
Boldness to Enter God's Presence

By David Wilkerson

May 21, 2007 Dearly Beloved:

THE LOVE OF GOD FOR HIS PEOPLE NEVER FAILS!

While reading Psalm 13 today, I was impressed to send you a few words of encouragement I have gleaned from this blessed chapter.

David penned the words contained in this Psalm. He asked, "How long will you forget me, Lord? Forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long shall I have sorrow in my heart daily? How long will the enemy be exalted over me?"

It sounds as if David felt that God had altogether left him to suffer and wake up each day with a black cloud hanging over him. For a season, David spoke out of despair: "God, will this feeling of isolation go on forever? When will my prayers ever be answered?"

Beloved, when troubles assail us yet we know we love the Lord — when deliverance seems hopeless — we sink under the pressure. Right now, someone reading these words is sinking under the awful pressure of a situation that seems to be unsolvable. They are on the verge of total despair, hoping a calm will come if only for a break in their trial.

Next, David asked, "How long shall I take counsel in my soul?" He spoke of forming one plan after another, trying to plan ways out of his trouble — but all plans, all arrangements, failed. Now he had nothing else to think of, no workable solution. He was at the end of it all.

How upsetting it is to see a ray of hope, a bit of sunshine, but then despair once again sets in. Keep in mind, this all happened to a godly man, someone after God's heart. David was a man who testified of having great trust in the Lord. Yet, like us, David went through hard times, as he describes here.

How did David arise from this pit of despair? "I will trust in your mercy...I will sing..."

Let me share with you several reasons to keep trusting your way through your present trials: No matter how the storms may rage, our precious Lord will still be feeding the fowls of the air, dressing the lilies of the field, and supplying an ocean full of fish with their daily needs. "Your heavenly Father feedeth them..." Not one bird ever falls to the ground without the Father's eye upon it.

What kind of Father would feed all the creatures of the earth and yet neglect his children? Jesus exhorted us to "give no thought" to everyday needs and problems, "for he careth for you."

Truly, the Lord loves you, and he will not turn a deaf ear to your cries. Hold on, move on, wait patiently. He will never fail you.

The love of Christ be with you always.

His bondservant,
DAVID WILKERSON

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Newsletter: Boldness to Enter God's Presence

May 21, 2007 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:19–20, 22).

There are two sides to Christ’s work at Calvary. One side is to the benefit of man, and the other side is to the benefit of God. One benefits the sinner, while the other benefits the Father.

We are well acquainted with the benefit on the human side. The cross of Christ has provided us with forgiveness of our sins. We are given the power of victory over all bondages and dominion over sin. We are supplied with mercy and grace. And, of course, we are given the promise of eternal life. The cross has given us the means of escape from the terrors of sin and hell.

I thank God for this benefit of the cross to humankind, and for the wonderful relief it brings. I rejoice that it is preached week after week in churches all over the world.

Yet there is another benefit of the cross, one that we know very little about. And this one is to the benefit to the Father. You see, we understand very little about the delight of the Father that was made possible by the cross. It’s a delight that comes to him whenever he receives a prodigal child into his house.

If all we focus on about the cross is forgiveness — if that is the end-all of our preaching — then we miss an important truth that God has meant for us about the cross. There is a fuller understanding to be had here, and it has to do with his delight. This truth provides God’s people with much more than just relief. It brings liberty, rest, peace and joy.

In my opinion, most Christians have learned to come boldly before God for forgiveness, for supply of needs, for answers to prayer. But they lack boldness in this aspect of faith — an aspect that is just as crucial in their walk with the Lord.

God’s delight comes in his enjoyment of our company. The Lord has great joy that the cross has provided us with open access to himself. Indeed, the most glorious moment in history was when the temple veil was rent in two, on the day that Christ died. At that moment, the earth trembled, the rocks rent and the graves were opened.

It was at this very moment that the benefit to God burst forth. In the instant that the temple veil — separating man from God’s holy presence — was torn asunder, something incredible happened. From that point on, not only was man able to enter into the Lord’s presence, but God could come out to man.

He who once dwelt in “thick darkness” didn’t wait for us to come to him, but he came out to us. God himself took the initiative, and Christ’s blood cleared away all hindrances. It was a unilateral move on

the Lord's part, the kind when one party declares, "Enough — I'm going to make peace. I'm going to tear down this wall of partition. And I'll do it out of my own initiative."

