

Who Can Bring Us to God?

Sunday, December 12th, 1986

1 Peter 3:18

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

If you are one who follows the reading of the Word of God, I will be speaking this morning from the book of 1 Peter. I would like for you to find your Bible and open it with me to 1 Peter Chapter 3. This is my subject: “WHO CAN BRING US TO GOD?”

I know that I am speaking to many people out there today. I know that we have quite a number of listeners. I have heard from so many of you and I am grateful for every letter and card that you have written.

I know that the people to whom I am speaking are as different as the snowflakes. Have you ever stood by the window and watched snowflakes fall? Someone told me that though there are billions of snowflakes there are no two just alike.

I know that there are hundreds of people listening to my voice today and you are all different. Out there in our area some are old and some are young. Some are rich and some are poor. Some are male and some are female. Some are quite educated and some are not so educated. Some are quite religious and others not so religious.

In spite of all our differences that I can go on talking about, we have one single thing in common. There is one thing that every son of Adam and every daughter of Adam has in common and that is that we are all sinners. That’s right; we are all sinners.

This is what the Word of God says and I think that is what you know. I think your heart would say that even if your mouth wouldn’t. The Scripture says in Isaiah 53, *“All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.”* We are sinners!

In Romans 3 it says this, *“There is no difference.”* Paul is talking about the Jew and the Gentile. He says that there is no difference. *“We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* James said, *“To offend in one point of the law is to be guilty of the whole law.”*

Paul said again in Romans 3, *“There is none good, no not one.”* Would you believe this? *“There is none righteous.”* There is none that is perfectly righteous. There is none righteous like God and *“There is none that understandeth.”*

There are none that can comprehend the mysteries of God. *“There is none that seek after God.”* Oh, we seek the blessings of God and the benefits of God, but not after God Himself.

In 1 John 1:9, John declares this; *“If any man say that he has no sin, he deceives himself and the truth is not in him.”* He is a deceived person. He goes on and says in verse 10, *“If any man say that he has not sinned, he has made God a liar.”* If I say it or you say it or anyone says that they have not sinned, they make God a liar.

He is not only a liar himself and deceived himself, but the Word of God does not dwell in him. He has also made God a liar because God said, *“All have sinned and come short of His glory.”* God says that all men are sinners.

Here is the critical issue (this being true, knowing that we are all sinners and that God is holy), *“How can man be just with God?”* How can man have fellowship with God? Job said, *“How can man be clean that is born of a woman?”* He said, *“Behold, the moon shineth not, the stars are not clean in God’s sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man who drinks iniquity like the water?”*

Who shall bring us to God? *“Two can’t walk together except they be agreed.”* God said, *“To be accepted, it must be perfect.”* David said, *“Who shall stand in His presence?”* I will answer that question; He said, *“He that hath clean hands and a pure heart and who has never lifted up his soul to vanity.”*

My friends; I want you to listen carefully; God is holy. Do you know the chief attribute of God? Do you know what an attribute is? An attribute is a characteristic; it is that by which a person is known.

You have attributes and you have characteristics. We call them personality sometimes. What is God’s chief attribute and characteristic if you were to define Him with one word? What word would you use to define God?

If you use the word love you have missed it. God is love but God’s chief attribute is not love. His name is not love. His name is Holy. Did you know that? The Scripture says, *“Holy and reverend is His name.”* That is God’s name; God is Holy.

Listen to all of these Scriptures: God is not in His loving temple; He is in His *“Holy Temple.”* He calls His angels not His loving angels but His *“Holy angels.”* Isn’t that what the Word says? The Bible is the Holy Bible. That’s right!

The Tabernacle is called the "*Holy of Holies.*" When the high priest went into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he wore a miter on which was inscribed some words. Do you know what they were? It did not say that God is love although He is. Please don't misunderstand me.

God's chief attribute is His holiness. When the high priest went into the Holy of Holies, on his miter was written these words, "*Holiness unto the Lord.*" It was not written, "God is love."

