

Come Closer: An Invitation to Intimacy

Hebrews 10:19-25, Song of Solomon 1:1-4a

July 16, 2017

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19-22)

1. The Lord desires _____ with _____.
Song of Solomon 1:2-4a ² *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth— for your love is more delightful than wine.* ³ *Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you!* ⁴ *Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers.*

See Psalm 45:10-15

Hebrews 10:22 ²² *Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

2. The Lord's relationship with His people is like a _____.
Ephesians 5:25-27, 32 ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her* ²⁶ *to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,* ²⁷ *and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ...* ³² *This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.*

Isaiah 62:5 *As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.* (See also Hosea. 2:16, 19-20, II Corinthians 11:2)

Revelation 19:6-9 ⁶ *Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.* ⁷ *Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.* ⁸ *Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."* (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.) ⁹ *Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."* (See also Revelation 21:2, 9-10)

3. Intimacy with God is a precious _____.
Hebrews 10:19 *Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ...*

Leviticus 16:2 ***The Lord said to Moses: “Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. (See all of Leviticus 16)***

Hebrews 9:7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

II Chronicles 6:18 “But will God really dwell on earth with humans? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!”

Isaiah 55:9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

4. Intimacy with God is a privilege, won for us by _____.

Hebrews 10:19-21 ¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ...

Hebrews 4:15-16 ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

5. We can only _____ for intimacy with God.

James 4:8-10 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Psalms 1:1-2 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

Psalms 46:10-11 He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” ¹¹ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Luke 5:16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

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- **“I’m not going to preach on intimacy with God.”**
- **But intimacy with the Lord is indispensable for a vibrant Christian life.**

1. The Lord desires intimacy with you/me.

Pat reads again Song of Solomon 1:2-4a ² *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine.* ³ *Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you!* ⁴ *Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers.*

- **For centuries the Church has interpreted Song of Solomon as an allegory of the relationship between Christ and the church.**
- **Puritans: Richard Sibbes 20 sermons (early 1600’s)**
- **“The Jewish doctors advised their young people not to read [the Song of Solomon] till they were thirty years old, lest by the abuse of that which is most pure and sacred (—horrible to say!) the flames of lust should be kindled with fire from heaven, which is intended for the altar only. ... on the other hand, that with the help of the many faithful guides we have**

for the understanding of this book it appears to be a very bright and powerful ray of heavenly light, admirable fitted to excite pious and devout affections in holy souls, to draw out their desires towards God, to increase their delight in him, and improve their acquaintance and communion with him. (Matthew Henry on the Song of Solomon.)

Psalm 45:10-15 *10 Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention: Forget your people and your father's house. 11 Let the king be enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord. 12 The city of Tyre will come with a gift, people of wealth will seek your favor. 13 All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold. 14 In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her — those brought to be with her. 15 Led in with joy and gladness, they enter the palace of the king.*

- God's presence at prayer gathering last Sunday.

Hebrews 10:22 *22 Let us draw near προσέρχομαι to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

- He can't "kiss me with the kisses of His mouth" and all of that from a distance.
- We can't "enjoy the pleasing fragrance of His perfumes" from far away.
- We must draw near.

2. The Lord's relationship with His people is like a marriage.

Ephesians 5:25-27, 32 *25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to*

himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ... ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Isaiah 62:5 As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Hosea. 2:16, 19-20 ¹⁶ “In that day,” declares the Lord, “you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’ ... ¹⁹ I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in_[e] righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. ²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord

II Corinthians 11:2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

- **Jesus referred to Himself as “the Bridegroom.”**
- **And listen to how the Book of Revelation talks about the end of history, the goal of God’s plan:**

Revelation 19:6-9 ⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.) ⁹ Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.” (See also Revelation 21:2, 9-10)

- **Cf. *The Little Book of Love* presents the Gospel as a love story.**

3. Intimacy with God is a precious privilege.

Hebrews 10:19 ***Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ...***

- We can enter the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies
- The King brings us into His inner chambers.
- But originally only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and only on *yom kippur*!

Leviticus 16:2 ***The Lord said to Moses: “Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. (See all of Leviticus 16)***

Hebrews 9:7 ***But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.***

- But now we are invited to “enter the most Holy Place.”
- Our intimacy with the Lord is not a relationship of equals.
- We are “out of our league.”

II Chronicles 6:18 ***“But will God really dwell on earth with humans? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!”***

Isaiah 55:9 ***“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”***

- “Is She Really Going Out with Him?” (Joe Jackson)
- We “married up.”

4. Intimacy with God is a privilege, won for us by Christ.

Hebrews 10:19-21 ¹⁹ *Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ...*

■ *Call to Worship

Psalm 24:3-6

L) Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?

R) **The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.**

Hebrews 4:15-16 ¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach **προσερχώμεθα** God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Hebrews 10:1 *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.*

■ Gospel

5. We can only prepare for intimacy with God.

■ We can't cause it or create it.

■ If I want to experience intimacy with my wife, it helps if I brush my teeth and take a bath. It hinders if I drink tomato juice!

■ It helps if I do chores around the house, and listen to her and treat her with the dignity and respect she deserves.

■ We can light the candles and pour the wine.

- But how do we prepare for intimacy with the Lord?
- Since intimacy with God is won for us by Christ, the first thing we must do is receive Him as Savior and Lord.

- We prepare for intimacy with God through confession and repentance.

James 4:8-10 ***Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.***

- We prepare for intimacy with God by contemplating His Word.

Psalms 1:1-2 ***Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.***

- We prepare for intimacy with God by spending time with Him.

Psalms 46:10-11 ***He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” ¹¹ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.***

- We prepare for intimacy with God by giving time to prayer.

Luke 5:16 ***But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.***

- Intimacy with God is indispensable to a vital Christian life.
- The Lord desires intimacy with you.
- He invites you to draw near.
- Let's draw near.