



**A  
LETTER  
FROM YOUR  
PASTOR:  
NOVEMBER 2022**  
*by Lee Shipp*

**HE IS WITH US**

*And to us who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us in the gospel, how unutterably sweet is the knowledge that our Heavenly Father knows us completely. No tale bearer can inform on us, no enemy can make an accusation stick; no forgotten skeleton can come tumbling out of some hidden closet to abash us and expose our past; no unsuspected weakness in our characters can come to light to turn God away from us, since He knew us utterly before we knew Him and called us to Himself in the full knowledge of everything that was against us. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. Our Father in heaven knows our frame and remembers that we are dust. He knew our inborn treachery, and for His own sake, engaged to save us. His only Begotten Son, when He walked among us, felt our pains in their naked intensity of anguish. His knowledge of our afflictions and adversities is more than theoretic; it is personal, warm, and compassionate. Whatever may befall us, God knows and cares as no one else can (A.W. Tozer, The Knowledge Of The Holy).*

God's rescue mission was not simply pity for doomed creatures made in His image. He was not content to simply pull them out of danger; He would restore and adopt them as His children. He desired to bring them into a place of great favor and intimacy. The question is not how sinners can have fellowship with God. How can God, Who is holy, have a relationship with us – sinners?

God is not some divine lifeguard but a redeemer willing to save you from drowning in your sins. He is not a rescue worker who wants to deliver you from struggling in the cesspool of life. He is not even a compassionate judge who longs for a way to excuse your crime. Instead, He is consumed with you. He longs for a relationship with you. He wants to be with you. So how can God do it? How can He legally join Himself to those who are sinners? Hebrews 2 reveals that Jesus became a man to suffer death so that by the grace of God, He could taste death for every man. Every man. Not just good men, for no man is. Not just righteous men, for no man is, but for every man. By this grace of sacrifice, Jesus could bring us to glory. Not only could Jesus save us from hell, but He could also

perfect us and make us one with Himself. He could call us brothers by means of imputed righteousness. This means that those who trust Jesus to sanctify them are as holy and perfect as Jesus, Who sanctifies!

Jesus came and by death destroyed death and the devil. Through the cross, Jesus wrecked the powers of Satan and delivered men from the bondage and fear of death. He now serves as our High Priest with great mercy and reconciles us to the Father.

Now, through the atonement, God has saved us and brought us near to Himself, to be with Him and He with us. He is with us! He can be anywhere, but He is with us! He is everywhere, but He is with us! He is not rooting for us; He is with us! He is not leading – He is carrying us. He is not coaching us; He is gracing us!

The Jesus in heaven acts just like the Jesus on earth. His compassion upon the outcast, the sinful, the children, the unclean, the sick, and the prostitutes is the same now as when He was on earth. He saved then; He saves now. He wanted the sinner then; He wants the sinner now. Jesus' desire to see Peter after his public denial is the same desire that Jesus has to see you.

There is safety in Jesus. There is tragedy outside of Jesus. Wrath, death, torment, and condemnation await all who do not trust in Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus wants you to come to Him. He wants you to come so He can save you from His unvented wrath against sin. He died to make reconciliation for the sins of His people. If you are not "His people," then you are still in your sins and will face the judgment of God.

***"THERE IS SAFETY IN JESUS.  
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Not only does Jesus want to save you from this condemnation, but He also wants you to be with Him in joy and life. He wants you to experience the joy and love of His Father. Jesus prayed in John 17:24, *"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."*

The Bible declares in Hebrews 2 that we are one with Jesus, and that He is not ashamed to call us brothers. Considering all our failures, sins, and abuses, it is a fantastic hope to know that we can spend eternity in the love and joy of God without ever being ashamed! God knows where you have been, what you have done, and why you did it, and He wants to sanctify you wholly so you can live joyfully with Him. How marvelous.

I want to take a moment to consider how Jesus is our merciful High Priest. Hebrews 2 reveals how Jesus became a man. He was not a superman, like an angel among us. He was man. He suffered from hunger, anguish, rejection, and so forth. He knows what shame is. He knows personally what it feels like to be abandoned, feel embarrassed, to be misunderstood, and to be falsely accused.

**A HIGH PRIEST WITH MERCY**

Jesus' pity or mercy for you is not like an animal lover pitying

a suffering animal. The Bible says He feels your pain. He is drawn to your suffering and engaged in delivering and healing you. He knows the torment of a trusted friend forsaking you, and He immediately goes into action to console you. When you are overwhelmed with sorrow, Jesus understands, for He also was overwhelmed with grief.

