



ACCESS

TO THE THRONE OF GRACE

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to come boldly
and confidently
before the
Throne of Grace
because Jesus
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unrestricted
ACCESS for us.

ACCESS

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Over the last seven months, we have been teaching through the book of Hebrews. The central idea is Jesus is “Better”. He is better than Prophets, Angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, and other High priests, the Old Covenant, the Temple, and the sacrifices. He is not only the substance of which these are a shadow and a sign of but He is the fulfillment of them all.

Through this Holy Week, we are going to look at how his perfect sacrifice gives ACCESS to the throne of grace and what that means for us. We are invited to come boldly and confidently before the throne because Jesus has secured unrestricted ACCESS for us.

Hebrews 10:19–22 (CEB) **19** Brothers and sisters, we have confidence that we can enter the holy of holies by means of Jesus’ blood, **20** through a new and living way that he opened up for us through the curtain, which is his body, **21** and we have a great high priest over God’s house. **22** Therefore, let’s draw near with a genuine heart with the certainty that our faith gives us, since our hearts are sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies are washed with pure water.

When Jesus was crucified, that very moment the temple veil or curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom. No longer were people to be separated on the basis of race, priestly status, education, or gender. Jesus has provided open ACCESS for anyone who submits themselves to His lordship. This was consistent with the plan he had from the beginning of time that he accomplished through Christ Jesus our Lord. In Christ we have bold and confident access to God through faith in Him. **Ephesians 3:11–12** (CEB)

“The very fact that we have access to God’s attention and presence should concentrate the thoughts and elevate the heart.” — Keller

ACCESS & REST

Since we have ACCESS to His throne of grace, let’s give Him ACCESS to our hidden hearts so that we can find REST. In this there are three invitations:



Claim/Accept ACCESS

We HAVE ACCESS, let's use it. Let us purposefully ACCESS God's throne of grace with intention and faith. Let us behave as if the veil is truly torn. In what ways could our life look different if we claim or accept the access that God has given us? Access to hope, joy, unfailing love, mercy, forgiveness, wisdom and truth, adoption and inheritance.



Give ACCESS to God

Let us intentionally give God ACCESS to our own hearts. He searches us wanting to reveal our hidden hearts SO THAT He can give us grace in our time of need. Are there areas of our lives that we prefer to keep closed, with a no-entry sign up? We may try to "sew up" the curtain because of shame, embarrassment, pain, or failure, not allowing the grace of God to penetrate, expose, and heal. We want to give Him ACCESS to our deepest thoughts, failures, stresses, sins, anxieties, and pain.



Find Rest

Intentionally setting time aside and posturing ourselves to allow the Spirit ACCESS will enable us to find REST in who God is and how actively He engages with us. Scripture states, "**9** So you see that a sabbath rest is left open for God's people. **10** The one who entered God's rest also rested from his works, just as God rested from his own. **11** Therefore, let's make every effort to enter that rest so that no one will fall by following the same example of disobedience, **12** because God's word is living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword. It penetrates to the point that it separates the soul from the spirit and the joints from the marrow. It's able to judge the heart's thoughts and intentions. **13** No creature is hidden from it, but rather everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of the one to whom we have to give an answer." **Hebrews 4:9-13** (CEB)

We find deep spiritual rest when we can see God active in our lives, through the Holy Spirit, making us more like Jesus.

Each day we will ask ourselves three questions:

How can I ACCESS His throne of grace in this area?

How can I give God greater ACCESS to my heart and mind?

How can I receive REST?

MONDAY

ACCESS TO ENTER



1. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)



2. SCRIPTURE Esther 4:10-17 (NKJV)

10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: **11** “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.” **12** So they told Mordecai Esther’s words. **13** And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. **14** For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” **15** Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: **16** “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” **17** So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.



3. DEVOTIONAL by Grace Waldner

What does it take to have an audience with the King of England? Gaining an audience is a privilege reserved for key individuals. The meetings last around 20 minutes and the majority of these are with diplomats or politicians. A few individuals are selected each year who have made extraordinary achievements in their fields. Anyone who meets with a monarch either has a specific title or has done outstanding work that sets them apart from anyone else. They have garnered the attention of the monarch and therefore are seen as worthy to meet with him in person. Gaining access to the king requires an escort. Without an escort, you have to get through over 40 palace guards and other security measures.

