

“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” (EPH 3:11-12).

God's children have one of the greatest privileges ever bestowed upon humankind. We have the right, the boldness and the freedom to break in on our Lord at any time.

Our Heavenly Father sits on a throne in eternity. And at His right hand sits His Son, our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus. Outside this throne room are gates, which open to all who are in Christ. At any time - day or night, around the clock - we can bypass guardian angels, seraphims and all the heavenly hosts to boldly enter these gates and approach our Father's throne. Christ has provided us with direct access to the Father, to receive all the mercy and grace we need, no matter what our circumstance.

This wasn't always the case. In the Old Testament, no person had access to the Father, with a few exceptions. For example, we know that Abraham enjoyed a measure of access to the Lord. This devout man was called a friend of God. He heard from the Lord, he talked to Him, he had communion with Him.

Yet even Abraham remained "outside the veil". Even though he was a friend of God, he never had access to the holy of holies, where God resided. The spiritual veil of separation had not yet been ripped in two.

At one point in Israel's history, God declared He would speak to the prophets through visions and dreams: *"...If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream."* (NUM 12:6).

Unrestricted Access To The Father

This was a very restricted access to God. Yet, again, there was an exception: Moses, the leader of Israel. God said of him, *"My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold..."* (NUM 12:7-8). Like Abraham, Moses talked to God, and God talked to Him. He spent forty days and nights in the Lord's presence, until his face shone. Clearly, Moses had a great measure of access.

But the rest of Israel knew nothing of this kind of access. The Lord said to them, *"(There) shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel..."* (EX 29:42-43).

No one was allowed to enter the holy of holies, where God's presence abode. Only the high priest was allowed to go in, on one day of the year, the Day of Atonement. Therefore, the people had to bring their sacrifices to the door of the tabernacle. They could peek through the door, but they couldn't behold anything fully. They could only wonder at the majesty of God's glory dwelling inside.

Again, this was a very restricted access. It was as if God were saying to them, "Come to my front door, and I'll meet you there. Then we can talk." They weren't invited

inside. The Lord spoke to them from the other side of the tabernacle door. Can you imagine trying to communicate with a close friend that way?

Inside the tabernacle, a veil separated the holy place from the holy of holies. As the high priest approached the veil, he must have trembled. It was an awesome, fearful thing to have access to God's glory. If you committed just one defilement in His presence, you'd be struck dead. God's holy presence could not abide sin of any kind.

What an awesome event the Day of Atonement must have been. On that day, all the children of Israel gathered around the door of the tabernacle. This was the same door where God had dealt out judgment to Miriam for questioning Moses' leadership, and to Dathan and Abiram for rising up against Moses.

Now the multitudes stood in awe as Aaron, the high priest, entered the mystical room to meet with Almighty God. They'd been given illustrations about what went on inside. But they were left to wonder, "What must it be like in there? Does the Lord have a visible form? Is His voice like the fear-inspiring one we heard at Mount Sinai? Is He kind and gentle, or is He frightening?"

Even David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, had restricted access to God. Scripture says he communed with God. He knew the Lord as his defender, refuge, keeper, and

strength. No one spoke more majestically or powerfully of God than this man did. Yet, even so, David didn't have the privilege of going into the most holy place. All through the Psalms, David speaks of yearning and panting after God. He cried out to get beyond the veil, to something he couldn't obtain: *"Deep calleth unto deep."* (PSALM 42:7).

Solomon also expresses this kind of unmet yearning to get to the Lord: *"My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved... I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone... I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer."* (SOS 5:4-6). Here is the language of divine longing: "I sought for him, I yearned for him, I wanted him. But I couldn't find him."

Israel Saw God as Dwelling In the Temple, in a Room Called the Most Holy Place.

Solomon built a majestic temple in Jerusalem to God's glory. When the structure was finished, *"...Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments... And they brought up the ark... unto his place."* (2.CHR 5:1,5,7). After everything was put in place, Solomon invited God to come and sanctify the most holy place with His presence. And God did, descending in a cloud and filling the temple.

