

Believe in a God of Grace

Today's Scripture

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

HEBREWS 4:16

Are you like many today who believe in a "religious" God? Do you believe that God is against you when you fall short, that He is angry with you when you fail, and that fellowship with Him is cut off when you make mistakes?

It's no wonder then that instead of running to the one true solution, many sincere folks run in the opposite direction when they are hurting. So there is a great deception, a powerful, wrong belief about God that has trapped many in the vicious cycle of condemnation, guilt, fear, defeat, and addiction.

I want you to know today that God is a God of infinite grace. He is repugnant to the "religious", but gracious and irresistible to those who are hurting.

No matter what you are going through today, whatever addictions may be binding you, right believing can and will set you free. Start with believing this powerful truth:

God is a God of grace and forgiveness. He loves you very much, and He doesn't hold your mistakes against you.

Don't let the mistakes you have made in the past hold you back from reaching out to God and receiving His forgiveness for all your failures. Begin to believe right about the Lord, believe right about His heart and love for you, and your entire life will be transformed. Right believing always leads to right living!



Today's Thought

God is a God of grace and forgiveness. He loves me very much and doesn't hold my mistakes against me.

Today's Prayer

Father, I thank You that You are a God of infinite grace. And because of Jesus' sacrifice for me, I can run to You boldly to obtain mercy and find help whenever I have failed or am feeling discouraged. Fellowship with You is never broken. Thank You for Your complete forgiveness. Thank You for not ever holding my mistakes against me, for caring when I am hurting, and for always being my supply in every situation of need and lack.

Amen.

Today's Reflection on Right Believing

Pursued by God

Today's Scripture

"But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar...Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

JOHN 4:4-7

I encourage you to read the remarkable story of the Samaritan woman in John 4. Considered a woman with a shady past, she was gossiped about in her village and probably shunned for being a home wrecker, a "stealer of husbands." Now, hers is not a fictional story. She was a real person, just like you and me. Her problems and pain, like many of ours, were real and hounded her every day...until she encountered a very real Savior!

Despite the custom of the Jews of that date to avoid any contact with the Samaritans, whom they perceived as spiritually inferior, John records that as Jesus was traveling from Judea to Galilee, "He had to go through Samaria" (John 4:4 NLT, emphasis mine). Pause with me and think about these words for a moment: *Had to. Needed to. Must.* Words that speak not just of necessity, but underscore a steady resolve and even urgency! Jesus had deliberately scheduled a divine appointment with the woman at the well, though she knew nothing about it.

We know from the account that this ostracized, lonely woman had a life-transforming conversation with Jesus at the well. But make no mistake – it wasn't she who sought out Jesus to talk to Him. It was the Savior who pursued the one whom others shunned. Do you know that He is still doing that today?

Do you have a past that you are ashamed of? Are you struggling to overcome something that you know is destroying you? Do you feel all alone and that no one understands the pain you are going through?

I want you to know that Jesus hasn't changed. As He was for the Samaritan woman, the loving Savior is still your very present help in your time of need (see Ps. 46:1). He knows the suffering, shame, and struggles you are going through right now. And even if what you are going through is a consequence of bad life choices and mistakes of your own doing, He doesn't abandon and forsake you. No—a thousand times, no! He goes out of His way to have a personal appointment with you, to restore and rescue you. The fact that you are reading this right now is a confirmation that Jesus is reaching out to you with His love, grace, and forgiveness.

Talk to Him as the woman did. Taste and touch His grace and compassion for you as she did. And like her, discover Jesus' forgiveness, freedom, and strength to walk into a bright new future.



Today's Thought

Right now, Jesus is reaching out to me with His love, grace, and forgiveness.

Today's Prayer

*Lord Jesus, I thank You that although You know every detail about my life—all my past mistakes and all my present struggles—You still love me so much that You pursue me. I praise You for seeking me even when I had no idea that You cared. I believe You are reaching out to me right now, and I receive Your love, Your grace, and Your forgiveness. I look to You, Jesus, to be my wisdom, peace, and strength every day.
Amen.*

Today's Reflection on Right Believing

When the Storms of Life Rage

Today's Scripture

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

PSALM 46:1

Storms of life. You know them well. They overwhelm you. Wave after wave of relentless battering that knocks you off your feet till you don't know which side is up. Till every ounce of energy is used up, and you feel so weak, abandoned, and lonely. Perhaps you're caught in one of life's storms right now.

When the disciples of Jesus were out at sea, caught in a turbulent tempest and tossed by the waves, who came to them in their darkest hour? It was Jesus Himself (see Matt. 14:22-33). Jesus came in style, walking on the raging waters. The loving Savior came to them at their exact point of need to rescue them.

What does this tell you? That He is above the storms. He walks above – He is greater than – every adversity and opposition that you may be facing right now, and He comes to you to rescue you!

