
By This Time You Ought to Be Teachers

By David Wilkerson

January 19, 2009 Dearly Beloved:

MERCY AND GRACE TO ALL WHO BELIEVE!

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Those who have walked with the Lord for any length of time know that prayer is essential to spiritual life. Sadly, many Christians believe this as a doctrine and as the secret for their daily supply of strength to endure — yet they seldom “come to the throne” to obtain mercy and find grace to help them in their hour of need.

It is dangerous to neglect this “coming to God’s throne” to seek his help. We are told to enter boldly into his presence to ask for help, even though we may feel unworthy to enter his presence. Yet Scripture makes clear: We are made acceptable by faith in Christ’s atoning shed blood.

The godless have no place to turn in times of fear and great adversity. They have no anchor for the soul, no place to find help and peace. But as children of the Most High we are offered mercy and grace in every trial and affliction, if we will simply go to him in childlike faith and boldness. “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10).

Do you need a fresh touch from the Lord? Are you in need of strength to go on? Is your present trial truly a “time of need”? Then you need more grace! Grace is ALL YOU NEED — FOR YOUR NEED. Yet his grace — your continual supply of strength, mercy and help — must be obtained by faith. You are to go to prayer expecting “to find” both mercy and grace.

Psalm 138:3: “In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.” Isaiah 40:31: “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Psalm 57:2-3: “I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up.... God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.”

Some do not come to God’s throne because they think prayer must be audibly voiced. There is indeed a time to pray with uplifted voice, to cry aloud, but I find my most effective praying is silent. IT IS THE VOICE OF THE HEART. This heart praying, or heart crying, was exemplified by Hannah in the Old Testament. She prayed movingly yet never spoke a word (see 1 Samuel 1:13). You see, it is the Holy Spirit who carries our secret cries to the throne of God.

Beloved, do not carry your troubles and discouragements another day. Shut yourself in with the Lord and simply pour out your soul in quiet. There is no more powerful prayer than that of a broken, wounded soul who comes like a child to seek help from a loving Father.

David the Psalmist said the Lord “heard the voice of my weeping” (Psalm 6:8). Likewise, God’s throne is open to you all hours of the day and night. God hears, he answers, and he will hear your cry.

In Christ,
DAVID WILKERSON

DW:bbm 1.19.09

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Newsletter: By This Time You Ought to Be Teachers

January 19, 2009 The writer of Hebrews says to his readers, "By this time you ought to be teachers" (Hebrews 5:12, my paraphrase). These are strong, bold words. Who exactly is the writer addressing here? In short, who is he rebuking? The book of Hebrews shows us he is speaking to believers who have been well-schooled in biblical truth. In other words, those reading this letter had sat under powerful preaching by many anointed ministers. Consider all these Christians had been taught:

- They knew about Jesus' high priesthood and his intercession for them at God's throne. They knew also of his invitation to come boldly before the throne to find mercy and grace in their time of need. They had been taught that a supernatural rest was available to them, if they would mix faith with the holy Word they heard preached.

- They had been taught the Lord is touched with the feelings of their infirmities. And they knew Christ had been tempted in all points as they were, yet he remained without sin. Moreover, just as God sent angels to minister to Jesus in his time of need, the Lord would send angels to minister to them as well. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (1:14).

- They had been exhorted, "Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (3:6). And they had received clear warnings of how unbelief grieves the Holy Spirit: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (3:12).

All of this sound teaching is found in the first four chapters of Hebrews. Now, in chapter 5, the writer addresses those gathered:

"After all of this teaching, still you are dull of hearing. By this time, with all your Bible knowledge, you ought to be teachers. But it is clear you need someone to teach you the elementary principles of God all over again. You still need milk, when you ought to be feeding on meat" (see 5:11-12).

Think about what the writer is saying here. He's telling his readers, in short, "By now you should be steadfast examples to your children. Your faith should be unwavering. You should no longer be murmuring or complaining in your afflictions, but instead be willing partakers of Christ's sufferings. You ought not to be hot one moment and then suddenly cold when the enemy comes in like a flood."

