

Keys to successful living

Part 6-dated 26/7/15

Reading : Hebrews 10: 19-20

Our sixth key for successful living is found in Hebrews 10. It is interesting to note that in almost every one of these keys, the text begins with the word *therefore*.

In other words we see a logical unfolding, a sequence of thought. Here are first five keys:

1. Let us fear (God)
2. Let us be diligent
3. Let us hold fast our confession
4. Let us draw near to the throne of grace
5. Let us press on to maturity.

I hope you remember these keys by heart. Let us now move on and look at the sixth key for our successful living. It is found in Hebrews chapter 10 verses 22 (within VV19-22).

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water”.

The content of this verse sounds similar to the fourth key, but there is an important distinction. That one (4th key) was “Let us draw near to the throne of grace”. This 6th key is: “Let us draw near to God”. The distinction is made clear in the context of Hebrews 10:19 and the follow-up in verse 22. “Since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place...let us draw near to God”. This suggests that drawing near to God is equivalent to entering the Most Holy Place.

In the light of this truth, let us look again at these two statements. The 4th key saying “let us draw near to the throne” means that we can come for the help we need—for mercy and for grace as we studied when I was teaching this key. But this 6th key saying “let us draw near to the Most Holy Place” means that we draw near to God Himself. In other words this 6th key opens the way to go much further. Not only that we come to the **throne** for help, but we come because we are invited to take our place with Christ on the throne. It is by taking our place with Him (Jesus) that we enter into the Most Holy Place.

The Tabernacle Pattern

The author of Hebrews uses descriptive language, based on the pattern of the Tabernacle of Moses. Put simply, three (3) main areas comprised the Tabernacle.

First was the Outer Court—an open courtyard bordered by curtains. Any Israelite could enter this area. Then within this courtyard on the western-end, was the Tabernacle itself—a portable tent held up by a wooden framework. Inside the first curtain of the tent was the holy place. Only priest could enter this chamber.

At the further end, beyond the second curtain, was the Most Holy Place—this chamber could be entered only by the High Priest once a year on the Day of Atonement. Our destination is the Most Holy Place, beyond the 2nd curtain. The only furniture in the Most Holy Place—as it was designed by God—was the Ark of the Covenant. This was a box made of acacia wood that was completely covered with gold. The Ark was topped with what was called the Mercy seat or the place of propitiation. Inside the Ark were the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments, but these were covered by the Mercy Seat.

This placement/arrangement indicates that through Christ's propitiation on our behalf, the Law has been covered by mercy. On the ends of the Mercy Seat were two cherubs facing one another. They were looking toward the centre of the Mercy Seat with their wings stretched out over them and their wingtips touching the centre.

The Mercy Seat is God's throne. It is important for us to remember that God sits on a throne of mercy. His mercy covers the Law. The two cherubs with their faces turned inward toward one another, their wingtips touching, represent the place of fellowship-but it also a throne-the seat of God as King.

There was no representation of God Himself in that piece of furniture BUT God did come into the Most holy Place and take His seat. He came in the form of the ***Shekinah Glory***—the visible, palpable presence of Almighty God. Without that glory, the Most Holy Place was in total darkness. There was no natural or artificial illumination.

When the ***Shekinah***-the glorious presence of God, came in, it was the sign that God was taking His place on the throne.

The 6th Let us statement invites us into the Most Holy Place. We are welcomed to draw near to God. We are, in fact invited to take our place with Christ on the throne. This passage in Hebrew 10 also tells us that we are to come by "a new and living way". What is the new and living way? IT IS JESUS. We see a direct comparison of Jesus' life and ministry—the "new and living way"—to the Most Holy Place.

FOUR REQUIREMENTS

Even though we are invited to enter the Most Holy Place, the writer of the Hebrew says we must fulfill certain requirements in order to approach the Mercy Seat and the throne.

1. A SINCERE HEART.

We approach God with our hearts, not with our heads. God is not the answer to an intellectual riddle, but He does meet a longing heart. It must be sincere heart, without any pretensions or hypocrisy. We have to expose ourselves to God just as we are and not try to cover up anything or pretend to be different than we are. We must be open and honest with Him.

2. A FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

In the next chapter of Hebrew we read: "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe"(Heb 11:6). We see from this passage that we must come with faith in God's faithfulness; in other words, we come not in our own ability or righteousness BUT with absolute faith in God's faithfulness.

3. OUR HEARTS SPRINKLED FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE.

An "evil conscience" comes from wrong and sinful deeds we have committed in the past. Through the blood of Jesus, however, we can receive assurance that all those evil deeds in the past have been forgiven and that our hearts are pure from sin. We can have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience through the blood of Jesus.

4. OUR BODIES WASHED WITH PURE WATER.

In his first epistle, John tells us that Jesus came by water and by blood (1-John 5:6). In these two conditions, we see the blood that sprinkles from an evil conscience and the water that washes our bodies. I believe **water** refers to Christian Baptism. In every place where it is explained in the New Testament, Christian baptism is depicted as sharing in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This confirms for us that “ the new and living way” is **Jesus**. It is the act of coming and partaking of His death, His burial and His resurrection. As we approach the Mercy Seat, we identify with every thing that Jesus went through in dying for our sins.

IDENTIFICATION WITH JESUS.

What, then does it mean to be seated with Jesus? It means to be enthroned—to share the throne with Him. Ephesians 2:4-6 reads “ But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

Notice the three stages of identification with Jesus. First we are “made alive”. Second, we are “raised up” or resurrected and third, we are “seated with Him”. Where is Jesus seated? On the throne.

Once we see our identification with Jesus, we are invited to follow Him all the way. Since He is the “new and living way” we can be made alive with Him and we can be resurrected with Him. **BUT WE DO NOT NEED TO STOP THERE.**

We can also be enthroned with Him.

In the pattern of Tabernacle, the 1st curtain represents what we enter into through sharing in the resurrection of Jesus. The 2nd curtain that leads to the Most Holy Place represents what we enter into through sharing in the ascension of Jesus.

Jesus was not merely resurrected; subsequently, He was raised up to heaven to the throne. This is where God wants us. God does not want us to stop short in this new and living way until we have reached the throne—until we are sharing the throne with Jesus, seated with Him in heavenly places. **THAT IS OUR DESTINATION.**

May the Triune God open our minds to understand our position in His Son Jesus Christ and help us to reach our destination.....Amen.