Isaiah said, "*In the year that king Uzziah died; I saw the Lord, high and lifted up and His train filled the temple: And the cherubim's and the seraphim's around the throne cried, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. God is holy! The chief attribute of God is holiness. Now listen to me and don't get angry with me. I'm telling you the truth; God is holy.*"

What is our chief attribute (the attribute of mankind)? Do you know what our chief attribute is? Our chief attribute is sin. That is what we are called in the Bible, "*sinners.*" That is what the Word of God calls us. The Scripture says, "*While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" Also, "*God commended His love toward us while we were yet sinners, (God loved us in Christ) Christ died for us.*"

"You who were dead in sin hath He quickened together. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. Jesus Christ the Lord died for the ungodly." That is what we are called. God is holy and we are sinners. God is light and we dwell in darkness. God is life and we are death.

There is death all about us. There is death within you. There is no death in God. The Scripture says, "*God is true; let every man be a liar.*" So, here is the point; who is going to bring us to God? God and the sinners are opposites. He said, "*Your sins have separated you and God.*"

You can't come to God like you are. You couldn't last, you couldn't live and you couldn't exist in God's presence. "*God dwells immortal, invisible, dwelling in a light to which no man can approach.*" That is what the Scripture says.

I know this and I want you to listen to me; "Who can bring us to God?" What are we going to do? I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there are some things that will not bring us to God, things that a lot of people think will bring them to God but won't.

You know; it says two or three times in the Word of God, *“There is a way that seems right to men and the end is destruction.”* God says, *“Your ways are not My ways and your thoughts are not My thoughts.”*

I do know this, the law will not bring us to God. You can hang the Ten Commandments on the wall in the school, in the church or anywhere you want to but the presence of that Law just does one thing; it aggravates sin. *“The Law entered that sin might abound.”*

The Law does not do anything but show us what we are. The Law cannot speak mercy. The Law cannot speak peace. The Law cannot speak forgiveness and the Law does not forgive. The Law condemns.

If you walk up to a mirror and look into the mirror, you might say; *“Well, my face looks dirty; my hair is not combed, my clothes are not neat and ironed.”* The mirror won't do anything for you. The mirror won't wash your face, comb your hair or clean your garments. You have to go somewhere else for that. That is what the Law does.

The Law shows me who I am, what I am and what I do. The Law will not bring me to God. The Law will not cleanse my heart or my soul or justify me. Paul said in Romans 3:19, *“What the Law saith it saith to them who are under the Law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God: Therefore, by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”* It is not possible for the flesh to be justified.

The Law will not bring you to God. You can read it, preach it, study it, strive to keep it and there will be only one result and the Scripture says; *“O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?”*

I will tell you something else, the church will not bring you to God. Besides that, the church is not a building, the church is not an organization, the church is not a denomination; the church is an assembly of people who have been brought to God. The church is an assembly of people who know God.

I hear people say, *“Well; I am going to church Sunday.”* What do you mean that you are going to church? Does that mean you are going down to that building? That is not the church; the church is an assembly of people with in whom the Lord dwells.

“God does not dwell in temples made with hands.” He is not worshipped with the figures and pictures of men's hands. A man can be a member of the church and not be a member of the body of Christ or the Kingdom of God.

Judas was one who belonged to an organization but he didn't belong to God. Demas belonged to the organization but he forsook it *"having loved this present world."* Simon Magus was baptized and became a member of the organization but he didn't know God.

Peter said to Simon, *"Your heart is not right with God."* Paul said Alexander the coppersmith *"did me much evil"* but he was a member of a legal organization calling itself "the church."

A church will not bring you to God. Good works will not bring you to God. What did those people say in Matthew 7 at the Judgment? They said, *"Lord; we preached in your name; we prophesied in your name; we cast out devils in your name and did many wonderful works."*

The Lord said, *"Then I will profess unto them; I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity."*

The reason good works won't bring you to God is because before the presence and holiness of God it is not good. *"In the flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God. By the works of the flesh no man is justified. There is none good but God."*

We may do good things compared to what other people do but that is one worm comparing himself with another worm. We have to be judged in the light of God's goodness, God's holiness and in that light. *"There is none good."* Good works will not bring you to God.

