

WELCOME TO



BELL CREEK

Community Church



FEBRUARY 22, 2026

FOLLOWING JESUS TO THE THRONE OF GRACE
HEBREWS 4:14-16 & PSALM 50:14-15

SERMON BY: PASTOR FRED WRIGHT

CURRENT SERMON SERIES:
FOLLOW – OUR JOURNEY WITH JESUS

FOLLOWING JESUS TO THE THRONE OF GRACE

HEBREWS 4:14-16 & PSALM 50:14-15

Seeking the Presence of God

Praying in Times of Trouble

Communicating Gratitude in Prayer

FOR NEXT WEEK

Read Colossians 3:7-15.

DAILY CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE READING

FEBRUARY 22: LEVITICUS 26-27

FEBRUARY 23: NUMBERS 1-2

FEBRUARY 24: NUMBERS 3-4

FEBRUARY 25: NUMBERS 5-6

FEBRUARY 26: NUMBERS 7

FEBRUARY 27: NUMBERS 8-10

FEBRUARY 28: NUMBERS 11-13

UPCOMING AT THE CREEK

MEMBERSHIP

Our next 3-week Membership Class begins today in the Prayer Room during both services. If you are interested in more information, please contact Pastor Dylan (dylan@bellcreek.org).

NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY CLASS

Our New Testament Theology Class continues tonight at 6:00 PM in the Prayer Room. Please join us as we continue our study in the Apocalypse of John.

AAA BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN

Bell Creek is participating in AAA Pregnancy Center's Baby Bottle Campaign to support the Sanctity of Human Life. Empty baby bottles are available in the back of the gym after both services for pick up. If you prefer to donate online or have questions, please contact Becky DeGrazia (BeckyD1633@gmail.com). Bottles are due back to Bell Creek by Sunday, February 22.

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING

All young adults 18-30 are welcome to come together for lunch after church the 2nd Sunday of each month. We will meet in the Prayer Room for lunch, fellowship, games, and encouragement in our faith. Let's gather together and build friendships with other young people in a fun and laid back environment. We will also have other gatherings and outings at various times throughout the year. Come join your fellow young adults at Bell Creek!

BETWEEN TWO TREES BOOK STUDY

Our Between Two Trees study will meet Sunday, March 8th. We will discuss *Everything is Never Enough: Ecclesiastes' Surprising Path to Resilient Happiness* by Bobby Jamieson. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Dylan (dylan@bellcreek.org).

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Save the date! We are excited to share that we will be hosting VBS on July 20-24. We will be journeying to *Emerald Crossing: An Irish Adventure through Psalm 23*. Registration will open this spring for both children and volunteers.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

PRAYER MEETINGS

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 12 NOON

PRE-TEEN & MIDDLE SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP

2ND SERVICE

AWANA

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SEPTEMBER-MAY

HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES
AND EVENTS AT BELLCREEK.ORG

OUR MISSION

MATTHEW 22:37-40

He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets depend on these two commandments."

MATTHEW 28:19-20

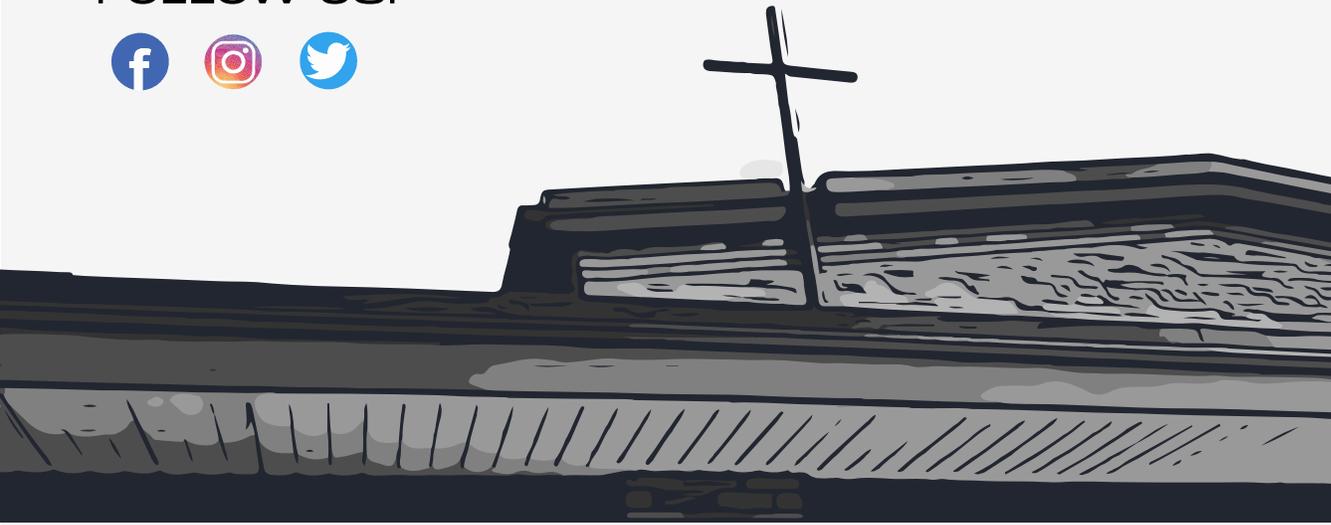
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am with you always to the end of the age.

