

COME WITH CONFIDENCE!

Hebrews 4:14-16

The rich words of Graham Kendrick and Charles Wesley:

My Lord, what love is this that pays so dearly

—that I, the guilty one, may go free!

And so they watched Him die, despised, rejected. //

But O, the blood He shed flowed for me!

And now this love of Christ shall flow like rivers. //

Come wash your guilt away! // Live again!

Amazing love! O what sacrifice\

—the Son of God given for me.

My debt He pays and my death He dies that I might live.

Amazing love!

How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Marveling at this love, the writer to the Hebrews
builds on that base.

Because of Jesus' death for us, He is able to serve as
our High Priest.

That's the theme Hebrews develops in **4:14-16**

Doctrinal teaching of **Christ's superiority to Judaism**
1-10:18

Jesus is the best revelation of the Father 1-4:13

Better than prophets 1:1-3

Better than angels 1:4-2:18

Better than Moses 3:1-4:13

Demonstration of Jesus' superior revelation concludes with a
warning:

Israel learned the hard way that it's dangerous to
take God's Word lightly.

His Word is living and effective—it's not something to play around with!

**If we want to enjoy His rest,
we must listen to His Word and *DO* what He says!**

Even when life is tough , and when we're unsure about what tomorrow may bring.

—especially when facing opposition and hard times.

Even then we can trust it as our *final authority*. **4:11-13**

**Since God's Word is living and effective,
we ought to respond in faith and obey it.**

Today, those who fail to enter His rest,

face ***His Word***, which is *sharper* than a two-edged sword.

It penetrates the innermost part of our being.

It cuts deep.

It uncovers every area of our life.

It works on us, poking and prodding, doing corrective surgery,
until we are transformed into what God wants us to become.

[Now the writer moves on to his second major doctrinal theme:

Not only is Jesus superior to other leading people in Israel's
history because He is the best revelation of the Father,
but also because . . .]

JESUS IS THE BEST HIGH PRIEST 4:14-7:28

Have you ever traveled away from home and needed a doctor,
when you didn't know anybody in town?

Have you ever needed a pastor when you were far from home?

Because of ski resorts surrounding Salt Lake, as well as their
role providing medical services for surrounding states, we
often received calls from pastors seeking someone to visit

people from their church, or from a family member looking for someone to help a relative, or an individual in distress seeking help.

Can you imagine finding yourself in that situation in a strange town, at 2:00 in the morning?

Hebrews tells us we have a High Priest in God's presence anytime we need help, day or night! Even at 2 a.m.!!

We can call with confidence, not fear, knowing He's there for us, ready to come to our side to assist us—whenever we need help.

Why is He able to do this for us so effectively?

REASONS FOR OUR RESPONSE

The basis of his exhortation

We have a great High Priest.

The writer suggests four reasons we can call on Jesus in our time of need.

–four reasons He is qualified to serve as our High Priest

–to intervene on our behalf.

1. He has passed through the heavens 14a

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,”

The High Priest was the one who passed through the veil in the temple.

He went from man's sphere in the world, into God's presence.

In the same way, Jesus, our High Priest, passed through the heavens.

He has been on both sides—ours and God's

He's been on our side; He's now seated on God's side.

He's been there. He has lived among us,
 faced the same temptations we face,
 and then ascended from here to the Father's right hand.
 He's a High Priest whose sphere of influence isn't limited
 to this world.

He passed through the heavens and now sits at the
 Father's right hand.

He has influence with the Father because He is God's own
 Son.

Imagine having a lobbyist for your cause who is the Son of the
 President.

Talk about being able to cut through the red tape and get to
 the top!

That's what **God's Son** is able to do for us in God's presence!

2. He is able to sympathize with our weakness.

4:15a

*"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize
 with our weaknesses,"*

He can sympathize with our affliction because He has
 experienced the same.

"Sympathize" lit., to feel together with another person what
 they feel.

Man's view of God sees Him above and far removed from
 our affliction.

Pagans view God as an angry God to be satisfied.

Greeks view Him as "apathetic," unfeeling.

Jews view Him as different, holy, far above us.

We, too, think: “A *holy God, could never understand what I’m going through. He can’t identify with me. He can’t feel what I feel.*”

Some people think we need *another* intermediary,
–someone who understands our feelings
–to intervene for us.

Hebrews tells us Jesus *IS* that somebody.

He knows exactly what we’re going through—because He’s
been there!

If you put two stringed instruments in a room and play a note on one, the string tuned to the same frequency on the other responds. They resonate together. *That’s sympathy.*

If you’ve suffered a broken leg and been confined to crutches, you sympathize with someone else on crutches, even *years* later.

The same is true for people who’ve lost a child, or go through depression, an auto accident, unfair criticism, or financial burdens.

We sympathize with them because we know the feeling.
We’ve been there!

What encouragement it gives to know that no matter how down we may be, no matter how pressured, how despondent, *Jesus understands.* He’s felt that pain too.

If we’re feeling betrayed, he knows the feeling.
He was betrayed.

If we’re falsely accused, he knows the feeling.
He was falsely accused.

If we’re under attack, he knows the feeling.

If we don't get what we deserve, . . .

If we don't have all we need to live adequately, . . .

If we're discouraged, and alone, abandoned, . . .

. . . He knows all about it! He's been there!

How strange it must have been for the Creator to experience human frailty.

But He endured it, so that when we come near His throne, we will never tell Him something that seems foreign to Him.

Kent Hughes: "Whatever we may be going through, there's not a note we can play, not a melody or a dirge, no minor key, no discordant note, **that does not evoke a "sympathetic resonance" in Jesus.**"

Jesus is able to sympathize with us in our weakness or affliction.

