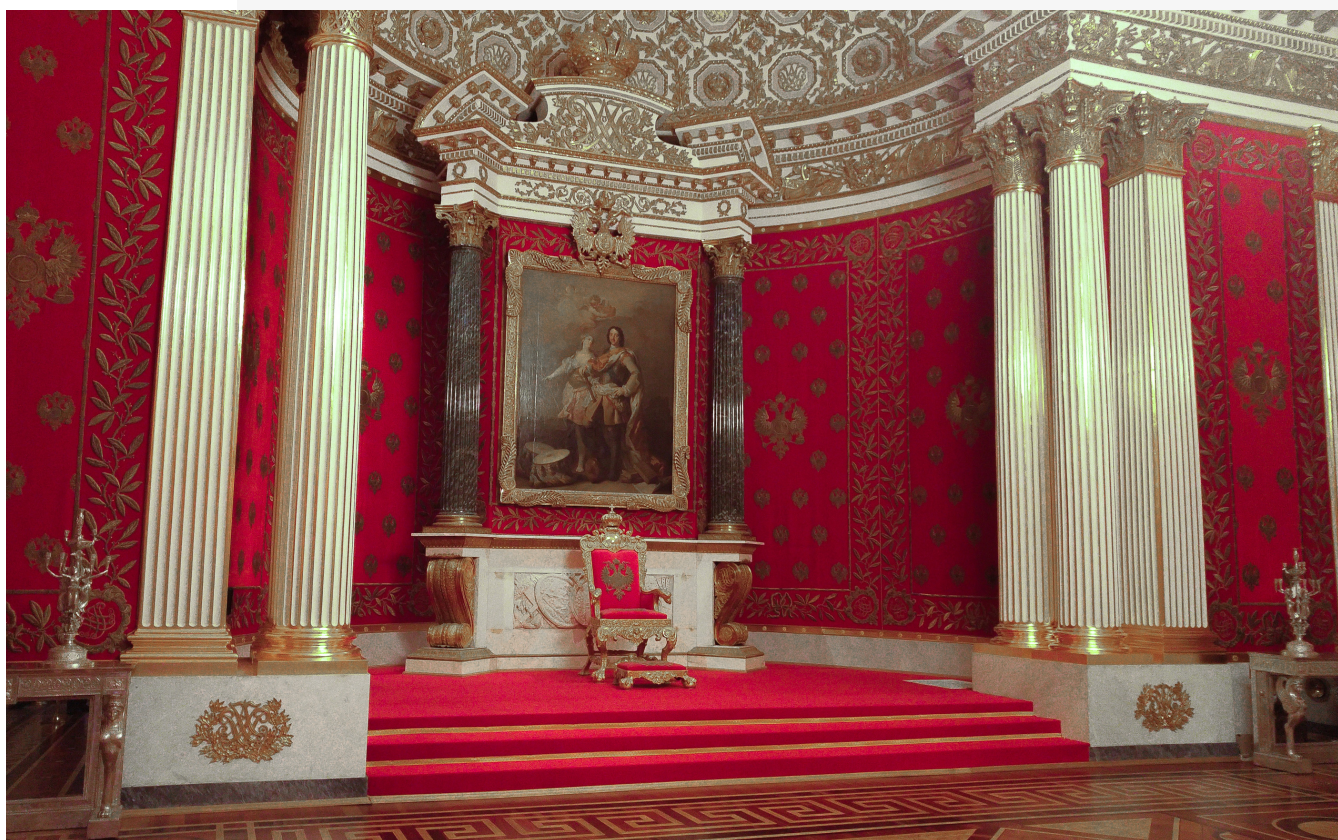


TEACH ME TO PRAY

HEBREWS 4:16

# THE THRONE



**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

DAVID MURRAY  
OCTOBER 2, 2022 (AM)

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# INTRODUCTION

Where do you turn when you are in need? When you experience a grim time, a weary time, a backsliding time, a suffering time, a tempting time, a lonely time, a testing time, where do you turn?

Some turn to their family or friends, and there's a place for that. Some turn to doctors, counselors, and pastors; and there's a place for that too. Others turn to self-improvement and lifestyle gurus. There may be a small place for that. Some turn to sin - the bottle, the syringe, the vape, porn - there's no place for that. That's where we turn, but **where should we turn when we are in need?** Let's get God's answer in Hebrews 4:16.

## BACKGROUND

We began this series last week by looking at the cross. This week we're looking at the throne, something the Hebrew Christians desperately needed to see. Many Jews who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah and put their faith in him for salvation were on the verge of giving up their faith and going back to Judaism. That's why Paul urged them to hold fast their confession (4:14).

Persecution by political and religious leaders had worn them out and worn them down so much that they thought God didn't care about them. That's why Paul urged them to remember the compassionate sympathy of Christ (4:15).

It was a grim time, a tiring time, a backsliding time, a persecuting time, a tempting time, a lonely time, a testing time. It was a time of desperate spiritual need. Where could they turn? Where should they turn? The Apostle answers: "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" (Heb 4:16).



What kind of throne is this?