Going to the front of the church is not going to bring you to God. God is not down front. Who invented that? I don't know who, but going down to the front is not going to God. God doesn't dwell at the front. *"The Heaven of Heavens will not contain Him. The earth is His footstool."*

Why do men make a pilgrimage down to the front of the church? There are some people who have been down there a half a dozen times and they still haven't found God. They are looking in the wrong place for God. God does not dwell in a place.

Praying the "Sinner's Prayer" will not bring you to God. You can go through all these recitations and imitations and pray something that someone told you to pray and still not know God.

I will tell you this, if a man would come to God and if a man would find out who can bring us to God, do you know where he is going to have to go? He is going to have to go to the Scriptures. This is where God is revealed, in the Word of God. God speaks through His Word.

The Scripture says, *“If they speak not according to the Word of God it is because there is no light in them.”* So, if we want to find out how a man can come to God; let’s go to the Scriptures. Let’s go to the Old Testament where the Law is first mentioned, and see how men came to God.

He said, *“I am the Lord; I change not. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.”* In the Scriptures there is a law of first mention, whatever or however a subject is mentioned the first time, that is what it means the whole way through. How men came to God back in those early days (in the days of Abraham, Moses and other men); that is how men come to God now.

In the Old Testament, listen carefully, there were three essentials to coming to God. There were three essentials for those who would come to God. I want you to listen; I am telling you the truth. For those who would come to God, they must come for atonement, for reconciliation, for mercy and for forgiveness. This is how we come to God.

God is holy and we are sinful. We need something to be done about our sin. There were three essentials in the Old Testament for those who came to God, and here they are:

First of all: There was a Tabernacle.

Secondly: There was a priest, a high priest.

Thirdly: There was a sacrifice.

There were many priests but there was one high priest and there was a sacrifice. Listen to Hebrews 9:6, *“Now when these things were ordained, (that is pictures of the truth, types of the truth, and patterns of the truth) the priests went always into the tabernacle, into the Holy Place, outside the veil, accomplishing the services of God.”*

“But, into the Holy of Holies, (into the Shekhinah glory and in the presence of God), went the high priest only once every year, not without blood which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people.”

Do you see what I am saying? There are three words in that text. There was the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies and the presence of God and there was the high priest and

there was a sacrifice. Once a year on the Day of Atonement that high priest went into the presence of God, where dwelt the Shekhinah glory and there he put the blood sacrifice. God forgave, God accepted and God reconciled, waiting for the coming Lamb of God.

Let me show you this from the Scriptures. Back in the days of Israel, when the encampment was out there in the wilderness, in the center of the encampment, there was a tabernacle. This tabernacle looked like any other tent from the outside.

This tent was only 45 feet by 15x15. It wasn't very large and it wasn't very imposing. Oh, but the inside! On the outside was badger's skin, just old gray, dusty, sandy, badger's skin protecting it against the weather.

When you stood on the hillside and looked down, it looked just like any other tent among many tents. Inside there was the ram's skin dyed red, there was the goat skin and there was the white linen. On the inside of that tabernacle was the Holy Place. There was a four-inch veil which separated the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God.

There was some furniture in this tabernacle. There was the candlestick which pictured Christ, the "*Light of the world.*" There was the showbread which is "*Christ the Bread of life.*" There was the altar of incense right in front of the veil which pictured the prayers of Christ always ascending to God.

There was an altar out there where the lamb was slain and there was a laver of water where the high priest washed, picturing sanctification. There were many priests that went about the services of the tabernacle every day, morning, noon and night.

Only once a year would the high priest come into the Holy of Holies, (only the high priest). He would stop and get a censor, with the incense, (which is the prayers of Christ) and he would slip under the veil with the blood and the incense. He would come into that Holy of Holies.

Now listen, in the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant. In that Ark was Moses' Law and the tables of stones which God gave to Moses on the mountain. In that Ark was Aaron's rod that budded and in that Ark was a pot of manna to which God fed the people.

Over that Ark was the Mercy Seat. Over the Mercy Seat were two cherubims, (winged creatures) facing the center. Over the top of that Ark was the very Glory of God, the cloud of God's glory, the holy, immaculate, infinite, and Shekhinah Glory of God.

When that high priest representing the people, came into that Holy of Holies, into the presence of God, he better have with him the blood atonement, the blood of the lamb. When he came in he put that blood on the Mercy Seat. For that year, sin was overlooked, covered and atoned for. They did that every year until Christ came.