With the billowing waves beneath His feet, His first words to His disciples were, "Don't be afraid. Take courage. I am Here!" (Matt. 14:27 NLT). What comfort those words must have brought to the disciples who were exhausted and shaking with fear for their lives.

When the storms of life rage, don't go by what you see and hear all around you. Don't go by your negative feelings and emotions. Live by the truth of God's Word, which encourages you to "be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic...For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you" (Deut. 31:6 NLT). Our God is a personal and loving God who is with you in your boat, right in the midst of the howling storm. He knows how to lead you to victory every time.

He cannot fail you!



Today's Thought

God, who cannot fail me, is with me in my boat. He knows what storms are ahead and will lead me to victory every time!

Today's Prayer

*Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that when the storms of life rock my boat, it's easy to get into fear and panic. Thank You for reminding me today that You are watching over me, that You are here to rescue me, and that the winds and the waves are no problem for You. I believe Your Word is true, and I believe You are calling me to take courage in Your presence. Open my eyes, Lord, and help me to see that You are always with me, and how You are above every storm. I welcome You into my boat, and I declare that no matter how bad the storm may seem right now, I am not going down, because You cannot fail me!
Amen.*

Today's Reflection on Right Believing

A Door of Hope

Today's Scripture

"I will return her vineyards to her and transform the Valley of Trouble into a gateway of hope..."

HOSEA 2:15 NLT

Are you among the people who think that when you fail, God leaves you and only returns when you get your act together? Some people think that they must clean up their lives and overcome all their struggles on their own before they can come before the presence of God. Well, I have a simple question for you: Do you clean yourself before you take a bath? Of course not!

In the same way, God wants you to come to Him just as you are, with all your weaknesses, idiosyncrasies, wrong beliefs, hang-ups, and all your bondages, fears, and addictions. He is the bath! You don't have to try to clean yourself up before you come to Him.

But Pastor, what if the mess I'm in is entirely of my own doing? Can I still just come to God as I am and expect Him to help me?

Yes, even if your trouble is due to your own willfulness or a mistake of your own making, He is still with you. He has never left you, and He never will. He will never forsake you (see Heb. 13:5). You are precious in His eyes. Can you imagine living with the kind of confidence, assurance, and peace that comes when you are truly anchored in this truth?

Today, even if you find yourself in the Valley of Trouble, know that you will not remain there for long. You will walk through it and not remain or camp there (see Ps. 23:4). God is opening a door of hope in your life today for you to step out of your darkness and into His marvelous light (see 1 Pet. 2:9). Things are going to get better. The breakthroughs that you have been waiting for are coming your way. Step through the door of hope and out of your Valley of Trouble today. Jesus is your door of hope! Believe in His love for you and allow Him to lead you to freedom. In His loving presence, you will find forgiveness, healing, and restoration. He will mend your life and transform you from the inside out.



Today's Thought

*I am precious in God's eyes. He who knows me perfectly loves me perfectly!
I can come to Jesus just as I am and receive His help.*

Today's Prayer

*Father, I can't clean myself up from the messes I've made in my life, and I can't find my way out of the Valley of Trouble on my own. I've tried and failed over and over again. Thank You for Your promise that You will transform my troubles into a door of hope because of Jesus. I believe that You are extending Your hand of grace and love to me, and that You will mend my life and transform me from the inside out. I take Your hand and step out of my darkness into Your marvelous light.
Amen.*

Today's Reflection on Right Believing

Go to the Source

Today's Scripture

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy....He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

PSALM 103:8, 10-12

Psalm 103 is one of my favorite psalms of David, a beautiful psalm that describes who and what God really is – a gracious and merciful Savior. Believing right begins with what you believe about God and must be based on the solid foundation of God's Word. To know the truth about who and what God is, we can't go by feelings, circumstances, human conjectures, or what we may have heard someone say about God. We have to go to the source!

If you heard a rumor that someone you knew was saying horrible and negative things about you, don't believe it immediately. Go to the source first. Ask this person if this is what he or she really said or if this is what he or she really meant. Many people allow precious friendships and relationships to become fractured because they believe the rumors. They become bitter, angry, and disappointed without ever verifying with the person if he or she had actually said those nasty things.

In the same way, in the world we live in, there are all kinds of wrong beliefs perpetuated about God: "God is angry at you." "He is disappointed with you." "God is allowing all these negative things to happen to you because He's punishing you for your past sins."

Please do NOT believe all this baseless gossip about God! Such impressions of God have damaged many people's relationships with Him, and they live with a distorted perspective of who God really is. Instead of receiving His love, grace, and forgiveness, they become afraid, distant, and fearful of Him. Instead of allowing Jesus to come into their situations, they live their lives running away, avoiding, and hiding from Him.

Come on, let's honor God and go to the source. Look again at what the Bible says about Him in today's Scripture reading: He is "slow to anger, and abounding in mercy...as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." *This is our God!* This is why you can always run to Him and believe that you can freely receive His help!



Today's Thought

According to God's Word, God is slow to anger and abounding in mercy toward me.