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# 1. WE HAVE A GRACIOUS THRONE

## The Throne of Grace

There are many different thrones in the world: unstable and unpredictable thrones; tyrannical and abusive thrones; distant and detached thrones; weak and poor thrones; unjust and unfair thrones; deserted and empty thrones.

But this throne is a throne of grace. It is stable, close, accessible, powerful, rich, just, and occupied. But above all, it is a throne of grace. The late Queen Elizabeth II's throne was characterized above all by faithfulness. This throne is characterized above all by grace - kindness for killers, gifts for the greedy, faithfulness for the unfaithful, truth for liars, strength for the weak, a future for the hopeless. "Grace" constructed this throne and oozes out of this throne.

## The King of Grace

It's a throne of grace because the one sitting on it is the King of grace. In the Old Testament, the Israelites had God's throne in the Holy of Holies. The ark of the covenant was designed to resemble a throne. It was a golden box with a golden lid and on either side were golden winged cherubim. In the Old Testament, it was called the "mercy-seat." But it was empty. The cherubim looked inwards at the empty seat with a person-sized gap.

But now, Jesus sits on the throne of grace, God's mercy-seat. He fills the person sized gap. The cherubim now have someone to look at. It's King Jesus who triumphed over temptation and testing without falling (14-15). He is the perfect combination of power and sympathy, majesty and mercy, greatness and grace, sovereignty and salvation, throne and grace.

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Power for prayer.** Prayer brings us to a *royal* throne and a *royal* king. That means prayer is powerful and influential. We're not coming to someone who says, "There's nothing I can do." We are coming to the all-powerful King on his all-powerful throne who can do all things.

**Pity for prayer.** Prayer brings us to a *gracious* throne and a *gracious* king. That means our prayers get a ready and willing hearing no matter how undeserving we are or we feel, no matter how small and undeserving our prayers are.

A GREAT THRONE IS A POWER-THRONE  
A GRACE-THRONE IS A PITY-THRONE



How does this throne of grace and King of grace change our prayers?



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## 2. WE HAVE A GREAT "THEREFORE"

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 (Hebrews 4:16).

### Therefore let us come confidently

No other kind of throne or king can give us confidence in approaching it or him. Unless it was a throne of grace we would not come, or we would with fear, timidity, doubt, hesitancy, etc. But because the king of grace is on the throne of grace we can come boldly and courageously. We don't come brash, cocky, and careless - it's still a throne and he's still a king - but we come with a careful confidence. We don't come dictating and demanding but we do come with certainty and assurance.

### Therefore let us come close

Most thrones and monarchs are intimidating and keep people at arm's length. Here we are invited not just into the Holy place but into the most Holy place, the Holy of Holies. He takes away all curtains and barriers and says, "Because I ripped the curtain with my death, you can now come close. Don't be stand-offish but draw-nearish." Many courts will find reasons not to admit you or your petitions. But this court finds reasons to admit and receive.

### Therefore let us come constantly

In the Old Testament, only the High Priest could approach the throne in the Tabernacle or Temple, and that only once a year. Now, all can come - the weak, the sinful, the tired, the backsliders, the poor, etc. The verb here can literally be translated, "Let us keep coming, let us keep coming near." Not just once a year or even once a day but all day every day. Come again, and again, and again. Whenever a need arises, come for mercy and grace. Whenever you feel convicted, come for mercy and grace. Whenever you've sinned, come for mercy and grace. Come for mercy when you feel miserable (subjective needs) and for grace when you know you should be condemned (objective needs).

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Come to the throne first.** Turn to this King and this throne before anyone else. Instead of turning to Google, Facebook, friend, family, husband, wife, parents, teacher, pastor, counselor, etc, turn to the King of grace on his throne of grace. Bring all your needs to him before you bring them to anyone else.

**Come to the throne most.** You can bring anything and everything to him. His power invites us to bring our big needs; his grace invites us to bring our tiny needs. Given that we are always needy, we should always be at the throne.

NEEDY TIMES ARE  
NON-STOP TIMES



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



## SUMMARY



## A NEW CHAPTER

**List your needs.** Make a list of all your needs and ask yourself how many of them you are bringing to God in prayer. Perhaps you could designate each day of the week for different needs that you bring to God in prayer: physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, familial, social, sexual, and vocational needs.

**Increase your confidence.** The more needs we bring in prayer, the more confidence we will have in prayer. The more we see the King of grace on the throne of Grace, the more confidence we will have in prayer.

**Prayer.** Gracious King, I come to your gracious throne needy yet bold, with confidence that you are able and willing to give me grace and supply all my needs.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where do you turn first and most when you need help?
2. How do you hope this sermon will change the way you pray and what you pray for?
3. What do you doubt most: God's power or God's pity?
4. On a scale of 0-10, where are you on the confidence scale when it comes to prayer?
5. What needs are you hesitant to bring to God? Why?
6. Do your prayers reveal the throne of grace to others? Do your prayers help them do this verse?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church  
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315  
Phone: (616) 878-9768  
[www.firstbyroncrc.org](http://www.firstbyroncrc.org)

Pastor David Murray  
[www.thestorychanger.life](http://www.thestorychanger.life)