You might say, "What about us today?" Look at the next verses in Hebrews 9. I want you to read verses 11 and 12: *"But Christ, being come a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, (not a tabernacle of badger's skin, goat's skin or ram's skin) that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood Christ entered once into the Holy Place having obtained eternal redemption for us."*

Who can bring us to God? Some say, "Preacher, let's go over that again slowly." Watch this; in the Old Testament and all the way through the Book of Hebrews it tells you that these things were done as a pattern and as a picture.

Out there in the wilderness there was a tabernacle. Over that tabernacle was the cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. The Holy of Holies was a manifestation of the presence and the Shekhinah glory of God. It was God Himself.

Once a year that high priest was selected by God and appointed by God. No man took this office upon himself but only the one who God appointed. With the blood that high priest representing the people would come into the Holy of Holies.

He would come in once a year not without blood which he put on the Mercy Seat for atonement to reconcile and offer for the sins of himself and the people; now, Christ being come, *"He tabernacled among us."* It says in John 1:14, *"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."* The glory of God is seen in the face of Christ Jesus.

Where was the glory of God seen in Israel's day? His glory was seen in the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies, over the Mercy Seat. Where is the glory of God seen today? It is seen in Christ. The glory of God is revealed in the face of Christ Jesus; He tabernacled among us. He is *"God with us. Call His name Emmanuel, God with us."*

"He is our Great High Priest." How many times does the writer of Hebrews write, *"We have a High Priest?"* Now that we have a High Priest at the right hand of God, *"Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace."* Christ is our High Priest.

Christ is our tabernacle, wherein dwells the glory of God. *“His blood maketh atonement for our soul. Christ being come a High Priest of good things to come by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, that is to say not of this building, but in His own flesh with the blood, not of bulls and goats, but His own blood, He entered once.”* I’m talking about justification, sanctification, redemption and acceptance.

You don’t do this every Sunday or every Sabbath Day or even once a year. *“By one offering Christ hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”* This is the way to God. This is the reason that Christ our Great High Priest who gave His own blood by His own sacrifice in the very presence of God, not in a tabernacle here on earth. Christ said; *“I am the way; I am the truth and I am the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.”*

You don’t come to the Father by laws and rules, organizations, professions, dedications and reformations; you come by Christ. Listen to the text in 1 Peter 3; (I told you I would get to it in 1 Peter 3:18); *“For Christ also hath once suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. Being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit.”*

Now, in closing; I want to give you several things in this text. I want to give them to you word by word. The Scripture says, *“Christ.”* Who is He? Who is this man Jesus Christ? *“A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and thou shalt call His name Immanuel (God with us). Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, Prince of Peace, the Everlasting Father.”*

He is God in human flesh. Our Great High Priest is God in human flesh. He has an everlasting Priesthood. His Priesthood never ends. *“He is a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.”*

Listen to this; Christ hath once, with one offering, with the one atonement, and with the one sacrifice and with one life and death, *“Christ hath once suffered.”* He suffered in life and He suffered in death. *“He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.”*

He suffered once in life and once in death. Why did He do this? He suffered for our sins. Isaiah says in Isaiah 53: *“He was wounded for our transgressions.”* He is the Lamb of God. He is not only the Priest, the Altar, the Tabernacle and the Sacrifice, He is the Lamb.

It was His blood that was offered. *“He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His*

stripes we are healed.” He is the Just One who died for the unjust. He is the sacrifice who brings us to God that *“He might bring us to God.”*

Paul in a great benediction and a great time of praise and blessing said this in Hebrews 7:25; *“Wherefore, He is able.”* He is able because of who He is, because of what He did and because of where He is. *“He is able, (totally sufficient), to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.”* He is able!

All who believe, all who receive, and all who trust, *“He is able.”* It doesn’t matter the sin or the past. *“He is able.”* How is He able? He is able because of who He is, what He did and where He is now. *“He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.”*

Paul wrote these words: *“There is one God, (only one, the Lord our God is only one God), and there is one Mediator, (one Intercessor) between God and men and that is the man Christ Jesus.”* One God and one Mediator!