STAY CONNECTED

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE!

WWW.BELLCREEK.ORG/CONTACT-US

FOLLOW US!



BELL CREEK
Community Church

30000 FIVE MILE RD.
LIVONIA, MI 48154

Sermon Series: Follow – Our Journey with Jesus

Sermon Title: Prayer - Following Jesus to the Throne of Grace

Sunday, February 22, 2025

Scripture Reading:

“Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me! O LORD, be my helper!” You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!” (Psalm 30:10–12, ESV)

Sermon Title: Prayer - Following Jesus to the Throne of Grace

What is “prayer?” Prayer, is talking to God! Whether we are worshiping Him, thanking Him, confessing to Him, seeking His help, or just telling Him about our day, prayer is simply talking to God!

Seeking the Presence of God

“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:14–16, ESV)

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace...”

Because we are forgiven, beloved, children of God, we can confidently draw near God’s throne when and expect to find mercy, grace, and help in our time of need.

When we say we want to “seek the presence of God,” we do not mean that God is sometimes absent and sometimes present. God is omnipresent, which means He is everywhere! He is always near! But Scripture also teaches that believers are invited to draw near to God in a relational, experiential way. There is a difference between the intellectual acknowledgment that God is present and entering His presence through prayer.

The Bible shows that when people encounter God, there are often two responses: first, they are terrified and humbled. When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, his first response was not confidence but confession: “And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’” (Isaiah 6:5, ESV). Entering the blinding light of the presence of a holy, almighty God reveals our frailty and sinfulness.

But Scripture also shows a second response: restoration and renewed courage. Isaiah is cleansed and then sent: “Here am I. Send me.” God’s presence humbles us, but it also restores us.

That is why in Psalm 73, the psalmist can say, “‘Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my

portion forever. For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.” (Psalm 73:25–28, ESV)

The Christian life is not only about believing true things about God; it is about learning to say, “But for me it is good to be near God.” Prayer is one of the crucial, essential ways we learn to dwell in God’s presence.

How do we do this practically? We are often very good at rushing into prayer with requests, but we are not very good at simply being with God.

This trains our hearts to slow down, to attend to God Himself, and to learn to enjoy His presence before we ever ask Him for anything. Before we learn to ask God for help, we must learn to be with God. Seeking His presence is the soil in which all other prayer grows.

I want to take just a moment to practice this together. We’re not asking God for anything yet; we are simply learning to seek His presence.

““As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.” (Daniel 7:9–10, ESV)

Let’s enter the presence of God using this Scripture as our guide...

“O LORD, Ancient of Days, heaven is full of Your glory, glory beyond imagination.

We see thrones set in place, and You seated in power. Your clothing white as snow and the hair of Your head like pure wool; Your throne is flames of fire, its wheels burning with fire, and a river of fire flows from before You, with thousands upon thousands serving You and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before You.

We feel small, humbled, and awed before your majesty.

We hear the roar of fire, and the countless voices of Your heavenly servants attending You.

We feel reverent fear and trembling mixed with deep peace, for You are holy and You reign forever.

Glory be to the Lord our God who calls us to come confidently into His presence. His mercy is everlasting. Amen.”

This is not about creating mental pictures for their own sake; it is about letting Scripture guide our prayers so that we learn to be with God, to pay attention to who He is, and to delight in His presence.

So, seeking the presence of God means slowing down long enough to actually attend to God Himself - seeing, hearing, and feeling His glory as Scripture reveals it, before we rush in to ask Him for anything.”

Question: When you think about approaching God, what makes you hesitant or unsure, and how does the picture of Jesus inviting us to “draw near to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” challenge or change how you think about God and His desire to meet with you?

Praying in Times of Trouble

“that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

When we are in trouble, Scripture does not call us to pretend everything is fine before we pray. God invites us (in fact, He **COMMANDS** us) to come to Him for help, and to come immediately when we are disturbed, grieving, afraid, or confused. The Psalms are full of prayers that express pain honestly.

“When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you. Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand.” (Psalm 73:21–23, ESV)

Maybe you’ve heard that you can say anything to God because He’s got big shoulders and can handle it? Are we to get angry at God and disrespect Him by telling Him He’s not good, He’s not fair, and He’s not doing what’s right? **NO!** Scripture sets boundaries on our expressions of pain.

