights to give mercy and this gives Moses and Paul both confidence to put themselves before God and make such extreme statements.
- C. Let us set our hearts to respond to Jesus’ continual intercession. This means actually appearing before the throne. It would be unimaginable to have an appointment with the President and then not show up. Jesus has given us access at great cost. Let us value the price He paid and actually appear before the throne. In our deep gratitude for His sacrifice, let us go on and ask Him to give us the heart of an intercessor as well.