
Binding God to His Own Word

By David Wilkerson

April 9, 2007 The Lord rules over all of creation with majesty and power. His laws govern the whole universe — all of nature, every nation and all the affairs of men. He rules over the seas, the planets, the heavenly bodies and all their movements. The Bible tells us:

“He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations” (Psalm 66:7). “The Lord reigns, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength...Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting...Thy testimonies are very sure” (93:1–2, 5).

These Psalms were written by David, who is testifying, in essence: “Lord, your testimonies — your laws, decrees and words — are irrevocable. They are utterly reliable.” The author of Hebrews echoes this, declaring that God’s Living Word is eternal and unchangeable: “the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Think about it: there are laws operating in the universe that govern how things work, without exception. Consider the laws that rule the movements of the sun, moon, stars and earth. These heavenly bodies were all put into place when God spoke a word, and since that time they have been ruled by laws that God also spoke into being.

We’re told throughout the New Testament that this great God is our Father and that he takes pity on his children. Hebrews tells us the Lord is touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and that he hears our every cry and bottles every tear. Yet we’re also told that he is the righteous King who judges by his law. And his Word is his constitution, containing all of his legal decrees, by which he rules justly. Everything in existence is judged by his immutable Word.

Simply put, we can hold the Bible in our hands and know, “This book tells me who God is. It describes his attributes, nature, promises and judgments. It is his rule of law, from his own mouth, by which he rules and reigns. And it is a Word *to which he has bound himself.*”

God does not rule by pity or feelings, any more than an earthly judge decides cases by human sympathy. Every earthly judge swears to determine a case before him according to the established law. He is not to rely on his own feelings or judgment, but issues rulings that are guided by the constitution of the land.

Likewise, God rules and judges everything before him according to the *eternal law* — that is, his own established Word. When the Lord makes a ruling, he speaks by his living Word, a Word to which he has bound himself.

We know that our Father is also King and Judge and has given us unlimited access to his court. And he has invited us to draw nigh to him, which we’re to do by prayer. There are many definitions of prayer, and many books and instructions on how to pray, but in the simplest terms prayer means *to come into God’s presence where he is.*

In short, it is by prayer that we go to God’s throne of grace, where he is seated. And there, in his presence, we are to make our requests known to him. Paul urges us, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests [petitions] be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

I often hear Christians say, “I don’t really ask God for much. I pray only for his will in my life, for his plan to be brought about on the earth. I don’t ask him for what he can give me. I seek him only for himself, not for his gifts.”

I have said these same things at times because I thought such an attitude is holy, but in truth it is not. Think of it: the all-knowing, all-powerful God of creation has given us his personal invitation to “come boldly to his throne.” And once we’re there, he invites us to ask of him, to make requests of him, to make our needs known before him. Consider these verses:

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Ephesians 3:12). These verses speak of coming to God boldly with our pressing needs, which pleases him.

Make no mistake: I enjoy my prayer walks with the Lord, when I simply worship. These are quiet times when I can be alone with him, and the Holy Spirit sighs and groans in me. At such times, I’m able to commune with the Father from my innermost being.

Yet there comes a time when the conditions of our lives become so critical that another kind of praying is necessary. When situations overwhelm us — when our needs seem impossible to meet, when discouragement casts us down, when sickness, financial troubles, fears or family problems weigh upon us — we must come boldly to the Father.

In such times, our needs will not be met by anemic, half-hearted prayer that gives up after a day or two. During these times, the true, unchanging Word of God exhorts us, “Come to the Father’s throne, and do so boldly. The door is open to you. Come with confidence that he will keep his Word.”

The subject of boldness in prayer is a crucial one. When God tells us to come to his throne boldly, with confidence, it is not a suggestion. It’s his preference, and it is to be heeded. So, where do we obtain this boldness, this access-with-confidence, for prayer?

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). The word “effectual” here comes from a Greek root word that means “a fixed position.” It suggests an unmovable, unshakeable mindset. Likewise, “fervency” speaks of a boldness built on solid evidence, absolute proof that supports your petition. Together, these two words — “effectual fervency” — mean coming into God’s court fully convinced that you have a well-prepared case. It is beyond emotions, loudness, pumped-up enthusiasm.

Such prayer can only come from a servant who searches God’s Word and is fully persuaded that the Lord is bound to honor it. Indeed, it is important that none of us goes into God’s presence without bringing his Word with us. The Lord wants us to bring his promises, remind him of them, bind him to them — and stand on them.

We see this demonstrated in Acts 10, when Peter was given a vision. God told the apostle, “Some men are coming to your door, and they will ask you to go with them. I have sent these men, Peter, so I want you to go with them, doubting nothing.”

What does this passage tell us? It says that when God has declared something to be true, we are to believe and stand on it, without consulting our flesh. We simply cannot measure the reliability of

God's Word by examining our situation or our worthiness. If we do, we'll end up only seeing that we're unworthy. And we'll talk ourselves out of claiming his Word and appropriating it.