In the Scriptures, we see God’s people tell Him they feel devastated, sad, angry, bewildered, shocked, depressed, and sometimes they even ask Him questions like, “Where are You? Why do you hide Your face from me? Why do You delay in helping me?”

But God’s people have a boundary. We see in the Scriptures that they speak honestly to God, but not with disrespect, accusations, curses, or bitter complaints against Him. We must bring our grief to Him, but we come as children before a Father, not as rebels before a tyrant. We are commanded to pour out our hearts before Him while remaining aware of who we are, and Who He is.

Prayer in times of trouble is the holy place where we express our deepest pain and where God hears us, comforts us, helps us, and renews our hearts and our hope in Him.

How do we pray in times of trouble?

We begin with Who God is, we name the specific trouble, we express our emotional reaction to our trouble, we describe what we see and hear, we express why it troubles us, and we turn to God for help.

“Holy Lord, You are: The Good Shepherd

Yet, when we **THINK** of: Those among us who are sick, grieving, depressed, anxious, suffering

Our hearts are: Sad, and burdened

We **SEE**: Our brothers and sisters downcast and burdened

We **HEAR**: Their sorrows and their tears

These things trouble us because: We love them and we confess that we often don’t know what to do or how to help because we don’t have the wisdom or the power to fix these troubles.

But in our helpless state, we turn to You: We ask You to heal them, strengthen them, help them. Uphold them, provide for them, and protect them.

Hear us, O Lord, and come to our aid. In Jesus Name, Amen!”

When we don’t know what to pray in times of trouble, don’t start by trying to fix the problem!

Start by naming who God is, then tell Him exactly what is happening, what you see, what you hear, and what you feel. Then turn to Him for help.

Question: What is one specific trouble you are carrying right now that you could bring honestly, but hopefully before God? How might naming what you see, hear, and feel help you draw near to Him in that pain?

Communicating Gratitude in Prayer

“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.” (Psalm 50:14–15, ESV)

In the Scriptures, gratitude to God is practiced by naming His gifts, not by vague thanks. Biblical thanksgiving doesn’t stop at a mere “thank you, God.” The Psalmists remember what God has done. They describe specific mercies, concrete acts of deliverance, and personal blessings. And in the act of remembering God’s provision, they experience deep joy.

“You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!” (Psalm 30:11–12, ESV)

So, gratitude, as it is modeled in the Psalms, involves remembering the details of God’s provision and expressing emotion. Gratitude is fueled by memory. We remember what God did, and our hearts begin to rejoice.

Note: Thanksgiving is not about pretending life is easy; it is about choosing to rejoice before God for what He has done, amid the good and the hard things of life. So, prayer becomes a place to display joy to God by talking about His works in all circumstances.

How do we express gratitude to God?

We Begin with who God is. We name a specific blessing. We express our emotional response to God’s blessings. We recount details of how we were blessed. We rejoice before God.

“Blessed God, You are: The Maker and Sustainer of everyone and everything!

We celebrate before You, for You have worked wonders.

We think of: How you have provided for our needs.

Our hearts are: secure, full, and happy!

We remember: Jesus has saved us, and because of Him we are forgiven, beloved, children of God. We have everlasting life, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and every spiritual blessing in Christ. And not only these things, Lord! You have provided us with food, clothes, homes, jobs, grocery stores, clean water, doctors, hospitals, fire departments, police departments, and the freedom to worship you together with our family in Christ in this wonderful church building. Your blessings are more than we can number.

These things remind us of: How long ago you brought your people out of slavery in Egypt into a good land, flowing with milk and honey!

And before You we: Overflow with praise, thanksgiving, and joy as we think about your love and kindness toward us in Jesus.

Blessed are You, O Lord. Amen!"

Question: In your prayers, do you seek God's presence and express specific gratitude, or do you run to Him with your list of needs? Most of us run to Him with our needs first! What would it look like this week for us to slow down and practice coming into His presence, or giving thanks intentionally?

Benediction:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16, ESV)



Prayer - Following Jesus to the Throne of Grace

1. What did you think of the sermon "Prayer - Following Jesus to the Throne of Grace"?

2. What makes you feel hesitant to approach God in prayer? How does knowing that Jesus sympathizes with your weakness change the way you think about coming into God's presence?

3. What does it look like for you to "seek His presence" this week before bringing requests? What habits or distractions make it hard for you to slow down and reflect on who God is?

4. What is one specific trouble you could pray about right now? How could you structure a prayer that; names who God is, honestly describes how it is affecting you, and turns you to Him for help?

5. What is one specific blessing from this past week that you can name in detail? How does remembering and recounting God's provision shape your joy and trust in Him?

