

Speaking to the soul



Approaching God

Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. Hebrews 4:16

I only spoke with HRH Queen Elizabeth II on one occasion. I had the privilege of attending a reception at Buckingham Palace to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee and afterwards there were refreshments. I was chatting with a couple of friends and suddenly saw the Queen approaching us. It became clear that I was the person who needed to speak first. I anxiously tried to call to mind the correct way of addressing her. She then asked various kind questions and I felt frankly overwhelmed. I had never imagined that I would actually get to speak with her. However, as the Queen herself would have acknowledged, our God is of infinitely greater power and significance. In our verse today we are told that we can enter his presence with boldness. This is an almost incredible word to use. How can we, as weak and unholy human beings, possibly come boldly into the presence of the eternal and holy God who created the universe? The writer to the Hebrews has a simple and clear answer: Jesus has opened the way for us to come into the holiest place of all and to enjoy a personal relationship with our Creator God.

It's wonderful to know that we can approach God with boldness, but we still need to know what sort of reception we will get when we meet him. The writer assures us that we will be met by mercy and grace. God is a God of justice, but we know that if he treated us justly we wouldn't stand a chance. We have all sinned and fallen well short of his standards. What we need is mercy, and that's what we are promised. Incredibly, God is willing to forgive us all our sins and set us free to live a new life. And, as we enter his presence, we also discover his generous grace, which meets us precisely at the point of our need.

All of this should convince us that we can live our Christian lives with confidence, not because of ourselves or anything we have done, but because of all that Christ has done for us.

QUESTION

Do you feel able to approach God with boldness?

PRAYER

Loving God, thank you that although I have failed you so often, you always greet me with mercy and grace. Amen

Photograph - Snow drops at Mount Stewart, National Trust

