

Hugo Bouter

# That He might bring us to God

1 Peter 3:18

---

## Introduction

This is a popular theme in meetings and conferences. It summarizes the glorious consequences of Christ's work of redemption. We once were far from God, but now we have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:11-22).

There are three main themes to think about:

1. We have been brought near to God (Luke 15);
2. We have been brought into a relationship with God and with Christ (Eph. 2);
3. We have been called into His service as sons and priests (Mal. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2).

## Back to the Father

Who does not know the story of the prodigal son? It is a beautiful illustration of man becoming aware of his lost condition and coming to himself. This speaks of conversion and repentance. He makes the decision to go to God, realizing his own failure: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight" (Luke 15:21). That confession is enough for the Father, and then the miracle happens: the repentant sinner is clothed with the best robe, he receives a ring on his hand as a sign of God's

faithfulness, and sandals on his feet. The latter testifies to all that is needed for a walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

The Father's response means that Christ Himself has become my righteousness before God. I have been accepted by grace, and made pleasing to God in the Beloved (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:6). We have been delivered from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13-14).

## Children and sons of the Father

It is a miracle of God's grace that now we have been brought near to God as children and sons. The Father acknowledges us as His dear children and we acknowledge Christ, the Son, as our Lord and Savior. Being "children of God" means that we are born of Him; as newborn babes, we have received new life, eternal life. Being "sons of God" emphasizes our new position before Him, for the sons of God represent Him here on earth and should walk in a manner worthy of Him (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:4-7).

This determines our Christian service, our worship in spirit and truth, and implies that the sons of God have also become heirs of God (cf. John 3 and 4). For it is by the Spirit of His Son, whom God has sent into our hearts, that we cry, "Abba, Father!" This is all in contrast to the blessings of Israel, which were earthly and outward in nature. The church or assembly, however, has come near through the blood of Christ and is growing up to be a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2).

## Priests in God's sanctuary

There is a third blessing related to our position in God's presence. We can be active as Levites and priests before God. The Old Testament types find their fulfillment in this dispensation in a new order of things (cf. also already Neh. 11:17). The temple rituals have a spiritual significance for the believers, who now as sons and priests can freely approach God and always have access in His presence.

The Most Holy Place is no longer closed. This is the teaching of the letter to the Hebrews (see Heb. 9 and 10). Among other things, the letter ends with the call to continually offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God through Christ, that is the fruit of our lips which profess His name. There are also material sacrifices of

doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Heb. 13:15-16).

Even under the old covenant there is mention of a son who is spared because he serves his father (Mal. 3:17). This is also the characteristic feature of those who serve God in spirit and truth and acknowledge Christ as Lord over His house. Peter says that we as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:4-5).

---

