

# Access to God



Hebrews 4:14-16 Phil 4:4-9 Luke 11:9-13

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Right before Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday, He cried out “**It is Finished!**<sup>1</sup>” the work of salvation is complete: Jesus has done everything needed for our forgiveness! One of the things that happened when Jesus died was that the curtain in the Temple in Jerusalem was torn in two.

50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom ...

Matthew 27:50-51a

That curtain separated the *holy place* from the *Holy of Holies*. The *Holy of Holies* signaled God’s presence on earth. No one was allowed in the *Holy of Holies* throughout the entire Old Testament times except the high priest *once a year* on the Day of Atonement. He would bring the blood of a sacrifice with him to make “**atonement**<sup>2</sup>” for the sins of the people. The curtain that hid the *Holy of Holies* reminded the people that their sin separated them from God.

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek word for “It is Finished” is *Tetelestai*, and in John 19:30, Jesus uses it in the perfect tense. The perfect tense indicates that the action has been done and its effect remains ongoing. Jesus’s sacrifice is complete, and its power and benefit remains in effect forever. [Theologically, the effect, power, and benefit of Jesus’s death is not only for those who follow Jesus, but also for those who came before Him!] He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world — regardless of *when* someone lives. He is the only sacrifice for our sins that God will accept. The Son of God is our Savior of ALL PEOPLE!

<sup>2</sup> “Atonement” is the major way that forgiveness is taught in the Old Testament. It is the idea that the blood of a sacrifice covers over your sins. God accepts that sacrifice (blood) as a substitute for the people. The sacrifice dies so that the people can live. EVERY single sacrifice in the Old Testament pointed forward to Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. The OT sacrifices were like foreshadows that point to Christ; His sacrifice has the power to forgive sins → ours today, and even those during the OT times.

When Jesus died on the cross, that Temple curtain was torn in two – it was split apart to show that the way to God's presence was now **OPEN** through the death of His Son! **The separation from God is finished!** Jesus is the sacrifice who **makes atonement** for your sins; His blood **covers over your sins** and they are remembered no more. Your sins have been dealt with, they no longer separate you from God. You are welcome in God's Presence. There is no curtain, nor anything else, that separates you from God! In Christ, you now have **direct and unlimited access** to the Father in Heaven!

This was all part of Jesus' work as your *Great High Priest*! Jesus, our *Great High Priest*, offered the sacrifice that God accepted on your behalf; His own blood -- shed on the cross -- **made atonement** for you – it covered over your sins. In His Resurrection and Ascension, Jesus was installed as your *Great High Priest* who now brings you into the very presence of God.

Let us then draw near to the **Throne of Grace** with confidence, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16

Because Jesus is your *Great High Priest* who has shed His blood for your sins, you can now **boldly approach God with confidence!** The curtain is torn down – you have *direct and unlimited access* to God!

The words that are used in this verse mean that you have *unrestricted and authorized access to God*. No one in the Old Testament times could ever approach God like you can now in these New Testament times<sup>3</sup>! You have *unrestricted, unlimited, direct and authorized access to God* every moment of every day of your life. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have been given access to the very **Throne of Grace** in Heaven above!

You can understand the **Throne of Grace** in two ways. The first is that it is the **throne of God Almighty**, the Maker of the heavens and the earth and everything in them. The Creator welcomes you into His presence; you know the Creator as your Father in Heaven! He knows every detail of your life and

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<sup>3</sup> This even includes even Abraham, Moses, and David! No High Priest, no Prophet, no Judge, and no King ever had this kind of unrestricted and direct access to God in the Old Testament! But YOU DO through faith in Christ! It is an unbelievable gift that God has given to you!

He cares about you as a Perfect Father! Remember how Martin Luther teaches it in the Small Catechism: *God would hereby tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him with all boldness and confidence, as children ask their dear father.* Your Father in Heaven welcomes you into His presence at anytime to talk about anything! When you think of the **Throne of Grace** as that of your Heavenly Father, the emphasis is on **His loving care** for you.