Before the cross, there was no access to God for the general public; only the high priest could enter the Holy of holies. Now Jesus' cross made a path for us into the Father's presence. By his grace alone, God tore down the wall that blocked us from his presence. Now he could come out to man, to embrace his prodigals and sinners of all sorts.

We see an illustration of this when God delivered Israel through the Red Sea. Consider Israel's miraculous deliverance. As God's people crossed over on dry land, they saw the waves crash down on their enemy behind them. It was a glorious moment, and they held a mighty praise meeting, with dancing, singing and thanksgiving: "We're free! God has delivered us from the hand of oppression."

Israel's story represents our own deliverance from the bondage and guilt of sin. We know that Satan was defeated at the cross, and we were immediately set free from his iron grip. Yet there is more to God's purpose in saving and delivering us. You see, God never meant for Israel to camp there on the victory side of the Red Sea. His greater purpose in bringing them *out of Egypt* was to take them *into Canaan*, his land of fullness. In short, he brought them *out* in order to bring them *in*: into his heart, into his love. He wanted a people who were totally dependent on his mercy, grace and love. And the same is still true for his people today.

Israel's first test came just a few days later, and they ended up murmuring and complaining, totally dissatisfied. Why? They had known God's deliverance, but they hadn't learned his great love for them.

Here is the key to my message: you cannot come into joy and peace — indeed, you cannot know how to serve the Lord — until you see his delight in your deliverance...until you see the joy of his heart over his communion with you...until you see that every wall has been removed at the cross...until you know that everything of your past has been judged and wiped away. God says, "I want you to move on, into the fullness that awaits you in my presence!"

Multitudes today rejoice in the wonderful benefits of the cross. They have moved out of Egypt, and they're standing on the "victory side" of their Red Sea trial. They enjoy freedom, and they thank God continually for casting their oppressor into the sea. But many of these same believers miss God's greater purpose and benefit to them. They miss why the Lord has brought them *out* — which is to bring them *in* to himself.

The parable of the prodigal son illustrates the double benefits of the cross. Jesus told this parable, using it as a teaching tool to get across a great truth. In the parable, we see the benefit to man clearly — and yet we also see the benefit to God. You see, the parable of the prodigal son is not only about forgiveness of a lost man. Even more so, it is about the delight of the father who runs after him.

You know the story. A young man took his portion of his father's inheritance and squandered it on riotous living. He ended up broken, ruined in health and spirit, and at his lowest point he decided to return to his father. Scripture tells us, "He arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

Note that nothing hindered this father's forgiveness of the young man. There was nothing this boy had to do — not even to confess his sins — because the father had already made provision for reconciliation. Indeed, it happened all by the father's initiative: he ran to his son and embraced him as soon as he saw the boy coming up the road. The truth is, forgiveness is never a problem for any loving father. Likewise, it's never a problem with our heavenly Father when he sees a repentant child.

So forgiveness simply is not the issue in this parable. In fact, Jesus makes it clear that it wasn't enough for this prodigal merely to be forgiven. The father didn't embrace his son just to forgive him and let him go his way. No, that father yearned for more than just his son's restoration. He wanted his child's company, his presence, communion.

Even though the prodigal was forgiven and in favor once more, he still wasn't settled in his father's house. Only then would the father be satisfied, his joy fulfilled when his son was brought into his company. That is the issue in this parable.

Here the story gets very interesting. The son clearly was not at ease with his father's forgiveness. That's why he hesitated to enter his father's house. He told him, in essence, "If you only knew what I've done, all the filthy, ungodly things. I've sinned against God and against your love and grace. I just don't deserve your love. You have every right to cut me off."

That was the prodigal's old nature talking. It was saying, "I can't just waltz in like this. My father hugs and kisses me, yet he doesn't ask questions? He just accepts me with open arms? That can't be right. I need a payment schedule. I may owe more than I can pay, but I've got to try."

Dear saint, what about you? Do you object to your Father's urgings to come into his presence? You may know that your sins are forgiven, yet are you willing to let him enjoy your company? Perhaps you're like the prodigal, standing on the road, weeping and repenting, full of godly sorrow. Like him, you cry out to the Father, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, I am not worthy to be called thy son" (Luke 15:21).