Moreover, we have been given help to approach God's throne of grace. The Bible says we are petitioners at his throne, and that Christ is there as our intercessor or advocate. By his shed blood on the Cross, Jesus has opened the door to the Father's throne for us. It is by him that we have access to personally bring our requests to God.

We also have the Holy Ghost standing beside us in the Father's court. The Spirit is our "paraclete," one who serves as our advisor. He stands by us to remind us of the eternal decrees and divine constitution that make up God's Word.

And so we have these incredible promises — of an advocate and an advisor, standing beside us — to give us boldness and assurance in coming to God's throne.

Boldness in prayer comes from having a knowledge of something called "binding precedent." If you can grasp this truth, it will forever change the way you pray.

A precedent is a "preceding case" that serves as an example in subsequent cases. And "binding precedent" is a legal decision made in the past that becomes an authoritative rule for similar cases in the future. For judges, this means having to stand by a decision that has already been made.

Good lawyers regularly rely on "binding precedent" for their cases, because they know a precedent will stand up in court. So they search their law books to find favorable cases from the past that can fortify their arguments in court. They also seek out the counsel of skilled legal advisors, who point out precedent decisions that pertain to their own case.

All through the Bible, we find holy men and women who seek out this kind of "binding precedent." They come into the Lord's presence to make a request, and they bind him to his Word. These bold saints don't just show up unprepared; they come carrying, as it were, a "spiritual briefcase" loaded with precedents of how God answered his people's prayers in times past. They remind him of all the promises he made, and point out case after case of how he fulfilled his Word to those in similar need.

I ask you: how does someone obtain the confidence to enter God's presence boldly and make such a request? He does it by preparing, by going to God's Word to find precedent cases. Such a servant doesn't enter God's court nonchalantly, but with an airtight history of example after example when the Lord bound himself to his Word.

Now let me ask you: who knows God's decrees and immutable laws better than the Holy Spirit? It is the Spirit who takes each of us into God's Word, shows us the Lord's dealings in history, and prepares us with case histories that build our confidence. Indeed, this is how we obtain boldness for prayer: by knowing and standing on God's promises and past mercies, and laying claim on them in our present case.

1. Consider Moses' example.

I take you to Exodus 32, when God told Moses he was going to consume Israel for their brazen worship of the golden calf. Moses responded by immediately fasting, falling on his face and pleading his case. But there was more to be done. He would bind God to the promises he had made to

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Moses stood on pledges that God had made years before — covenant promises, unbreakable pledges to bless, protect, and answer Israel's prayers "for you, your children, and your children's children." Moses now reminded him, "Wait a minute, Lord, you made a promise to Israel. You said these people are your seed, and that your seed would endure forever. If you consume Israel, you'll go against your own Word."

God answered Moses, "Let me alone. I'm going to raise up a new generation for you." But Moses held to God's precedent promises: "No, Lord, this is your own Word, which you declared to your people. This is what you promised." At that point, "The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people" (Exodus 32:14). Moses had stood firmly on "binding precedent," and God honored it.

2. Consider the example of King Jehoshaphat.

When Jehoshaphat ruled over Judah, he faced an invasion by a massive army. The nation trembled helplessly before this mighty force. So Jehoshaphat "set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah" (2 Chronicles 20:3). The people prayed, fasted, interceded and repented — *yet there was more to be done*. The king remembered God's "precedent mercies," and he brought them up before the Lord:

"O Lord God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? Do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the heathen? In your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand you?" (20:6). Jehoshaphat was binding God to his past mercies: "Are you not our God who did drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and gave it to the seed of Abraham, your friend forever?" (20:7).

Jehoshaphat now reminded God, "Lord, we are that seed! You gave your people an eternal word, and I bring it before you now. The promises you made to Abraham and our fathers are still binding on you, to fulfill for us, the promised seed." Of course, God answered Jehoshaphat, and Judah's enemy was defeated. God was bound to his own Word.

3. Consider King David's example.

David would have made an effective lawyer in any believer's court. He regularly came before God's throne with petitions, binding the Lord to his Word with precedent cases of the mercy he had shown. David wrote, for example:

"God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers told us, what work you did in their days, in times of old, how you drove out the heathen, and planted them" (Psalm 44:1-2). David reasoned, "That past deliverance wasn't achieved by Israel's strength. You brought it to pass, Lord, by the power of your hand. It was accomplished by your Word, because you favored your people."

The record showed clearly what God had done for his people in similar cases, in their times of dire need. So David made his petition with confidence, based on his knowledge of these past mercies. He boldly said, "Lord, here is how you ruled back then. Now, I'm asking you to command your deliverance for us again. Do it for us today, God! It's time for your people to have victory over their enemies."

Psalm 74 sums up each of these examples, instructing us today: "Honor your covenant...Arise and

plead your own cause...Forget not your word" (74:20–23).

Nehemiah 9 contains one of the clearest examples of bringing “precedents of mercy” to God’s throne. Reading the example in Nehemiah 9 is like opening the pages of God’s Law book and reading, “The Case of Nehemiah and the Elders of Israel.” We are even given the date — the twenty-fourth day of the month Tishri — and according to histories, it took place sometime around 445 B.C.