What if you desperately needed to see the king, but did not have an appointment, and you knew that if you entered the throne room you would be put to death?

This was the situation that faced Queen Esther.

Esther’s Uncle Mordecai uncovered a plot to eradicate the Jews in the land of Per-

sia. He appealed to Queen Esther to go to King Ahasuerus and plead for the welfare of the Jews - her people. The only problem was that she did not have access to the king whenever she wanted. If anyone, even his wife, entered the throne room without permission the penalty would be immediate death.

Esther did not have access.

Even though she had an urgent need, no matter what her reason, the law said – death.

Esther fasted and with bated breath entered ... spoiler alert – the Lord protected her, she was spared, and the Jewish people were saved.

In the Old Testament God's presence was not accessible to anyone. There were special times, procedures, and people who could enter. Those who did not follow those assigned practices were killed.

As believers and followers of Jesus Christ, our access to God's presence is no longer under restriction. We do not have to fear going before the throne of God. We will never receive a death sentence for entering. We have unlimited audiences with the Creator of the universe. We can enter at any time, as many times as we want, with any request or need. There is nothing that we need to accomplish to enter. No earthly title or amount of money can gain us access. Christ accomplished all for us on the cross. His sacrifice gives us access. He has bestowed on us a title of entry. Son. Daughter. We have a permanent pass of entry into the throne room of El Shaddai (God Almighty).

This is our most cherished possession, but how often do we live and operate as if entering God's presence would yield a punishment, would have no effect, or is not allowed? This eternal access is our birthright and we must protect it against satan's temptations of bitterness, doubt, fear, worry, and a host of other strategies to distract us and cause us to become apathetic toward the privilege of entering the Throne of Grace.



4. ACCESS & REST

Spend a few minutes allowing the Holy Spirit to shine a light on areas in your heart that are stitching up the curtain between you and God.

Meditate on the honor and privilege that we have to be close to the God of all things. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, we now can boldly approach the throne of God with no appointment and no time limit.

Spend a few minutes reflecting on the following questions...

How can I ACCESS God's throne of grace in this area?

How can I give God greater **ACCESS** to my heart and mind?

How can I receive **REST**?



5. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)

TUESDAY

ACCESS TO WISDOM



1. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)



2. SCRIPTURE

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Proverbs 2:6

For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 8:11

For wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

1 Corinthians 1:30

And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.



3. DEVOTIONAL by Kris Cohen

As a child, one of the things I prayed for most often was wisdom. I'm not exactly sure why, but for some reason, it just clicked with me. As I reflect as an adult, perhaps it was the thought that I could have access to the wisdom of the one who holds all knowledge was mind blowing!

When I went to college, I was taught in one of my classes that the ancient Greek philosophers viewed philosophy as a way of life and the pursuit of wisdom. For us as Christians, wisdom is pursuing living like the one who was wisdom in flesh - Jesus Christ. It was put to me this way, that the Christian life is meant to be:

...the display of the ministry and teachings of Jesus. Therefore, to be practically wise is to be skilled at living under God's reign, and living in his kingdom. Taking Jesus' yoke upon oneself and living out the Sermon on the Mount- i.e. be free from anger and contempt, free of sexual lust, cherish one's marriage, always speak truth... love one's enemies, give to the poor out of love, pray out of love, pray in accord with priorities of the kingdom, fast out of love, live simply, live without worry/judgment... Acquiring this is a long question, but the short answer is practice doing

the things Jesus did, prayer, meditation, study, solitude, silence, fasting, service, and familial community.

Wisdom becomes less ethereal and more practical as we take time to consider Jesus as wisdom in action. And because we have access to Jesus, we have access to wisdom. As it says in James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." So let us ask God for wisdom as we seek to live like Jesus by living under God's rule and reign.



4. ACCESS & REST

Reflect: What area in your life do you need wisdom?

