

# Incarnation: Draw Near to God

## Intro

Judah coming into the dressing room

- Many reasons not to come in: fear, unqualified/undeserving
- His confidence to enter the dressing room was based on his connection with me - *he was physically connected, holding on to my leg*

The writer of Hebrews make a similar appeal to us in terms of us drawing near to God. He suggests,

*The incarnation helps us confidently draw near to God resulting in a day-by-day, moment-by-moment outworking of faith, hope, and love in our lives.*

**Hebrews 4:15-16 ESV** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

## What is drawing near to God?

Draw near means to come facing toward. To approach, come near, visit, figuratively to worship, draw near, go near to.

The present tense is an exhortation to continually drawing near to Him in prayer, worship, devotion of heart and life.

**Piper:** "This drawing near is not a physical act. It's not building a tower of Babel, by your achievements, to get to heaven. It's not necessarily going to a church building. Or walking to an altar at the front. It is an invisible act of the heart. You can do it while standing absolutely still, or while lying in a hospital bed, or while sitting in a pew listening to a sermon. Drawing near is not moving from one place to another. It is a directing of the heart into the presence of God ..."

I did it as I came up to preach...

## The Incarnation helps us draw near to God

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The verse under consideration indicates there is a connection between Jesus being human and us confidently drawing near to God.

“Not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are” = human

Since human, “Let us then with confidence draw near”

Why does the writer feel the need to make this connection between the incarnation and our own experience? Why do we need help in terms of drawing near to God?

1. We need help in terms of our motivation
2. We need help in terms of our ability to draw near

## Why do we need help to draw near to God?

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John Owen – (1616 – 24 August 1683) was an English Nonconformist church leader, theologian, and academic administrator at the University of Oxford.

**Owen:** “The words [in these verses] contain a further description of our high priest, by such a qualification as may *encourage* us to make use of him and improve his office unto our advantage ...”

↳ OWEN suggests we need encouragement

We are demotivated, according to Owen, from drawing near because of a sense of terror and a sense of unworthiness

**Owen:** *“There are, therefore, two things that the apostle intends to remove, and to have us free or delivered from, in our drawing near to the throne of grace ... First, ... a “spirit of bondage unto fear,” ... a great and awful horror in their minds ... Secondly, a disbelief of acceptation, arising from a sense of our own unworthiness.”*

How does the incarnation help motivate us to draw near? How does it help us overcome our sense of terror and sense of unworthiness?

- The knowledge that Jesus the man is fully God, and without sin, motivates us to draw near in spite of our terror because he has propitiated God...made God favourable towards us
- The knowledge that Jesus, God the Son, is fully human and therefore sympathizes with us and endured what we endured motivates us to draw near in spite of our unworthiness because he has made us righteous
- Note – the senses of terror and unworthiness are legitimate!
- **GOSPEL**

## Terror and Unworthiness

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**Owen:** *“seeing we have an high priest, and him such a one as we have described [God and man] ... [these verses are] to encourage, guide, and influence us unto the ensuing duty[of drawing near], and in all the concerns of it. Without this [the knowledge that our high priest is the incarnate Son of God] we have no might unto it, no ability for it.”*

It is not only our motivation to draw near to God that is positively affected by the incarnation, but our actual ability to draw near also depends on the incarnation.

Reminder: *“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

In regards to terror, there is mercy

In regards to unworthiness, there is grace

**Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV** [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—**by grace** you have been saved—

Our sense of terror can be dispelled because God is rich in mercy towards us as seen in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the incarnate Son. We would be crazy to approach God apart from Christ. But in Christ, the incarnate Son, we need not be terrified of God because he has been made favourable towards us.

Our sense of unworthiness can be disregarded because God is gracious towards us, forgiving our sins through the incarnate Son who removes our unworthiness and clothes us in his worthiness.

We can draw near to God because Jesus, the Son of God who became a man, saved us.

How does drawing near to God impact my life?

— another passage from Hebrews about drawing near

**Hebrews 10:19-25 ESV** - Therefore, brothers, since we have **confidence to enter the holy places** by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, **through his flesh**, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of **faith**, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our **hope** without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to **love** and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Drawing near to God, confident because of the incarnation, fosters faith.

- Christ, in delivering us from sin, has demonstrated his worthiness as someone we can have faith in.
- Everyday life – hearing bad medical news, Mike and Deb
- Draw near to God and bolster your faith

Drawing near to God, confident because of the incarnation, <sup>STRENGTHENS</sup> helps us hope.

- Christ, in reconciling us with God, has shown himself able to keep his promises.
- Moment by moment – You are struggling with your own walk, unable to overcome a besetting sin
- Draw near to God, “he who began a good work,” let hope rise up

Drawing near to God, confident because of the incarnation, promotes love.

- Christ, demonstrated his love to us in the incarnation, “For God so loved the world
- Right now – finding it hard to serve and to love <sup>- family - church - neighbour</sup>
- Draw near to God, let your heart’s affections grow hot, and love out of the overflow in God’s love for you

Draw near to God!

- ↳ Draw near focusing on the incarnation
- ↳ Jihad coming out of locker room
- ↳ this X Mas...