Today's Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word that is truth. I acknowledge that in the past I have bought into many of the world's wrong beliefs, distortions, and lies about You, and that I've run away from You rather than to You. Today, I choose to believe that You are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy toward me. I believe that as far as the east is from the west, so far You have removed my sins from me. Help me to always see You as the God of Love and compassion that You really are, and come boldly to receive Your mercy and grace.

Amen.

Today's Reflection on Right Believing

If You Only Knew

Today's Scripture

"If you only knew the gift God has for you, who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water...Anyone who drinks this water (from the well) will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

JOHN 4:10, 13-14 NLT

Remember the shunned Samaritan woman whose story you read on Day 9? When she asked Jesus why He (a Jew) would ask her (a despised Samaritan) for a drink of water, this was His amazing response: that she would ask Him for living waters, the only thing that would satisfy her from within and satisfy her deep thirst for acceptance and love forever.

What an amazing Savior! Although this woman had a past of looking for love in all the wrong places that imprisoned her in shame and self-loathing, Jesus met her at her point of greatest need with the offer of Himself, the living water. He knew all that she has ever done and yet offered her the true intimacy that fully satisfies every aching need. He invited her to discover, taste, and experience His perfect and unconditional love.

Jesus is saying the same thing to you today: *If you only knew* who it is who comes to you in your darkest and weakest moments. *If you only knew* this gift of God who will never leave you nor forsake you, who has gone before you and who comes to you in the midst of your storms. *If you only knew* the One who reaches out to you even when you have failed and who doesn't hold your past mistakes or present failures against you.

If you only knew this gift of God who offers the living water of His unconditional, endless love to you, and you drink of that love, you will never thirst again. You won't need to look for love or acceptance in all the wrong places, have your heart broken and fearful about the future, and have your life derailed. You can wake up with a fresh expectation of good every day.

Jesus was essentially inviting the woman to ask Him for the living water of His love. Will you do that today? Your life will never be the same again when you personally experience His love!



Today's Thought

Jesus offers me the living water of His unconditional, endless love today. My life will never be the same again when I personally experience His love!

Today's Prayer

Lord Jesus, I am so thirsty for You. I know that only You can satisfy the deepest needs of my heart. Today, I believe that You are here right now, offering me the living water of Your love. I receive Your love and Your life into my heart and into my life. Thank You for reaching out to me, and for Your perfect and unconditional love that will never fail me. I receive You as the answer to all I will ever need for every challenge that I face.

Amen

Today's Reflection on Right Believing

Today’s Scripture

The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.”

JEREMIAH 31:3

I heard a story of a minister from Oregon who was assigned to provide counseling in a state mental institution. His first assignment was to a padded cell that housed deranged, barely clothed patients. He couldn’t even talk to the inmates, let alone counsel them—the only responses he got were groans, moans, and demonic laughter.

Then the Holy Spirit prompted him to sit in the middle of the room and for a full hour just singing the famous children’s hymn that goes, “Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong.” Nothing happened at the end of that first day, but for weeks, he persisted to sing the same melody with greater conviction each time: “Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.”

As the days passed, the patients began singing with him one by one. Amazingly, by the end of the first month, thirty-six of severely ill patients were transferred from the high-dependency ward to a self-care ward. Within a year, all but two were discharged from the mental institution.

As one of the best-known and loved hymns of all time, this hymn’s ongoing popularity lies in its succinct elegance in unveiling Jesus’ heart. It beckons one to recognize that no matter what challenges, failures, and misdeeds one might be dealing *with*, *the love of Jesus remains a constant*.

“Jesus loves me! This I know.”

How so?

“For the Bible tells me so.”

So simple, yet so powerful.

Whether you feel it or not, Jesus’ constant love for you rests in the truth and on the foundation of His unchanging Word. It proclaims that His love for you and me is based utterly and completely on Him---on His promises, His work, and His grace. Today, let healing and rest for your soul come as you allow your heart to be anchored on this truth.



Today's Thought

*No matter what challenges, failures, and misdeeds I am dealing with, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.*

Today's Prayer

*Lord Jesus, thank You for unveiling Your great heart of love for me in
Your Word. I am amazed by how much You love me, no matter what I have or have
not done. I believe that Your love is true and constant and that nothing can change
that. Today, I rest in Your love because it is based on the sure foundation of Your
unchanging Word. Because you love me, You went to the cross for me. Because
You love me, You are with me and for me today, supplying all that I need.
Thank You, Jesus! Amen.*

Today's Reflection on Right Believing

SERVICE TIMES

Sundays:

11:00 am EST In-Person Morning Worship

11:00 am EST Live Streaming via www.caroldixon.net and CDM App

11:15 am EST Live Streaming via YouTube and Facebook Live

Wednesday Nights:

7:00 pm EST Live Streaming via www.caroldixon.net and CDM App

7:15 pm EST Live Streaming via YouTube and Facebook Live



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