Ask: Through Jesus we can go directly and boldly to the one with eternal knowledge. Take some time right now to stop, pray, and meditate on the life of Jesus as you seek His wisdom.

Thank: Thank God for giving you access to His wisdom through Jesus.

How can I ACCESS God's throne of grace in this area?

How can I give God greater ACCESS to my heart and mind?

How can I receive REST?



5. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)

FAST

FASTING AS
ACCESS

Dear Mercy Commons,

Thank you for joining us in our time of fasting and prayer as we prepare our hearts over Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Our last meal will be dinner on Tuesday and we will resume eating on Friday after our evening gathering. Our desire with this booklet is to be intentional with our time and also our bodies as we engage with the spiritual discipline of fasting from food.

All for Him,
Nick

WHY DO WE FAST?

Fasting has long been a powerful component in the life of Christian worship. Jesus began his public ministry after 40 days of prayer and fasting in the wilderness. He spoke of fasting in the Gospels (Matt. 6:16-18; 9:14-15) and the early church practiced it (Acts 9:9, 13:2, 14:23). Fasting has been a part of the Mercy Commons story too, and many significant moments of direction and vision for the church have come directly out of church-wide fasts. But what is fasting for? Is it just some sort of sanctified diet? In short, we deny ourselves food in order to feast on Jesus.

1. The physical hunger we feel in a fast intensifies our longings for Jesus. In our pain and discomfort we desperately seek God, cry out to him. We recognize more clearly our dependence on God and our hunger and thirst for more of his presence.
2. The combination of prayer and fasting (the two always goes together!) helps remove distractions and allows us to focus on Jesus. The time we don't spend eating is more time we can spend in silence, prayer, listening to God. In our busy lives, fasting helps us create space to meditate on God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to speak.
3. All of this is not just for our own spiritual renewal, but to empower us to bring renewal to our world. It is significant that just prior to beginning his public ministry, Jesus fasted. The 40 days in the wilderness was for Jesus a preparatory time, a season of struggle and temptation and isolation (similar to the 40 day period the Israelites spent in the wilderness prior to entering the Promised Land), and yet one that clearly catalyzed his forward momentum in mission.

TIPS FOR FASTING

- If this is your first fast, ease into it. Don't feel the pressure to go without food for all three days. Start with fasting a meal a day, then gradually build up to a full day.
- An intermediate fast would be what is known as a "Daniel Fast." This is where you abstain from choice food, meat, and wine and only eat vegetables and drink water.
- If you are fasting from food, we typically encourage a juice fast, which would include fruit juice and soup/broth and water.
- We only recommend a full water only fast if you have experience fasting and/or participated in one of the these other versions before.
- The idea behind fasting is to abstain from a routine habit/practice for the sake of spiritual hunger. You may not be able to fast from food due to health reasons, etc. so consider abstaining from social media, television, or any other habitual practice in your day that you can set aside for the sake of focused prayer.
- The fast begins after dinner on Tuesday night. Don't eat a massive, greasy meal as your last meal. You'll regret it!
- At some point during each day of the fast, find a 30-minute time slot (at least) to read that day's devotional. Ideally this is in a quiet, distraction-free place where you can have uninterrupted time. Bring your juice and ask Jesus to be your nourishment! Feasting on the Word of God will do wonders for a growling stomach.
- On each day there will be a theme and a passage of Scripture to contemplate. The idea is to read and meditate on the Scripture for a good 15

minutes, and then spend 15 (or more) minutes in prayer.

- If your days are full and you can't find the time to take a break, consider reading through the booklet on Sunday night, to prepare your heart for what's to come.

If you have kids this a great opportunity to introduce them and include them to the concept of fasting. Make sure you clarify the purpose of fasting in an age appropriate manner. Much of how they will participate will depend on their age, so here are some age appropriate suggestions:

- **AGE 5-9:** Abstaining from candy, soda and dessert.
- **AGE 10-13:** Abstaining from one meal during the day. This HAS to be done wisely and with faith, if it is an intense sports season consider a protein drink as a meal replacement.
- **14 & OLDER:** Depending on the maturity of your child, they can make the same choices that you, as an adult would make.
- If you do have children who are abstaining from food, this is obviously a great opportunity to be more intentional with family prayer and/or devotions.

