

Before the Throne

By David Wright

A king dressed in royal splendor sits upon his throne. Two men come before him requesting forgiveness. One, a terrified slave, approaches the monarch and drops to his knees. He confesses that he has made a serious mistake and begs for mercy. With pounding heart he awaits judgment. The other man, the king's own son, approaches the throne boldly. He, too, has committed a serious offense--and his sorrow is genuine. But the prince is confident of his father's love and willingness to forgive.

Which of these attitudes better illustrates appropriate conduct in prayer? Plainly, the Christian should approach God's throne with the boldness of a son, not the timidity of a slave. Paul proclaims to the Galatians that "through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir" (Gal. 4:7). And he tells the Romans that "if God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn?" (Rom. 8:31-34).

The believer's confidence derives from the compassion of Jesus, a high priest who is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" and "who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb. 4:15). Jesus knows what it means to be in pain, to experience overwhelming desires, to be hungry, thirsty, and tired. Jesus knows how it feels to be sad, anxious, lonely, discouraged, hurt, frustrated, or angry. Life in human flesh filled his heart with understanding. So, like sons and daughters in a royal family, let us "with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (v. 16).

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