As the scene opens, Israel has gathered to fast, pray and confess their sins. The nation was in trouble, and they greatly needed God’s mercy, protection and forgiveness. So the priestly Levites led the people in prayer, “(crying) with a loud voice unto the Lord their God.” This was no casual gathering, with aimless, unfocused prayer. These godly, repentant Levites had fasted and prayed for more than a day. But again, there was more to be done than praying and fasting. They must bind God to his Word, bringing up his past dealings with Israel. They pled their precedent case as follows:

“Lord, you heard our fathers’ cries in Egypt. You opened the Red Sea for them and led them safely through. Then you miraculously led them through the desert, with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. You fed them with bread from heaven and gave them water from a rock. Indeed, you showed our fathers great mercy. But they acted proudly, hardening themselves and disobeying your Word. Yet you are a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and you forsook them not” (see Nehemiah 9:17).

The Levites then began a long litany of Israel’s sinfulness and the mercies God showed them in each case:

“Our fathers made a golden calf and worshipped it. Yet, in your manifold mercies, you didn’t forsake them. Instead, you forgave them and sent your Spirit to guide them. You sustained them, and they ate, were filled and grew fat. But once again they backslid. They killed the prophets you sent to bring the people back to you. Finally, you had to deliver them into the hand of their enemies, where they became a troubled people.

“Once again, they cried for mercy. And, according to your manifold mercies, you delivered and saved them once more. But after you gave them rest, they once again did evil. Again they suffered and cried out to you — and again you heard their cry. Time after time you delivered them according to your mercies. In spite of all their failings, all their persistent backslidings, you heard every cry of their heart. And you never withheld your mercies from them.”

When the Levites finished this lengthy list of “precedent actions” by God, they prayed boldly: “Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty...who keeps covenant and mercy, do not let our trouble seem little before you, for you are our gracious and merciful God” (Nehemiah 9:31, 32). The Levites bound God to his Word. They were confident in asking him for mercy, because they had a historical knowledge of his forgiving, tender mercies: “Many times you delivered them according to your mercies” (9:28).

These examples should encourage any downcast believer who thinks he is beyond experiencing God’s mercies. A pastor confessed to me recently, “Brother David, I have taken a heavy fall into sin. I don’t see how I can ever get back. I’ve sinned against such great light. How could God ever be merciful to me?”

The Bible tells us that the Lord is no respecter of persons. And because he doesn’t show favoritism —

because his promises never change, from generation to generation — we can ask him to show us the same mercies he has shown his people throughout history. A good precedent case was God's mercy on King Manasseh, who sinned worse than every king before him yet repented and was restored.

The Lord's mercies never fail, and his precedent examples of past mercies should provide each of us with bold assurance to bring our own requests to him. So, dear saint: when you fear you may have sinned too often against the Lord's mercy...when you think you've crossed a line, and God has given up on you...when you're discouraged, cast down by failure or by un-Christ-like behavior...when you wonder if God is putting you on a shelf, or withholding his love from you because of past sins — if you truly have a repentant heart, then lay hold of this truth: *GOD CHANGES NOT.*

Bind God to his Word. Write down every remembrance you have of what he has done for you in past years. Then go to Scripture and find other instances of his "mercy precedents" with his people. Bring these lists before the Lord and remind him: "God, you cannot deny your own Word. You are the same yesterday, today and forever."

I urge you, do not neglect doing this. Often we rush into God's presence making our requests passionately and zealously. But we wilt in our time of prayer, because we don't come to his throne prepared. We must have a fixed position when we come to God. True boldness doesn't begin with emotions; it begins when we are *fully persuaded*. And so we must build a case beforehand not just to present to God, but to fortify our own faith.

Today we have something that the Old Testament saints could only dream of. And that is *God's own Son seated at the right hand of our Father-Judge*. We know the Son, because he is our blood-covenant brother, by adoption. And we are able to claim our blood-tie to him whenever we stand before the Judge and bind him to his own arguments:

"Father, I have nothing to bring to you but your own Word. You decreed from the foundation of the world that your Son, Jesus, would die. And you promised that by his blood I would be cleansed, and by his stripes I would be healed.

"You also promised that I would be complete in Christ. You said you would keep me from falling, and that Jesus would be my intercessor. You promised that by faith in him, I would be fully accepted and adopted by you.

"Then you promised you would open your ears to my petitions. You promised to supply all my needs. And you told me to believe your prophets, who recorded in the Scriptures your promises to be merciful to me, always ready to forgive me.

"You promised you wouldn't allow me to carry any load that I couldn't bear. And you told me, 'All things work together for good to them that love me and are called by me.'

"Father, these are all your decrees. They are your very own promises. And you cannot deny your own words. You are the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and you are also my God. Oh, Lord, have mercy and grace on me now, in my hour of need. Amen!"

I truly believe that God is wonderfully blessed when we approach his throne with this kind of boldness, binding him to his own Word. It's as if he says to us, "Finally, you got it. You bless me!" □

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