This is indeed true repentance. But such repentance is not complete *if you are reluctant to enter into your Father's house*. Why the hesitation? Like the prodigal, you may still be focused on your past sins.

Yet note how this father responds to his son. He utters not a single word of reproof. There is no reference to what the prodigal did, no mention of his rebellion, his foolishness, his profligate living, his

spiritual bankruptcy. In fact, the father didn't even acknowledge his son's attempts to stay outside, unworthy. He ignored them! Why?

In the father's eyes, the *old* boy was dead. That son was out of his thoughts completely. Now, in the father's eyes, this son who had returned home was a new man. And his past would never be brought up again. The father was saying, in essence: "As far as I'm concerned, the *old* you is dead. Now, walk with me as a *new* man. That is my estimation of you. There is no need for you to live under guilt. Don't keep talking about your sin, your unworthiness. The sin problem is settled. Now, come boldly into my presence and partake of my mercy and grace. I delight in you!"

But the prodigal wasn't happy in his father's presence. He must have thought, "Shouldn't I be severely disciplined? What can I do to make this up? I need to feel consequences, to feel your rod on my back. I have to prove I've changed."

He had a mindset of condemnation, and it was put on him by Satan. Today, the same thing happens with many of God's children. Our Father rejoices over us, embracing us with loving arms. Yet we think humility means telling God how bad we've been, digging up our past sins rather than trusting his expressions of love. And all the while we think guiltily, "He has to be angry with me. I've sinned worse than others."

Like the prodigal, we need more than reconciliation — we need to be renewed. The prodigal needed what Paul calls the "renewing of the mind." I love reading these words from the parable: "But the father said, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet...bring out the fatted calf, and kill it; let us eat and be merry" (Luke 15:22-23).

At that point, the father's servants brought forth the best robe in the house. As they put it on the son, this represents his being clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Then the father put a ring on the boy's finger, signifying his union with Christ. Finally, he put shoes on the boy's feet, representing being shod with the gospel of the peace of Christ. This loving father was showing his child:

"Away with those rags of flesh, those shreds of self effort to please me. Let me show you how I see you, what my estimation of you is. You are coming into my house and into my presence as a new, kingly, royal child. You're coming not as a beggar or a slave, but as my son, who delights me! Now, enter in with boldness and assurance."

The same is true for us today. We have to be renewed in our thinking about how God receives us into his presence. I return to the verse at the opening of this message: "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*" (Hebrews 10:19-20, 22, my italics).

The word for "boldness" here is derived from a root meaning "an emancipated slave." It means no

longer being under the law of sin and death, but under the rule of grace. In short, it is by the love of the Father — by his mercy alone — that we are qualified to go into his presence. And here is the qualification: “Giving thanks unto the Father, *who has made us meet* [qualified] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:12–13, my italics).

We simply cannot qualify ourselves to be fit for God’s presence. We can pray and read the Bible till we faint, we can promise God that we’ll do better. But no works of flesh will ever qualify us for his presence. We bring absolutely nothing to God that is worthy of his delight. It comes by his grace alone.

The son is now reconciled, renewed and qualified. Now the feast was being prepared to celebrate the prodigal’s return to his father’s house. And the father announced, “It is necessary that we should go into the house and make merry.” Beloved, the same applies to us today: it is *necessary* that we go into the Father’s presence, without guilt and condemnation, and be glad!

The father’s statement here reveals his sheer delight that his child was “at home” once more, in a house of love, peace and joy. The father states, in essence, “It was necessary to me that my child came into my home, my presence, my place. That is my delight.”

Now picture the son entering the threshold of that house. What is his posture as he goes in? He cannot please his father if he sits in a corner dejected, replaying his sins and regretting all the wasted years. He can’t sit in the presence of such amazing grace and still be ruled by fears of condemnation, of exposure, of being judged if he slips up and sins again. Such an attitude would wound his father’s heart.

Scripture tells us what happened next: “Let us be merry...and they began to be merry” (Luke 15:23–24). I tell you, unrestrained joy broke out in that house, with singing, dancing and celebrating. And it was all because *the delight of the Father was there*. That boy was able to march right in without guilt or condemnation, because he knew the Father was at peace with him.