Everyone in Israel believed God resided in the great temple in Jerusalem. Therefore, the Israelites directed all their prayers toward it. Solomon asked the Lord, *"If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name; Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause:"* (2.CHR 6:34-35).

Solomon was asking, "Lord, when our armies go to war against our enemies, hear them as they offer prayers toward you here, in your temple. Give them success in battle." They thought of God as not being on the battlefield, but in that holy room in Jerusalem. Moreover,

if Israel went into captivity, they were to *"...pray toward their land... and toward the house which I have built for thy name... Then hear thou from the heavens..."* (2.CHR 6:38-39). This is why Daniel opened his window in Babylon and prayed toward Jerusalem (SEE DANIEL 6:10). Today, the Jews still turn toward Jerusalem to pray. I was once on a plane when an Orthodox Jew put on his prayer shawl, stood in the aisle and prayed toward Jerusalem.

Yet, in spite of God's glory in the temple - in spite of visions and dreams given to prophets, in spite of visitations of angels - God's people remained outside the veil. The door to the holy place hadn't yet been opened. And access to Him was still restricted.

Jesus Brought With Him a Greater Measure of Access.

Christ's life in human flesh provided greater access to the Father. Yet even then, access was still very restricted. When Jesus came to the world as a babe, only a few people were present, a handful of shepherds and wise men. The rest of humankind was oblivious to Him coming. Back at the temple in Jerusalem, the priests were going about their duties and the people were saying prayers, all following their usual routines.

When Jesus was a young boy, a few people saw Him in the temple. These were mostly priests and scribes who marveled at His knowledge of God's Word. But the general public didn't know about Him. Later, others met Him in the carpentry shop where He toiled. But who could believe Jesus was God in flesh, as He repaired their broken chairs? He was merely Joseph's son, a fine young man who knew a lot about God.

When Jesus began His ministry, He directed His words to a small population in a very small country - that is, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And because He could only be in one place at a time, access to Him was restricted by logistics.

If you wanted to get to Jesus, you had to go to Judah. So, if you lived outside of Israel, you had to travel for days or weeks by boat, camel or foot. Then you had to trace His presence to a village, find a crowd

there and ask them to locate Him. Or, if He'd just left town, you had to listen for rumors to find out where He was going. You might have to hire a boat to take you to the other side of a large lake, or walk all day and night to get to the wilderness where He was teaching the masses.

Once you found Jesus, you had to be physically close to hear His voice, receive His touch, be blessed by His holy presence. You could try to make your way through the crowd to get to Him, but everyone else wanted to be near Him, too.

This was a most restricted access. To get to the Lord, you had to be in the right place at the right time. Consider the blind man who heard Jesus passing by. When this man learned who it was, he cried out, "Jesus, heal me, that I may receive my sight." Only then did Christ restore him.

Or, consider the woman with the issue of blood. She had to push through a crowd to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. All the while, everybody else was trying to touch Him as well.

There was also the mother of Nain, who led a funeral procession to bury her dead son. When Jesus crossed her path, He touched the bier and raised the boy from the dead.

Or, think of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, in the sheep market. Many sick and afflicted people had gathered there to be healed. But this one man was in the right place at the right time. As Jesus passed by him, He healed him as well.

Often you had to calculate or plan ahead of time to get access to the Lord. Zaccheus did this, climbing a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus. Four other men solved a similar logistics problem, on behalf of a sick friend. When they located the crowded building where Christ was teaching, they opened a hole in the roof and lowered their friend right in front of Jesus' eyes.

Finally, in one sudden, glorious moment, Jesus provided total, unrestricted access to the Father. The Bible says that at Golgotha, on a Blood-stained cross, *"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice,*

yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom..." (MATT 27:50-51).

At the moment of Jesus' death, the veil in the temple in Jerusalem was literally ripped apart. That's the moment our destiny was sealed. In the instant that our Lord gave up the ghost, we were given total, unrestricted access to the holy of holies: *"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, that is to say, his flesh."* (HEB 10:19-20).

