

Craig Groeschel: Hey, it's great to have you with us for another week on the LifeChurch podcast. My name is Craig Groeschel. I'm the pastor of LifeChurch. If you're new with us what you'll normally hear is you'll normally hear the weekend messages that are rebroadcast, but we're actually not allowed to do that for a three week window. What I've been doing is sharing with you, just from my own personal devotional time, some thoughts that I was meditating on as I was reading through the book of Hebrews.

I was in Hebrews chapter 4 and I noticed that the writer three different times used the same kind of introductory invitation when he said, "Let us do this." Week number one, we talked about, "Let us do our best to enter God's special rest." Last we looked at the invitation when the writer to the Hebrews said, "Let us hold firmly to what we believe."

Today I want to look at the third one and that's from Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15 and 16 and this is what the text says: "This high priest understands our weaknesses. He faced all the same testings we do yet he did not sin." Verse 16, here's the "Let us." The author says, "Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. Then, we will receive His mercy and we will find grace to help us when we need it most." I love this. Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. We'll find mercy and find grace to help us when we need it most.

I love the descriptive words that we can come boldly, we can come confidently. Whenever I read that I always think of the story of when I was a kid and my dad was the assistant manager at JC Penney's store. There was this door that said "Employees Only" and I was like a little kid, 6, 7, 8 years old. I'd walk up to that door and I'd go in the "Employee's Only" door and go in the back stockroom like I owned the place. The reason is because my dad was in charge. I could come boldly into that room.

We have this invitation to come before the very throne room of God with that same sense of confidence, like our heavenly Dad says we can be here, and so we enter boldly. The author of the Hebrews-, to the Hebrews, is actually building this strong case all the way through Hebrews 4. He essentially is saying this: Because of the goodness of God through his Son Jesus, we can boldly, confidently, without reservation approach God in His very throne room.

I was trying to figure out how to illustrate this and I don't want this to come across wrong. I hope you know my heart, but I give you this example. Sometimes some people from our church, maybe from a different state or whatever, when they meet me they get a little bit nervous. I understand this because the first time I met my pastor years ago, I was like freaked out. This, you know the office of the pastor, I had so much respect for him and so I got a little bit nervous. It's always interesting to me, you know, I'm like, "I'm just a regular guy. Why would you be nervous?" But here's what is kinda the point of this illustration is my kids never, ever get nervous around me. My kids, they run up, they jump into my lap. They'll tell me that I need to take a shower cause I stink or whatever. I mean, there's no reservation and no

fear with my children.

Why? Because I'm their dad. I'm their daddy, and this is how we can see God, that yes, we have a reverent and a holy fear of who He is but at the same time, He's our heavenly Daddy. He's our Abba. We can approach Him with the same confidence that any child would approach their earthly, loving father. We can go before our heavenly Father in that same way. Someone asked my youngest daughter one time, they said, "What's it like to be around pastor Craig all the time? What's it like to be around pastor Craig?" Joy said, "He may be your pastor, but he's my daddy." I love that and that's how we can look at God. He's our heavenly Father.

Now, so here's a thought. Because of what Jesus did, we're adopted into His family. Because of what He did for us, we are His children. He is our Father. He is our Abba Father. He's our heavenly Daddy. Why do we come before Him? What do we do when we come before His throne of grace? Two big thoughts. First of all, we're gonna pray and the second thing is, we're gonna enjoy His presence. We have the ability to pray and petition our God and we can enjoy His presence.

Let's talk about prayer for a minute. Years ago I taught this principle that what we pray about reflects what we believe about God. Think about that. What we pray about reflects what we believe about God. If we, you know, pray for big things we believe we have a big God. If we don't pray much at all, we really don't believe God is actively involved. What we pray about reflects what we believe about God.

Here's a question somebody posed one time that really got my attention. They asked this question, "What if everything that we prayed for last week God said "yes" to and answered this week?" What if everything that we prayed for, what would be different in the world if God answered every prayer you prayed for last week? What would be different in this world? A good question would be what would be different outside your world? In other words, you might have prayed for your family, your situation, your test. What would be different in the world? What we pray about reflects what we believe about God.

I'll be honest, for years I worried about a lot of different things. I agonized, but I rarely prayed. Here's what I can do. I can take whatever is a burden to me. I can take it before God. I can cast my cares upon God because He cares for me. I can take my burdens to God. I can petition Him with my requests. I have access to the heavenly throne room. I can go to my heavenly Daddy who loves to give good gifts to His children who ask Him. I can come boldly before the throne of grace and pray to my heavenly Father.

Then, I also need to recognize that I can be literally in his presence. Think about this. If you're a follower of Jesus we have access to the very presence of God. In his presence, we don't just petition Him. We don't just talk to Him, but we enjoy His presence and we listen to Him. Even though we have access to Him, we never take it for granted. We never treat it lightly. What are we doing? We're going to His throne. He is the King of Kings. He is the Lord of Lords. He is at the same time our

heavenly Father and yet, He is the reigning, ruling, righteous supreme King of the universe and we live in that tension. He is the God of all, the supreme judge, and yet we have a relationship with him. We come in with that intimacy and yet that reverence all at the same time.

He's our Father. He's a friend. He's a shepherd. He's a redeemer. He's righteous king. He's the judge and the ruler of all. What do we do in his presence? Well, I love the end of verse 16 that tells us this: "In his presence, there we will receive his mercy and we will find grace to help us when we need it most." Another version says, "We will find grace in our greatest time of need." I love, what do we get? Mercy and grace. Mercy and grace. Psalm 23 tells us, "Grace and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives."

Are you in a tough spot right now? Are you in a bind? Are you facing challenges? Do you need help? Guess what. Go boldly before God's throne. Why? You're His child, okay? You're not just the child of the boss at JC Penney's. You're a child of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. You're a king's kid, and when you go before His throne you will find grace and mercy in your time of need.

Father, today we thank You that we have access to go before your throne even now. God, I ask that You would move of behalf of those who need Your power, that we would experience Your true presence. Not just praying, but listening to what You say to us. God, we thank You that in Your presence we will find help in our time of need. We pray this worship in You in Jesus name. Amen.