

Devotion 47:

Our Father Is Accessible Now Through Jesus

Hebrews 1—13

Our purpose in this devotional book has been to get to know our heavenly Father better. We now come to the fitting conclusion, the book of Hebrews. It is fitting because it recapitulates the journey we have been on since Genesis.

Why do we need to get to know our Father better? Why don't we know Him well now? As you recall from Genesis 3, Adam's sin separated us from our Father. After Adam's fall in the Garden, we are now born in his likeness, in his image. That means we depend on ourselves, not our Father, to know good and evil. We doubt God and His judgment. We are selfish, self-centered, and self-absorbed. Like Adam's hiding from God after he sinned, we, too, prefer to hide from our Father and do our own thing in this world. We seek our glory, not His; we seek our happiness, not His holiness; we seek our will being done, not His.

The major problem with this predicament, however, is that our sin leads to death. It separates us from others, from ourselves, and from our Father. And in being separated from our Father, we are separated from everything that is important in life: love, meaning, peace, truth, hope, joy, and life itself. We are separated not only from knowing our Father, but we are totally separated also from being in His presence. Thanks to His compassion and grace, abounding love and faithfulness, He did something about our problem.

In Genesis 3:15 He promised to send a Savior. He chose Abraham to lead His people from whom this Savior would emerge. The promise was reiterated to succeeding patriarchs and a covenant was finally made with His chosen children, the people of Israel. And even though His children continually violated the terms of the covenant, our Father kept His end of the agreement. And finally, at just the right time, Jesus came to save us from our sin and to reunite us with our Father.

Thanks to Jesus Christ, we now have immediate and direct access to our Father. This is the message of Hebrews. Jesus is superior to angels, prophets, Moses, sacrifices, and Levitical priests. *"In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."* (1:2) His new covenant is superior to the old, Mosaic covenant made on Mount Sinai.

"The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God...And it was not without an oath!... Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant." 7:18-20a, 22

His perfect obedience and once-and-for-all blood sacrifice is superior to the animal sacrifices offered repeatedly in the temple:

“The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” 9:13-14

“But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” 9:26b-28

His priesthood is far superior to that of the tribe of Levi:

“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. 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.” 4:15-16

“But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.” 7:24-26

And right now, He is in the holiest of holies, at our Father’s right hand.

“We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.” 8:1b-2

Jesus is there continuously, not just one day a year. And no rope needs to be tied around his ankle for He has already conquered death and will live forever. He is *“interceding for us,”* (Rom. 8:34) *“speaking to the Father in our defense,”* (I Jn. 2:1b) and *“appearing for us in God’s presence.”* (9:24) And, are you ready for this?

“Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.” 2:11

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus.” 3:1

Unfortunately, many Christians today fix their eyes and thoughts on themselves and strive harder to become good Christians, acceptable to God. The temptation to return to the Old Covenant is ever present, *“but a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.”* (Gal. 2:16) The book of Hebrews tells us that to enter our Father’s presence is to enter His rest, and *“for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.”* (4:10) In other words, as God rested from His work of creation on the seventh day, now we can cease our efforts to gain salvation by our works and rest in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Our Father welcomes us with open arms daily. He feeds us with His Word and nourishes us through Holy Communion. He surrounds us with brothers and sisters in the family of God. Through Jesus He invites us not only to know Him, but also to get close to Him. We now see, after reading 44 books of the Bible, that this journey of getting to know our Father has really been His journey, His desire, ever since before creation. So let’s not hesitate:

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”
10:19-23

Our Father is accessible to us now through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.