This tearing of the physical veil represented what took place in the spiritual world. Finally, we were able to enjoy something that generation after generation couldn't. We had a privilege even Abraham, Moses and David didn't have. We have access to the holy of holies, the very throne room of Almighty God. The door was no longer shut to us. Anyone could now see inside and walk in. Unrestricted access was made possible.

Moreover, at His death, Jesus became our high priest. He ascended to the New Jerusalem, to a temple not made with hands. There He took on the role of high priest. He walked right into the holy presence of God and, with the incense of His own intercessions, presented His Blood at the mercy seat. Then He sat down at the Father's right hand, with all power, might and glory.

At that point, Jesus claimed His covenant right to receive into one spiritual body all who would repent and receive Him as Lord. And He sent the Holy Spirit to issue a call to His children: "I have opened the door to the Father. You are now accepted simply by being in Me by faith. So, come boldly to the throne. I'll take you into the presence of My Father, who is now your Father. You have unrestricted access to Him, day and night."

Here is the Heartbreak, Pain And Sorrow of Jesus' Soul.

What is the greatest pain Christ's soul could ever experience? I believe it's that a generation that has received full, unrestricted access does not come to Him.

For centuries, God's people begged and pleaded to go through the veil. They yearned and longed to see the blessing of our day. The access we now enjoy is the very access Moses yearned for. It's the same access David's heart could see but couldn't obtain. It's the access Daniel never had, though he prayed to the Lord three times a day. Our forefathers saw this access happening in our day, and they rejoiced for us.

Yet we who have been given the right to this wonderful gift take it for granted. The door has been opened for us, yet we refuse to enter for days and weeks at a time. What a crime! Every time we ignore the access Jesus bought for us, casually walking past the door, we take His Blood lightly. Our Lord told us we had all the resources we needed if we would only come to Him. Yet we continue to snub His costly gift.

Scripture admonishes us, *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith... Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"* (HEB 10:22-23). This passage clearly speaks of prayer. God is urging us, "Come into my presence often, daily. You can't maintain your faith if you're not drawing near to me. If you don't boldly enter my presence, your faith is going to waver."

You may know Christians who were once on fire for Jesus. They were always making quality time for the Lord, searching His Word and shutting themselves in with Him. They knew to draw to Him to keep their faith alive.

Yet now these same Christians merely "think" their prayers. Or, they rush into God's presence for a few minutes, just to say, "Hello, Lord. Bless you. Please, guide me today. I love you, Jesus. Goodbye." Their seeking heart is gone. The unhurried communion they once enjoyed is no more. When you ask them about their abandoned prayer life, they claim to be "resting on faith".

I tell you, prayerless people soon become faithless people. The more they forsake the gift of access, refusing to draw on God's provisions, the more they drift away.

Jesus Grieved Over Jerusalem Before He Ascended to Heaven.

When Jesus walked the earth, He made Himself accessible to the population. He taught in synagogues, on hillsides, on boats. He healed the sick, performed wonders and miracles. He lifted His voice at the feasts, crying, "I am the living water. Come to me, and I'll satisfy your thirsty soul." Anyone could draw near to Him and be satisfied.

But our Lord's invitation was mostly ignored. He cried over the people, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"* (MATT 23:37). He was saying to Israel, I'm here now, available to you. I've told you to come to Me for healing and to have your needs met. But you won't come."

How did Jesus respond to the people's rejection of Him? He declared, *"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."* (MATT 23:38). The word Jesus uses for desolate here signifies loneliness, unfruitfulness, waste. He said, "Your church life, your household, your spiritual walk - they're all going to dry up and die."

Think about it. If parents don't seek God daily, their children certainly won't. Instead, their home will be filled with worldliness, spiritual barrenness, a loneliness beyond description. Eventually, that family will end up in total desolation.

Keep in mind, Jesus spoke these warnings in a day of grace. He added, *"...Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."* (MATT 23:39). The meaning here is, "I've given you all the access you need to live an overcoming life. But you've ignored my offer. I'm sorry, but your decision is going to bring desolation to your life and home. And you won't see me again until eternity."

