



Bethel South Sermon Notes – “*Behind the Veil*”

Speaker: Ps Mike Gowans

Series: Jesus Is Better

Main Passage: Hebrews 9

Main Idea

Jesus didn't simply make prayer possible—He made God's presence *accessible*.

Through His finished work on the cross, the veil separating humanity from God was torn. We no longer approach God from a distance, but with boldness, confidence, and intimacy through Jesus.

Jesus Made a Better Way

Hebrews 9

Under the Old Covenant, the Holy of Holies was separated by a thick veil.

Only the high priest could enter.

Only once a year.

Only after extensive preparation.

The presence of God was real, but access was limited.

Then Jesus changed everything.

Matthew 27:51

"At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."

The veil wasn't torn by people.

It was torn by God.

→ Jesus didn't improve access to God. He removed every barrier.

Bold Access to God's Presence

Because of Jesus:

- We don't have to earn God's acceptance.
- We don't have to approach Him with fear.
- We don't have to wait for a special occasion.

We have access every day.

→ The most exclusive place in the universe has become available to every believer.

Don't Settle for the Outer Court

Many Christians spend their lives living in the outer court.

They're:

- **Saved**
- **Serving**
- **Busy**
- **Faithful**

Yet they never experience deep intimacy with God.

God wants more than your activity.

He wants your intimacy.

He doesn't simply want you to work for Him.

He wants you to know Him.

And He wants you to know that you are fully known and fully loved.

His Presence Is the Greatest Gift

Sometimes we seek God primarily for what He can do.

We pray for:

- **Healing**
- **Provision**
- **Direction**
- **Miracles**
- **Answers**

While God certainly cares about those things...

His greatest gift isn't what He gives.

His greatest gift is Himself.

Exodus 33:15

"If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here."

Moses understood that God's presence was more valuable than the Promised Land.

→ The presence of God is what makes His people different.

We Weren't Meant to Live in Our Own Strength

When we try to love...

Serve...

Lead...

Forgive...

Or endure life's challenges in our own strength...

Eventually we run out of fuel.

Key Thought:

God's presence is our strength.

We weren't designed to merely work for God.

We were designed to walk with Him.

A Pattern That Prepares Our Hearts

The Tabernacle Prayer Pattern isn't about earning God's love.

It's about preparing our hearts to enjoy His presence.

The Gate

Thanksgiving

Begin by thanking God for what He has done.

→ Gratitude shifts our focus from our problems to God's faithfulness.

The Courts

Praise

Worship God simply for who He is.

→ Praise reminds us that God is worthy regardless of our circumstances.

The Brazen Altar

Remember Christ's sacrifice.

Celebrate the joy of your salvation.

→ Never lose your wonder at the cross.

The Laver

Receive His forgiveness.

Allow Him to cleanse your heart and conscience.

→ Jesus doesn't cleanse us because we earned it. He cleanses us because He loves us.

The Lampstand

Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you.

Ask Him for:

- **Wisdom**
- **Strength**
- **Discernment**
- **Guidance**

→ The Christian life cannot be lived apart from the Holy Spirit.

The Table of Showbread

Feed on God's Word.

Meditate on Scripture.

Speak His promises over your life.

→ Don't live on stale bread. Spend time daily feeding your soul with God's Word.

The Altar of Incense

Intercede for others.

Pray for:

- **Your family**
- **Your church**
- **Your city**
- **Your nation**
- **God's Kingdom to come**

→ As we draw close to God, our hearts begin to reflect His heart for others.

Behind the Veil

This is where the journey leads.

Not to another task.

Not to another request.

Simply to God's presence.

Here we:

- **Listen.**
- **Worship.**
- **Rest.**
- **Wait.**
- **Enjoy fellowship with Him.**

→ Prayer isn't only about speaking to God. It's also about being with Him.

Everything Points to Jesus

Inside the Ark of the Covenant, every item foreshadowed Christ.

The Manna

Jesus is the Bread of Life.

He alone satisfies our deepest hunger.

Aaron's Rod

What was once dead came back to life.

→ Jesus still brings dead dreams, broken relationships, and weary hearts back to life.

The Tablets of the Law

The Law revealed humanity's inability to save itself.

Jesus fulfilled what we never could.

→ Jesus became our righteousness.

The Mercy Seat

At the Mercy Seat, justice and mercy met.

Through Jesus, we no longer approach a throne of condemnation.

Hebrews 4:16

"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence..."

→ God invites us to a throne of grace, not a courtroom of shame.

Friends Spend Time Together

God doesn't simply call us servants.

He calls us friends.

Relationships grow through time together.

→ The goal of prayer isn't checking a spiritual box. It's enjoying *friendship* with God.

Final Challenge

This week, don't settle for routine prayer.

Use the Tabernacle Prayer Pattern as an invitation to draw near to God's presence.

Walk through each step intentionally.

Then...

Go behind the veil.

Sit quietly.

Listen.

Be still.

Enjoy His presence.

The greatest reward of prayer isn't getting something from God.

It's getting more of God Himself.

Discussion Questions

1. Ps Mike said that many believers spend their lives living in the "outer court." What do you think that looks like practically, and what keeps people from experiencing deeper intimacy with God?
2. The veil was torn from top to bottom, giving us direct access to God's presence. How does that truth change the way you think about prayer?
3. Which step of the Tabernacle Prayer Pattern do you feel most naturally drawn to? Which one would help strengthen your relationship with God if you practiced it more consistently?
4. Ps Mike said that God's greatest gift isn't answered prayers or miracles—it's His presence. Why can it be so easy to seek God's hand instead of His heart?
5. What is one practical change you can make this week to spend less time rushing through prayer and more time simply being with God?