



Entering the Throne Room Hebrews 4:14-16

Heb 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. 16 (C) Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

TITLE SLIDE

We are fortunate enough (or if you are a republican, unfortunate enough) to have a monarch as head of state, Queen Elizabeth II. One of the most enduring symbols of royal power is the throne. In fact the Queen has a number of thrones, depending on where she is. This is one in Buckingham Palace (I think!) but one of the best known thrones she sits on is this one in the HOUSE OF LORDS when she presides over Parliament.

The throne has been a royal symbol right back into antiquity as a symbol of royal power and authority. This EGYPTIAN THRONE belonged to Tutankhamen and to indicate his royal grandeur, it was made out of gold. Not to be beaten, thrones have also been symbols in some denominations too. Here is a PAPAL THRONE. When people got rid of monarchs the throne endured as a symbol of authority - the chair.

TITLE

Let's go back to the throne in the HOUSE OF LORDS because it is an important symbol of who the Queen is.

IT IS A SYMBOL OF THE MONARCH'S AUTHORITY When the Queen is seated on the throne it is a sign that she is in charge and everything is being done for the benefit of the Crown and in her name. The people that serve there have all pledged allegiance to her. IN past times, people had to pay homage to the monarch and pledge fealty to him or her. We still bow to the monarch today.

IT IS A SYMBOL OF THE MONARCH'S POWER In the olden days, the monarch literally made laws, gave orders etc. from the throne. The Queen only symbolically does that when she opens Parliament but the throne is symbol of the monarch's right and authority to make laws which govern her subjects

IT IS A SYMBOL OF THE MONARCH'S JUSTICE Once upon a time the monarch did mete out justice to people from the throne. Unbelievably people can still opt to have their cases heard by the king in Saudi Arabia. She doesn't do that any more but until recently, the House of Lords was our most supreme court and cases were heard in the chamber where in theory the Queen could go along and preside.

And in the throne room, people were expected to behave in a certain way.

SLIDE

- people bow in submission

- justice is meted out to wrongdoers
- treaties and alliances are made there
- only the privileged get to remain there

You know what these are. You have to bow in respect and submission. In times past, enemies and criminals were brought before the throne for justice to be meted out on them. The only people that were allowed to be there with the monarch were his court – those who were privileged to remain there. If any unworthy person was found there, they were punished. Of course, there were those who did find favour with the king and then those became the king's friends and he would make a treaty with them.

The throne was a place in medieval times that was feared. God is a monarch more in the style of great kings and emperors than a constitutional monarch. He is a righteous God, who cannot those who rebel against Him and will mete out justice towards them if they end up before His throne. Look at Revelation 20:11 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.* That's a view of God we often don't like to discuss. It's chilling isn't it.

But it is the reality of God. He is a righteous God. All have sinned and come short of God's glory. He does not leave the guilty unpunished. People never get away with it. There will be a reckoning and that's what Revelation is about.

So is being before God's throne SOMETHING TO BE FEARED? If you're not a Christian then the answer is yes. But if we know Jesus as saviour and Lord then God's throne is something completely different. This is how the writer to the Hebrews put it. ***Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.***

People who were part of the king's court were never afraid to be there because the king had given them the privilege of being there. If you are following Jesus this morning, then you have confidence to come before God's throne and find help not horror!

How come? WE HAVE FOUND SOMEONE WHO HAS MADE US WORTHY TO ENTER THE THRONE ROOM. For us, the throne of God is a throne of grace – somewhere we have God's unmerited favour. As we look at the table this morning we see why. God loved us so much that He did not want His wrath to settle on any human being. So He sent His own Son to die for us. His body was broken and His blood shed that we could have the privilege of being in His presence as people He has made peace with. By His grace – His unmerited favour, He has determined to make a treaty - a covenant with each man and woman. And that covenant was made possible when Jesus had His body broken and blood shed. The only thing we have to do is accept that covenant, find forgiveness and follow Jesus.

WE HAVE A GOD WHO UNDERSTANDS US. The brilliant thing about all this is we have a God who understands us. How? Interestingly, when people found favour with the king, they were presented to court by someone of particular favour who spoke about their worthiness to be there to the king. How do people get to be in God's presence? They need to be presented by someone worthy to be there. In the olden days that was done by priests. The letter to the Hebrews was written to help Hebrew – Jewish – people to understand that human priests did a less than perfect job in being able to bring people before God and that ordinary people couldn't really get into the holiest place as it were and come before God's throne.

But Jesus is our Great High Priest. His shed blood is enough sufficient for us to be confident to enter God's presence and find favour, not wrath. Better still, Jesus is the guy who brings us into court and He presents us to God on the basis of His credentials, not ours. Because He has been to our world and gone through all the weaknesses of life, we know that when we come before God confessing our sins, God knows all about it and helps us to be the people He wants us to be, rather

than condemns us.

But there's more.... WE DON'T JUST FIND OURSELF WORTHY TO GO TO GOD'S PLACE... He has determined TO COME TO OURS. That designated place is here - At the Lord's table And the designated time is as often as we like. Monarchs rarely leave their palaces and visit someone in their own homes. But we have a God who desired to have a meal with us often. These symbols are a promise that Jesus is with us because He said he would be. The symbols show why that can be - because His body was broken and His blood shed for our sins.

Are you feeling weak and aware of your sin this morning? Are you racked with guilt? Do you feel in the wrong place before God? Come before Him in confession this morning, because you will find forgiveness and help in your time of need.

Perhaps you have realised that you're not worthy to be in God's presence at all because you don't know Him. If that's the case, come to Him this morning, confess your sin before Him, accept Jesus into your life, follow Him. God is prepared to show you favour, not because of what you have done but because of what Jesus has done. Come before his throne and find grace, find help, find God.

CONFESSION *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

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