He knows what it feels like. He's experienced it too.

3. He was tempted like we are. 4:15b

"We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are."

He has been tempted in every area of life we will ever experience.

He knows all about the struggle we face with the lust of the flesh.

"Make these stones bread . . . Feed yourself! Satisfy your need!"

He knows all about the struggle we face with the lust of the eye.

"Look at all the kingdoms I can give you!"

—focus on things we can see.

He knows all about the struggle we face with the pride of life.

“Cast yourself down, . . . and I will make you powerful!”—prestige, success

Satan threw everything at Him that he throws at us,
and more intensely; the stakes were much higher!

Jesus knows all about what we’re going through.

The only difference: because of His character, Jesus never had to struggle with sin on the inside, as we do, for He had no sin. He was totally apart from it!

He never gave in to temptation, so He experienced far greater pressure than we ever endure. We give in under much less pressure.

Some people say that if He could never give in to the temptation, then it wasn’t as real for Him as it is for us.

C.S. Lewis: “A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. . . . ***Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is.***”

You find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in.

You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down.

A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes does not know what it would have been like an hour later. . . .

We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it;

Christ, because he's the only man who never yielded to temptation, is the only One who knows to the full what temptation means.

Some people appear to live a sheltered life.

We think they never face the temptations we do.

How could they understand what I'm going through?

Jesus didn't live a sheltered life;

He's endured greater pressure than we could ever imagine!

4. **He never gave in to the temptation.** 4:15c

He was tempted in every way, just as we are “—yet was without sin.”

He never sinned. He never threw in the towel.

He knows what it takes to triumph over temptation

—specifically *this* temptation the Hebrews are facing

—He faced it.

He was tempted the same way they are—every way we're tempted—without sin.

This doesn't mean he experienced every individual temptation we do.

But He did experience the same kinds of temptation, and much more intensely.

He reached our limit of temptation and far beyond it, and still didn't cave in!

Since He knows how great the pressure can be,

He has greater compassion for people who are tempted than any sinner could ever have!

OUR RESPONSE TO THESE REASONS

How should we respond to such a High Priest?

1. Let us hang on to our profession 4:14b

“Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.”

Our English text says *“let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.”*

That gives the impression we’re supposed to hang on to our faith.

It leads to the conclusion that we might let go of our faith and lose our salvation.

That’s not what the text says. Lit., *“let us hang on to our profession.”*

He isn’t addressing the fear of losing our salvation or of “giving up the faith.”

Salvation is referred to in Scripture as *eternal* life—it doesn’t end!

He’s talking about hanging on to our *profession*

They’re tempted to go underground—act like the crowd—avoid affliction.

He exhorts us not to throw in the towel and join the crowd returning to Judaism.

Jesus knows that feeling. He was tempted to throw in the towel. But He endured the affliction. He can help us do the same.

Hang in there! Never give up! Don’t throw in the towel!

Continue to live for God; trust Him to handle the obstacles!

2. Let us draw near with confidence and get the help we need. 4:16a

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Since we have this kind of High Priest, we can approach Him confidently to seek help when the pressure mounts.

LET’S DRAW NEAR TO HIM!

RESULTS OF OUR RESPONSE

When we hang on to our profession . . . When we draw near boldly . . . **Two things happen:**

1. We receive mercy 4:16c

He understands our struggle.

“ Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy”

John Foster wrote about a time in the ‘30s when he came home to find his daughter in tears in front of the radio. She told him the news: “Japanese tanks entered Canton today.”

For most people it was just another war story.

But she was born in Canton.

To her it meant home, school, friends.

What made the difference? *She had been there!*

She identified with those people.

That’s true of Jesus also.

We receive mercy because He knows what it’s like.

He’s been there!

2. We find grace to help us when we need it. 4:16c

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

The throne we come to is a throne of *GRACE!*

The phrase catches our attention.

Why? We don't think of a throne as a place of grace.

We have courts of *law*. Rulers lay down the law!

Judges judge based on law!

Even religious people impose laws:

"Do this! Don't do that!"

We *expect* God to be sitting on a throne of *judgment!*

This is a throne of *Grace!*

This isn't a throne of condemnation.

Jesus doesn't sit in a courtroom, scowling down from His bench with an angry look, waiting to crack His gavel when we confess our failure.

He sits on a throne of grace.

We can approach without fear of rejection.

He's a compassionate, loving God, who understands what it's like.

When we draw near to God's throne, we receive mercy and we find the grace to help in our time of need. He hears our need and supplies what is lacking.

Jesus understands what we're going through.

He has an unequalled capacity for sympathy. He knows what it *feels* like.

He's standing by, waiting for us to come, ready to help in our time of need!

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

*“Let US then approach the throne of grace with confidence,
so that WE may receive mercy, and find grace to help in OUR
time of need!”*

We have a tremendous privilege!

We can go into the throne room.

We can get help when we need it.

Have you taken advantage of that offer?

Theologically, we know we’re *always* in His presence!

But *practically*, have we gone to His throne when WE faced the hard times?

Boldly—to get help.

When WE face the hard times, do we churn and struggle?

Do we try to “tough it out?” Or, do we turn to Jesus for help?

He *wants* us to come. In fact, He *commands* us to come.

*Have **you** come to Him for HELP?*

Come, you whose hearts are discouraged
and loaded down with heavy burdens.

Come to our great High Priest.

Come to Him, and rest.

Wesley’s hymn, *Amazing Love*, one verse concludes:

“Bold I approach the eternal throne.”

That’s the result of His amazing love!

He’s the perfect High Priest.

He’s been on both sides of the veil.

He is ready to pour out His mercy and help us,

when we hang on to our confession, and draw near to Him.
Let's draw near with confidence!