I ask you, does this word apply to you? Think about all that has been learned by this present generation of Christians. How many sermons have we heard that challenge us to trust the Lord in all things? How many times have we heard God's incredible promises preached to us? How many

faith-stirring sermons have we taken in? How often have we been blessed by a message about God's faithfulness? And yet how often are we quickly deflated when a trial comes?

Multitudes in the church today are well taught, full of biblical truth, experienced sermon tasters. Indeed, it is us whom the writer of Hebrews is addressing in this letter. And he is telling us, "By this time you ought to be teachers by your example. But instead your faith still wavers in times of battle."

In Deuteronomy 11 we find Israel at the Jordan River about to cross over into the Promised Land. Before God's people went into Canaan, Moses called them together for a special message from the Lord. Remember, this wasn't the generation that was doomed to die in the wilderness for their acts of disobedience. Rather, this was the generation that followed those faithless ones. When their fathers crossed the Red Sea, these people were still young, ranging in age from infancy to twenty years old. Now many of them were over fifty years of age, and their own children comprised the third generation.

Moses began his exhortation to this "middle generation" with the following words: "Know you this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm" (Deuteronomy 11:2).

Moses made it clear: "The message I am about to speak to you is not directed to your children. It is not meant for those who haven't seen the miracles you've seen. It is not for those who haven't known the discipline of the Lord. It is not for the untested, those who haven't experienced God's awesome might in the midst of their trials.

"No, this message from the Lord is addressed to those of you who have been sorely tested. You have experienced God's discipline firsthand. You have come through many trials, you have witnessed great deliverances, you have seen God's amazing promises fulfilled." "Your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did" (11:7).

Why did the Lord want to drive home this message to that middle generation of Israelites? It was because *their children had never seen him do great works in their lifetime*. The third generation simply didn't know God as their parents did. And now the Lord was saying to the parents, in essence:

"Consider where you are now, on the edge of the Promised Land. Your scouts have reported there are giant enemies in the land, with high walls surrounding their cities. Do you get the picture? Your children are going to face new battles you have never faced. They're going to face temptations you never could have imagined. They are up against overwhelming trials. *And they are not battle-prepared the way you are.*

"Your children are going to need teachers because their faith has not been in the fire. *You* must become their teachers. In short, your lives and faith are to be examples to their generation. Indeed, I

have called you to become teachers to every generation to follow, all who will be insecure or ungrounded in their faith.”

“Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (11:18–19).

God was telling this middle generation, in so many words: “Here is your full-time calling as my servants. You are to be steadfast always, never wavering in your trust in me. In this way, your children will see my mighty hand at work in your life. They will be emboldened by the peace you have in the midst of your afflictions.”

I want to speak now to God’s people today, including every mature, Bible-trained servant of the Lord. Think of everything our generation has been taught. Over the years we who have known the Lord intimately have experienced many miracles. We have been blessed by his deliverances from great trials and temptations.

Decade after decade we have proven God faithful in the midst of dire circumstances. We have known him as our source of strength. We have been touched so often by Christ’s healing hand. We have known the comfort and guidance of God’s Spirit at all turns. We have great knowledge of the Lord’s many precious promises because we have seen him fulfill them to us faithfully over the years.

Do you see where I’m heading with this? *Yes, beloved, by now we ought to be teachers!*

Yet, the fact is, our preaching and experiences have not touched the youthful generation behind us. These young ones haven’t been enamored by the beauty of God’s Word because they haven’t heard it preached in purity. Instead, they have mostly been enticed into church with the lure of flesh-centered activities and entertainment. Once inside, the only gospel they hear is one that is easy, non-committal. And that easy message has totally failed them.

I know there are a few churches reaching young people in significant numbers. But by and large the upcoming generation has not known, seen or experienced God’s miracle-working power. Tell me, to whom can they turn? To me, their plight is captured in a headline in the *Wall Street Journal*: “The World Has Lost All Trust.”