I ask you: what can make me rejoice and be glad in the Father’s presence? What can set my heart free in his fellowship? What can free me to be merry with my Father? It is not just the knowledge that I am safe...not just that the cross has given me access to the Father...not just that there is relief for my soul. Rather, *it is to see, by faith, the Lord’s delight in me!* It is to behold his rejoicing over me, to see that he is pleased with me. It is to know that, in his eyes, there is no stain of sin on me, and that he sees me as worthy and a delight to him.

Beloved, this is the real issue at the heart of this parable. It has less to do with the coming home of the son, and more so with the delight of the Father! That dad was fully focused on the company of his child, his fellowship, his oneness with him. And so it is with us: our presence in the Father’s house is his joy and delight. I remind you of the Father’s words at Jesus’ baptism: “This is my beloved Son, in

whom I delight, in whom I have great pleasure.” Just as God delights in his Son, he delights in you — because you are in his Son!

I often wonder why so many believers today — including those in ministry — are so downcast and discouraged. Why do so many lack true joy and rest? I’m convinced that for many it is because they have a hard time seeing themselves as God sees them. Lasting peace and joy come only when we believe, deep down, we are who God says we are. And his Word says, “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).

Imagine how tragic it would have been — how demeaning to the Father’s love — if the prodigal had entered his father’s house joyfully, only to be overcome with old fears: “This is too good to be true. What if my dad changes his mind? What if I fall tomorrow?” No! He had to resist those thoughts. And he had to place his eyes instead on the visible delight his father had in him at that very moment.

I know a pastor who recently took a fall back into an old drug addiction from his past. This man was immediately surrounded by a group of “Job’s comforters,” ministers and elders who insisted that he relive the details of his sin so that they might “restore” him. I tell you, that kind of thing never accomplishes God’s work of restoration. Guilt, condemnation, works of flesh — none of these things can ever bring anybody back to the Father’s love.

The fact is, this pastor has already repented. He has cried in anguish, “I have sinned against God, against my family, against my congregation.” There have been consequences already. Right now, what this man needs to know is that the Father is right there to embrace him — to kiss him, welcome him home and say, “I delight in you. You have come to the victory of the cross. You are my beloved son, and you are learning Christ.”

None of this will make any sense to us until we surrender our lives to the power of God’s Word. As followers of Christ, we are to take God at his Word and accept as true what he says we are. This means our “old man” represents a man who still seeks to please God in the flesh. Such a man hates sin, he doesn’t want to offend God, and yet his conscience continually brings him under guilt. So he pledges to overcome his sin problem: “I’m going to change! I’ll start today to fight my besetting sin, no matter what the cost. I want God to see how hard I’m trying.”

Such a man brings to the Lord much sweat and many tears. He prays and fasts to prove to God that he has a good heart. He’s able to resist sin for days at a time, and so he tells himself: “If I can do this for one day, why not two? And if I can go for two days, then why not four, why not a week?” By the end of a month he feels good about himself, convinced he’s working himself free.

But then his old sin surfaces, and down he goes, deep into despair. And that starts the cycle all over again. Such a man is on a treadmill that will never end, one he can’t get off.

May it never be! His man-in-flesh was crucified along with Christ, killed in the eyes of God. Indeed,

Paul tells us that the old man was pronounced dead at the cross. Jesus took that old man into the grave with him, where he was left for dead and forgotten. Just as the prodigal's father ignored the "old man" in his son, the Lord says of our old man: "I won't recognize or deal with such a one. There is only one man I recognize now, one with whom I'll deal. That is my Son, Jesus, and all who are in him by faith."

So, who is the "new man"? The new man is the one who has given up all hope of pleasing God by any effort of the flesh. He has died to the old ways of flesh. And by faith he has come to know there is only one way to please God, one way to delight him: *Christ must become all*. He knows that there is but One whom the Father recognizes: Christ and all who are in him.

This new man lives by faith alone: "The just shall live by faith." He believes God's Word so completely he leans on nothing else. He has found his source of everything in Christ, who is all sufficient. And he believes what God says of him: "Your old man is dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." He may not feel it, or comprehend it fully, but he won't argue with his loving Father's Word. He accepts it on faith, believing the Lord is faithful to his Word.

Now the Father is in full delight! And he declares, "This is my beloved Son in whom I delight. You are his body, and he is your headship. So I delight in you also. All that I have given my Son, I give to you. His fullness is yours."

This is a picture of having boldness to enter his presence!

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