When was the last time you came to God to find everything you needed for life? Were you in trouble, facing a crisis with your family, your job, your health? There's nothing wrong with appropriating

access to God in times of severe need. Isaiah writes, **"LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them."** (ISA 26:16). The Psalmist testifies, **"I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble."** (PSALM 142:1-2).

Our Lord is a Father who cares deeply about all His children's troubles. Whenever we face hard times, He urges us to draw near, saying, "Come, pour out all your troubles, needs and complaints to Me. I'll hear your cry and answer."

Yet, for many Christians, this is the only time they access the Father. I ask you - where is the panting after God that David describes, the deep thirsting to be in God's presence? Where is the daily ministry to Him, the pouring out of the heart in love and adoration?

Prayerless Christians Don't Realize the Danger They're In.

You may object, "So what if some Christians don't pray? They're still believers - blood-cleansed, forgiven and going to heaven. Where's the danger in growing a little lukewarm?"

I believe our Heavenly Father realizes we live in a busy age, with many demands on our time and energy. Christians are caught up in busyness and activities as much as anyone else. Yet I can't believe God takes lightly our rejection of His access, which cost His only Son His very life.

God has made Christ our strong tower. But only those who **"run in to it"** are safe (SEE PROVERBS 18:10). If you don't go in, then you're still outside the door. You stand where Israel stood. But God doesn't meet anyone at the door anymore. All the provision we need is inside: forgiveness of sin, mercy in time of need, power to overcome.

Imagine the pain of rejection felt by the Father and Son. I envision this conversation taking place between them:

"Son, you were beaten, mocked, crucified, buried. It so pained me, I shut my eyes at the sight. Yet you fulfilled the everlasting covenant. You provided acceptance and access for all who would trust in You. Because of You, a last days people would be able to come to me. And they would grow mighty in my strength, building reserves of faith against a devil who would tempt and try them as at no other time.

"Yet where are our beloved children? Monday passes, and we never see them. Tuesday arrives, and still no children. Wednesday comes, with no sight of them. Thursday, Friday and Saturday pass, yet still we don't see them. Only on Sunday do they approach us, while they're in church. Why don't they come? Don't they love us?"

God asked Adam the same question when he hid from the Lord in the garden of Eden: **"Adam, where art thou?"** (GEN 3:9). The Lord knew where Adam was all along. He was really asking Adam why he'd rejected His fellowship. And He was showing Adam that there was danger in hiding from His presence.

Indeed, Christians who don't appropriate access to the Father end up in a Sardis condition. The Lord instructed John, **"...unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God... I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."** (REV 3:1).

Jesus is saying, "You may be a good person, someone who'll do anything for anybody. You've got a good reputation among both the church and the world. You're known as being truly alive in Christ, blessed of God. But an element of death has crept into your life.

Something of the world has defiled you."

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments..." (REV 3:4). What is the defilement referred to here? It is prayerlessness. And here is Jesus' warning to us: **"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."** (REV 3:2).

The believers in Sardis hadn't been watching. They hadn't been in prayer, waiting on the Lord, seeking Him as they once had. Instead, they allowed themselves to grow careless, not coming to God daily for help. Now a defilement had been laid on them. The word Jesus uses for defiled here signifies a soil of sin, a black mark on a white garment. Christ is telling us, "If you don't pray, you have no defense against the enemy. Your negligence allows your garment to be stained."

Yet Jesus declares of a few, **"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."** (REV 3:4). He's saying, "You still have a small flame of desire for me. You don't want to lose my presence, to be given over to barrenness. Quickly now, stir up your hunger again. Go back to the secret closet of prayer, and call on me. Set your heart like a flint. Fan the flame of faith before it dies - before death sets into your soul, as it has with so many around you."

Don't ignore your great gift of access. Your eternal future depends on it. Pray and seek the Lord. He has provided you with access. And He promises to meet your every need.

By David Wilkerson
January 8, 2001

Copyright © 2001, World Challenge, Inc., P.O. Box 260, Lindale, Texas 75771.