ACCESS THROUGH CONSENT



1. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)



2. SCRIPTURE Genesis 22:1-17 (ESV)

1 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." **2** He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." **3** So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. **4** On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. **5** Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." **6** And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. **7** And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" **8** Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.

9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. **10** Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. **11** But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." **12** He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." **13** And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. **14** So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

15 And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven **16** and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, **17** I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies..."



3. DEVOTIONAL by Carrie Slick

There were many times years ago when I read this passage and assured myself that I, too, was like Abraham. I was willing to sacrifice the things I loved and depended on most if the Father were to ask me for them. I realize now, in many ways, I was lying to myself.

Months ago I read it again and noticed myself feeling anxious. Instead of reassuring myself that all was good, I felt the Holy Spirit inviting me to become curious about what I was feeling. I consented and sat for a while in my anxiety, then started to feel angry and defensive, as well. I thought, “Why would Abraham agree to that? Why would God even ask knowing that would cause Abraham so much pain? What about Isaac? How could they both do that to Isaac? I imagined walking my own son up that hill and I felt grieved and scared at the thought of losing him. I told God, “I would not do that, I would not sacrifice my son to you.” I sat there in the silence and the noise of my own anger, shame, and anxiety (from actually being honest with myself). Then the emotional noise subsided for a moment and I heard the gentle voice of the Father in my mind, responding, “Daughter, you don’t have to, I already did that for you.” I sat and wept, overwhelmed by the love of my Father. I asked God to help me understand the Abraham/Isaac story according to the truth of who He is.

Read verses 22:6 - 10 again.

In the past, I perceived both Abraham and Isaac as victims being acted upon by an authoritarian God. Abraham obeyed out of fear and Isaac (who I imagined as a young child) didn’t have a choice. In all of this, God was testing Abraham? I came to realize that was my own childhood story and the lens through which I was misunderstanding.

I now understand that Isaac was older, closer to adolescence, or at least old enough to carry the wood up a hill. Also, Isaac would have understood, at some point, what was happening, as sacrificial offering was the common way they worshiped God. I could imagine as a son, he would have witnessed, possibly helped, Abraham prepare the sacrifice on many occasions. This would suggest that Isaac consented, both to trusting his father and to being the offering to God. There is no mention that Isaac protested or struggled when Abraham bound him up and laid him on the wood.

This passage is often used to teach about our obedience to God. Consent is part of our journey towards obedience. In giving our full and complete yes to what God asks of us, we are bringing our heart and will along in the journey toward obedience. Read Matthew 26:36-45 and consider the other Son who consented, who was nailed, bound to the wood, for whom no replacement ram was provided. He was the sacrifice. He trusted the Father and said “yes”, even through rejection, perse-

cution, anguish, and the forsaking of His Father in death. I think of how often I don't consent to what God is asking and for much smaller things. Like when He invites me to slow down and be still with Him. Yet, my heart cries out daily for the grace to say "yes" to the reality of my humanity and self-reliance and to the truth that I cannot live honestly and fully apart from Christ.

This requires my repeated consent to obediently live in the dynamic love relationship between, first, Christ and myself, and, second, with the community of believers. This is not often easy to do. On this side of the garden, we have been in constant pursuit of self; self-preservation, and self-aggrandizement. Even in our worst victimization and pain, this is how we strive to self-protect and regain our sense of self-worth. We long to be the beloved of God, but end up striving to be beloved by the world. Thankfully, our Father is so good. He is always reaching towards us and asking, "Will you? Will you trust me? Will you consent to all I have for you? Will you consent and trust that even if it costs you everything, I will give you true life, identity, and belonging? I will give you true love."



4. ACCESS & REST

Father, I thank you that you created me from the overflow of your love and to display Your glory. I was created for You and to only be satisfied in You. I am your Beloved. Give me the grace to consent to all that You want to do in my life and to let go of my defenses. Thank you for loving me, not as the world does, but perfectly, honestly, and sacrificially.

How can I ACCESS God's throne of grace in this area?