The prophet Isaiah spoke of a coming day when the world would be “eating the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction” (Isaiah 30:20). Isaiah predicted that out of this adversity and affliction a cry would arise. And when God hears that cry, he “will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee” (30:19).

What a tremendous promise: When God hears his people crying out of adversity, he will answer

them. How will he do this?

“Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, *yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers*: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (30:20–21).

Do you see what Isaiah is telling us? In the midst of a calamitous time, a cry is going to mount up to heaven. And once that cry reaches God’s ears he will send forth an unseen, unknown army of teachers to guide us. These ministers will be raised up during the hardest of times, when there is so much chaos and affliction, so many floods and fears, and everything seems too much to bear. That is the moment when God’s people will need his teachers most.

Who are these unsung ministers to come forth? These are the teachers Moses speaks of, the ones mentioned by the writer of Hebrews. Paul also speaks of them, calling them “living epistles.” Just as Isaiah declared, these teachers will no longer be hidden but will emerge to be seen by all.

Such teachers may have never stood in a pulpit to speak. They may have never taught a class or even a home Bible study. In fact, they may not have any speaking abilities at all. What they will have is a battle-won faith that has endured every trial and affliction.

Right now, many of these teachers are knee-deep in sufferings of their own. Some face adversity twenty-four hours a day, enduring awful pain and trials that are never-ending. But these servants are overcomers. Out of situations darkened by gloom and despair, they are emerging with a powerful faith. How is this possible? Daily these servants overcome the enemy by their faith, mixing it with the promises in God’s Word.

These people could write a book about what they have endured. And through it all they have not given in to panic. Instead, they continue moving forward with an abiding hope, their confidence in the Lord growing ever stronger. Consider the following powerful examples:

- One teacher is a devoted woman of God undergoing a grinding trial. Daily she has the desperate task of caring for both a mentally challenged son and an elderly mother-in-law with dementia. This woman has to be on guard around the clock because either of the two might run away or burn down the house. She tells of how weary she becomes at times, wondering if she can make it through another day.

What it all boils down to daily for her is simple: *She prays*. This woman knows firsthand how to go boldly to God’s throne of grace to find mercy in her time of need. She writes of receiving great infusions of strength and comfort from the Holy Spirit. And now, by her example, she is teaching others how to overcome in the midst of adversity.

- I know of a godly pastor who is awaiting a heart transplant. Because of this man's condition he no longer is physically able to preach. He has no job or any assured income and his heart medicine is very expensive. In terms of his health he is a walking time bomb.

Yet this pastor is one of the hidden teachers the Lord is bringing forth for all to see. He once suffered in obscurity but now he is an example to all those around him. Over time, worried family members have had their faith ignited as they've seen his trust in the Lord grow day after day. I learned of him from a couple in ministry who knows him and has witnessed his unwavering faith.

At times this precious man feels he has no ministry. But in truth he is teaching unknown multitudes who need to know of God's faithfulness in the midst of adversity.

You also are one of God's living epistles, known and read by those around you. Dear saint, I have a question for you: What is your life saying to those around you? How does the book of your life read?

I thrill at the many testimonies now pouring into our office. We read stories about servants who are filled with hope despite job loss, who have peace in spite of physical sickness, who have courage in the face of endless suffering. And they all have this in common: *They pray*.

These are teachers, living epistles, God's love letters to a hopeless world. And they have become so by being in constant communion with the Lord through every trial and struggle. They wholly trust Jesus to renew their strength to go on. They depend completely on the Holy Spirit for direction. And they continually go to God's throne for grace in their time of need.

I ask you: Are you a teacher in hard times, ministering to others by your example? It is impossible to keep faith without boldly going to the throne in prayer for all you need. I urge you, go to the Lord daily for all the mercy you need. He is calling you forth as one of his teachers!

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