The sufferings Jesus experienced were beyond personal. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. His stripes heal us. God laid the iniquity of us all upon Him. His weakness and suffering experiences are central to His High Priest work.

He is assigned by the Father to take care of you. Not only when you are doing good, but when you are failing, sinning, and suffering, Jesus is engaged on your behalf. Jesus is not loyal only when you are. Jesus is loyal when you are not. Jesus is not only faithful when you are faithful; Jesus is faithful when you are not.

When you have lost confidence in yourself, when your life is spiraling out of control, when there is no way you can pull yourself up, here comes your High Priest with mercy. He is not confident in you to follow His instructions. He is confident in Himself to be all you need.

### **A HIGH PRIEST WHO CAN BE TOUCHED**

When you suffer, He is touched. When you are tempted, He is touched. When you are broken, He is touched. Understand that every time you are betrayed, wounded, hurting, or persecuted, it touches Him. He is one with you, according to Hebrews 2.

Hebrews 4:15 says that we have a High Priest who is touched by the feelings of our infirmity. He is not like a doctor who knows you are sick and how to heal you. The feeling of your pain touches Him. The bowels of His compassion erupt within Him. Picture a mother holding her helpless, suffering child in an emergency room, and you will begin to see the compassion that Jesus has for you. He holds you like that. That is how the mercy comes to you. You are not a patient; you are His brother; you are one with Jesus. It matters to Him.

But you say, "Then, where is God when I hurt? Why does He seem to not care? Why doesn't He help me?" It is because you must access what is flowing out of His heart. He is not holding back mercy, like a dam holding back water and somehow, you must find a way to break the dam. He is not withholding grace. Instead, you are not receiving the abundance of mercy extended to you. You must *"come boldly unto the throne of grace" to obtain mercy and find the grace in difficult times (Hebrews 4:16).*

Not even your sin restrains the Father's grace. Even then, Jesus is touched by your infirmity, and He is drawn to you with the utmost concern and help. Jesus is not your High Priest because you do not need forgiveness. He is your High Priest because you need forgiveness. Jesus is not your High Priest because you have no sin; Jesus is your High Priest because you sin (1 John 2:1).

Jesus will transform all these painful experiences into strength. He alone can work everything together for your good. The good that Jesus is working for you is that you will be conformed to His image.

### **A HIGH PRIEST WHO MAKES YOU GREAT**

When you continue to suffer or sin, Jesus does not despair. He knows He can perfect you. He knows that His blood has made atonement for you. He knows your death has been defeated. He knows because He made atonement for you; He destroyed your death. Jesus is not worried about His ability to sanctify you. He is joyfully gentle in His dealings with you. There is no cloud of judgment over you; no impending wrath is headed your way; Jesus has taken it away.

What did David mean when he said God's gentleness made him great? In Psalms 18, David said, *"Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip."* David deserved judgment. David deserved the harshness of God, but instead, God was gentle. God did not beat David when he was down but picked him up. Likewise, if you humble yourself before God and come to the throne of grace, you will be given mercy. The gentleness of God will make you great. God's mercy to you has nothing to do with the greatness of your sin but with whether you come to Him with it. The devil would tell you to hide your sin from God. All of history tells us this is foolish. The cross tells us to bring our sins to God. All the saints tell us this is freedom.

### **WHAT WILL JESUS DO WITH YOU?**

Do you struggle to believe this? You can believe this for others but not for yourself. You knew better; you promised and vowed to God you would be good, but you have failed. Now, how could somebody like you be given mercy? Is there any hope?

Is there something in the Bible that can assure me that if I come to God with my infirmity, He will be faithful to me? Yes, there is. *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).* In no wise! I will never cast you out. In no wise! No exceptions. No three strikes and you are out. No sin too bad. No sinner too rebellious. Whoever (that is you) comes to me (that is Jesus), I will in no wise cast out.

There is no excuse for you not to come. Those words from John 6:37 were spoken on purpose; those words were spoken for you because Jesus knew you would find it hard to believe that God loves you. He knew you would think you are the exception; you would think you are that one person God hates; you are that one sinner that is too bad to be saved. So, Jesus made it plain – him (put your name in place of him) that comes to me I will in NO WISE cast out.

If you come to Jesus, you will not be cast out. If you do not come to Jesus, you will be cast out. Beloved, come! Stop listening to Satan as he tells you God does not want to be with you. The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Come and find grace and mercy.