How can I give God greater ACCESS to my heart and mind?

How can I receive REST?



5. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)

ACCESS TO INTIMACY



1. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)



2. SCRIPTURE Matthew 11:25-30

25 At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. **26** Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!

27 “My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

28 Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”



3. DEVOTIONAL by Joey Prentiss

My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

There was always supposed to be intimacy with God—a knowing of the Father and being known by him. Look at Adam and Eve walking in the garden. Look at Abraham’s journey, Joseph’s dreams, and Moses’ encounter with the burning bush. Relationship is intimate, it invites a closeness that offers rest and peace.

Being known is how it is supposed to be—but that’s not how it is.

The consequence of Adam and Eve’s unfaithfulness—their rejection of intimacy with God—rendered a weighty and burdensome relationship to others and to the earth (Genesis 3). Adam and the generations to follow would struggle daily with distorted relationships, laboring under an arduous yoke that could never offer the soul rest, toiling to be known and to know God.

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am

humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

While we often think of Jesus' words as merely meaning the heaviness and pain of daily life (because life is usually really hard), there is evidence that Jesus is also specifically referring to the burden that scribes and religious leaders of the day were placing on people (France 247). There were extra rules, instructions, and laws to foster a right and close relationship with God. While well intended, their yoke was unable to provide rest and peace. It was incapable of a father-son closeness.

Jesus then invites us into something more than just freedom from the weight of life. Jesus has chosen to reveal God to us. We now have access to deeply know the father, just like the son. We get to be close, to hear his voice, to know his will, and to find rest for our souls.

Moses once pleaded with God to see his face. But there was no way to offer access without death. Instead, God offered Moses a glimpse of his backside (Exodus 33:18-23). This brief encounter changed Moses. His face was so radiant that people feared him (Exodus 34:30). Jesus has now given us full access to see God's face – imagine what change could be in us.

Jesus longs to walk with you, to be with you. He longs to give your soul rest. And along the way, God will transform you.

We merely must recognize our need for help, and accept his yoke. It is a life-long process of learning how to live as God requires but with an invitation to rest at the deepest level. Not a relaxation of the demands of righteousness, but a new relationship with God (France 248).

So come to Jesus because he has chosen to reveal God to you. When you walk with Jesus, you will experience the unforced rhythm of his grace. There is access to the rest your soul longs for. A father-son closeness that awaits you.

Let it change you.



4. ACCESS & REST

Coming to Jesus involves recognizing our need for help and accepting His yoke. Reflect on any resistance you may have towards surrendering to Jesus in this way. What fears or hesitations do you experience?

In what ways do you long for transformation in your own life?

How might drawing closer to Jesus facilitate this transformation?

How can I ACCESS God's throne of grace in this area?

How can I give God greater ACCESS to my heart and mind?

How can I receive REST?



5. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)

ACCESS TO JUSTIFICATION



1. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)



2. SCRIPTURE Romans 4:20-5:2

20 Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. **21** He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. **22** And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. **23** And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded **24** for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

5:1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. **2** Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

Pause and reflect on what words or phrases stood out to you.

Read the passage again.

Reflect on what God might be saying to you.

Consider the following:



3. DEVOTIONAL by Karin Saltas

The *therefore* at the beginning of Chapter 5 gives us reason to look back at the previous chapter to see what foundation has been laid. In Chapter 4, Paul makes it clear that we are not justified by works, by ordinances, or by the law. We are only justified (made right, put in right standing with) by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith means that we believe, or rest our whole weight on, and rely completely on the person and work of Jesus to save us. Jesus alone can save us, forgive us, and redeem us. God is able to do all that He promises.

Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we are forgiven and justified. And because we are now justified, we gain all the benefits that are Christ's.

Our justification opens up to us a full and guaranteed assurance that we will one

day see him face to face and dwell with him forever. It also, however, opens up to us a full and guaranteed assurance that we can be in intimate relationship, communing with Him now in this present day.

Our justification, by faith, gives us peace with God. We are truly and completely reconciled. We are no longer enemies, but friends and children, belonging to Him. Peace with God speaks of a relational, intimate reality. God did not just pardon us but brought us into Himself. There is nothing strained or broken or uncertain in our relationship, we are in a state of shalom, blessing, and ease.