A second way to understand the **Throne of Grace** is that it is the **throne of the King of Heaven** who uses His mighty power to rule over all things for the benefit of His people. You are welcome in the presence of the King and can approach Him with any need at any time. He has promised to use His mighty power on your behalf and for your benefit: to bring joy to you, to answer prayer, and to make all things work for good in your life. You are welcomed in the presence of the King of Heaven! When you think of the **Throne of Grace** as that of the King of Heaven, the emphasis is on **His Mighty Power** at work in your life.

Because Jesus is your **Great High Priest** who has shed His blood for your sins, you can now boldly approach God with confidence! There is no fear: your sins are forgiven, your conscience is clean, and you belong to God. You have *unrestricted and unlimited access to your God and King in Heaven*<sup>4</sup>!

When you boldly approach God's **Throne of Grace**, He is there paying very careful attention to you. He hears your every word! He sees every tear; He understands every sigh; He knows every detail. Your **Heavenly Father**, with His **loving concern** for you; and the **King of Heaven** who uses His **mighty power** on your behalf, welcomes you into His presence and generously gives you grace, mercy, and the exact help you need!

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<sup>4</sup> You have the same access to the Father in Heaven as Jesus does! The word picture is that Jesus ushers you into the presence of God and to His Throne of Grace in Heaven. The image is that you are standing at the "right hand of God the Father in Heaven" along with Jesus! You have been given unrestricted, unlimited, and unparalleled access to God and you are invited to talk to Him boldly and bring your needs to Him. In this word picture, worship and prayer lifts you into heaven and into the very presence of God! Why not memorize Hebrew 4:16 and keep this word picture always in front of you?!

There are two places where this *unrestricted, unlimited, and unparalleled access to God* happens in our lives. It happens in **worship** and it happens in **prayer**.

In **worship**, we as a congregation approach God and His **Throne of Grace together**. **Worship is pictured** as an audience with the **King of Heaven**, your **Heavenly Father**, where He speaks His Word to us, and we hear, believe, and obey it. In worship our **God, King** and **Father** forgives our sins, cleanses our consciences with Living Water, gives us the Bread of Life to eat! In worship, our **God, King** and **Father** showers us with His mercy, grace, and Spirit so that we can live as His people. In response, we confess our faith, we sing His praises, we offer our prayers, we give our tithes and offerings, we love one another, and we confess the faith to our neighbor. As we **worship** here **on earth**, we approach our **God, King** and **Father** and His **Throne of Grace in Heaven** --- together as a congregation.

The second place where you experience this *unrestricted, unlimited, and unparalleled access to God* is in **prayer**. Prayer is not seen as God standing or sitting at your side here on earth listening to your prayer. Rather, prayer is pictured as you boldly and confidently approaching your **God, King** and **Father in Heaven!** You draw near to His **Throne of Grace** with confidence! Jesus ushers you into God's Heavenly Holy of Holies! In prayer, you can speak freely, and openly, with the Lord your God, knowing that He cares; that He loves you; and that He will use His mighty power on your behalf. **You are most welcome in His presence!**

In both **worship** and **prayer**, it is like Heaven and Earth overlap. As we stand here on earth, in worship or in prayer, we are also standing before the **Throne of Grace** in Heaven. *Through faith in Christ, you draw near to the Throne of Grace with confidence, to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**The separation with God is finished!** When Jesus died, the Temple curtain was torn into, indicating that you have *unrestricted, unlimited, and unparalleled access to God* in Heaven! Amen!

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Lord Jesus,  
when you cried out “it is finished,”  
one of the things that happened  
was that the Temple curtain was torn in two.  
We thank you that you have opened the way  
to God the Father for us,  
and that you usher us into His presence  
and His throne of grace.  
Help us to understand the magnitude  
of this gift You have given to us.  
Help us to be bold in asking our Father  
for grace, mercy, and help  
in our time of need.  
Amen

# Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

# Philippians 4:4-9

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

# Luke 11:9-13

Jesus said, "And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"