Our justification, by faith, also gives us access to the grace of God, in which we stand. The idea of access means that we have been invited and ushered in. An introduction has been made for us. This admittance to grace is also an ongoing access to grace. It is by grace that we have been saved, by faith. We were ushered into grace at salvation, but we also go on in grace. It is in grace that we stand. We continually lay hold of the grace of God with confidence.

Our justification, by faith, also fills us with the hope of the glory of God. We know that we will one day have a full view of God in all His glory. We will behold His radiant splendor and beautiful perfection. We will see all of his perfect attributes with nothing to block our gaze. This hope also means that we will be free from all our sin and fear and brokenness. We will be who we were made to be.

Later in Chapter 5, Paul breaks it down like this:

18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and a new life for everyone. **19** Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous. **20** God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. **21** So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.



4. ACCESS & REST

Spend a few minutes expressing your gratitude to God in prayer. You could begin by thanking Him that because of the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus, we now have an abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness. We now have justification and life. We now have grace that reigns through righteousness and leads us to eternal life.

Spend a few minutes reflecting on the following questions:

How can I ACCESS God's throne of grace in this area?

How can I give God greater **ACCESS** to my heart and mind?

How can I receive **REST**?



5. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)

SATURDAY

ACCESS TO AUTHORITY



1. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)



2. SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Mark 16:14-18

14 Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. **15** And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. **16** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. **17** And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; **18** they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”



3. DEVOTIONAL by Stephanie Christin

Throughout the gospels, the priests and scribes are appalled by Jesus. The audacity to claim to be the son of God! They ask “By what authority do you do these things?” (Mark 11:28) They suspect that Jesus is a false prophet or even performing miracles by powers of darkness.

In the end, Jesus reveals to us the secret. He states in John 8:28 “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. Then in Matthew 28, “all authority in heaven, and on earth has been given to me. And then he takes it one step further and charges us by that authority.

As disciples of Christ, we have been commissioned to spread Christ's story, to make more disciples, and to continue his ministry. I understand the doubts of the disciples. Even after all they had seen and done with Jesus, it was hard to believe that they could continue all of this without him by their side.

But when the veil was torn in his death, we were invited into the dwelling place of the most high God. We were not only washed clean of sin. We were also given ACCESS to the authority that Jesus claimed over the powers of darkness and death and the Holy Spirit's power! If we so choose, we can live life out of this God-given authority.

What does that look like for me? I get to say no to fear. I get to say no to worry and anxiety. I get to say no to temptation and patterns of sin. I get to say no to bitterness that divides my relationships. I get to say yes to healing. I get to say yes to joy. And when I say yes, or no, there is power behind my answer. Sometimes we don't know what to do to get out of destructive thought patterns or habits. We can start by claiming our authority in Christ and just saying NO to our flesh.

This extends to the people around us. Through prayer and ministry, because of what Christ accomplished, we have authority when we pray and ask for friends and family to see this same kind of freedom.

In Mark 16 it says "And these signs will accompany those who believe" and goes on to describe powerful miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. As we begin to walk in authority in our internal lives, can we also ask God to increase our faith for the miraculous? God's power and authority are ours and can be accessed to bring wisdom, healing, and deliverance to his people and glory to his kingdom here and now. What a gift, to be granted access to the power that raised Christ from the dead!



4. ACCESS & REST

What might be holding you back from living out of your God-given authority?

Is there a struggle of your flesh you desire to take authority over?

Is there someone in your life you wish to pray for with this God-given authority?

Are there gifts you are desiring to receive or operate more in?

Jesus, thank you that you did the work on the cross and I get to walk in the fruit of that work each day. Please help my faith to increase, my boldness to be drawn from you, and my eyes to be open to those around me needing to taste your presence and power.

How can I ACCESS God's throne of grace in this area?

How can I give God greater ACCESS to my heart and mind?

How can I receive REST?



5. SILENCE & SOLITUDE (2-5 min)



mercy
commons