

SERMON
SERIESAND WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO PLEASE HIM, FOR WHOEVER
WOULD DRAW NEAR TO GOD
MUST BELIEVE THAT HE EXISTS
AND THAT HE REWARDS THOSE
WHO SEEK HIM.

HEBREW'S



26

LET US DRAW NEAR IN
*Faith*HEBREW'S
VERSE BY
VERSE STUDY**SESSION OBJECTIVE: HEBREWS 4:14-16**

To understand what we have in our Great High Priest.

Read the Text:

"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. 15 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. 16 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)

Study the Text:**The Great High Priest**

Lesson 9 ends on an ominous note, closing at verse 13: "...but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." In verses 14-16, the author is not going to shy away from that truth but to enforce a reality that offers comfort while still pushing the reader to hold fast to their confession. The author is providing a lens by which to view that reality. Below is a breakdown of the passage with special attention given to key words and ideas.

HIGH PRIEST

The Old Testament describes the building of the Tabernacle in Exodus and provides details on the construction of the different rooms. The Tabernacle (and later the Temple) had the Holy Place (outer room) and the Most Holy Place (inner room) separated by a veil (or, more familiarly, a curtain). "And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen... And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy" (Ex. 26: 31, 33). Exodus 30 describes the building of an altar and outlines that only one person, Aaron (and then the subsequent High Priests), is able to enter through the veil to the Most Holy Place but "he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die" (Lev. 16: 2). He is able to enter once a year after a significant

process (Lev. 16) and with a very specific purpose: "...Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for *himself, his household and the whole community of Israel*" (Lev. 16:17b). Hebrews 9 and 10 will further elaborate the process and deepen its meaning, but for now it is sufficient to note that God's people required a blood atonement for their sins and the high priest once a year would not only make atonement for the whole community, but themselves as well.

PASSED THROUGH THE HEAVENS

The high priest is the only person to enter the Most Holy Place, and, as the earthly representation of God's throne room, it has created significant tension in that earthly ministry. But the author of Hebrews does not want you to miss that Jesus, as the Great High Priest, is not bound to the earthly, but to the heavenly. For He was not only raised from the dead, but it is said that "as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). And to pass through the heavens is a non-subtle way of saying that Jesus is not playing by earthly high priestly rules or even by creation rules, but as the Son of God and Great High Priest He is presenting Jesus in the throne room of God. The author has confirmed (Heb. 1:3) and will confirm (Heb. 12:2) that Jesus has passed through the heavens and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. He is not merely a high priest, but the Great High Priest.

HOLD FAST CONFESSION

Once again, the author presents the plea to "hold fast." In Chapter 3, the author urged the reader to "hold fast" in confidence. This time, the author is concerned with confession. And he gives us, among other things, a good confession to remember, "Jesus, the Son of God." Now, if this confession seems familiar, it is because the author has implied this title of Jesus many times (think all of chapter 1), but here is the first time that he explicitly applies it to Jesus. In Romans, Paul says, "because, if you confess with your mouth that *Jesus is Lord* and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Here, the author presents another truth worth believing and confessing: "Jesus, the Son of God."

SYMPATHIZE WITH OUR WEAKNESSES

"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." Weaknesses are no fun to talk about. But, the author is concerned here with weaknesses directly tied to our being tempted. And while James teaches that "each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15), we must resist the urge to place that "desire" onto Jesus. The desire James notes is a "desire or lust for what is forbidden" (Gk. ἐπιθυμία). However, the author of Hebrews is not hinting that Jesus had "lust for what is forbidden," but rather, as in Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, His good desires were twisted by an external tempter. And the author goes even further by noting that although Jesus was tempted (as we are), "yet without sin" and therefore He is able to sympathize with our weakness.

Worth noting, the author has repeatedly communicated to his readers other weaknesses while not directly spelling them out. The author has repeatedly (even in this lesson's verses) said "hold fast" as if the reader is prone to weakening even in remembering that Jesus, the Great High Priest, is the Son of God. Jesus is able to sympathize with our physical weakness as well. For "the Word (Jesus Christ) became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14) and He acknowledges that "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). The scripture also confirms His physical weakness by stating that "Jesus, wearied as he was from His journey, was sitting beside the well" (John 4:6) and, in case someone is against naps, scripture add that Jesus took a nap (Mark 4). Jesus is able to sympathize with every aspect of being human, yet without sin!

What About Now?

After reading verses like 4:13 (“And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”) we can find ourselves overwhelmed by our sin. The enemy wants you to stay in a feeling of nakedness and exposure. But we must remember that God did not cast out Adam and Eve naked and exposed, but sympathized with them by making them “garments of skins and clothed them” and even promising that very day for a savior to come: “he (Jesus) shall bruise your (Satan’s) head” (Gen. 3:15). In today’s verses we are given that savior by name and are told that once again God has made a way to sympathize with his people. And the author states that we should “draw near with confidence” because God has dealt with Adam’s sin through Jesus, the Son of God. And draw near “to the throne of grace” where Jesus, the Great High Priest, is sitting. “And receive mercy and find grace in a time of need” because Jesus is able to sympathize with our weakness!

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Hebrews 4:14. What two titles are given to Jesus?

2. Do you relate with one title more than the other? Which title do you use more often?

Day Two

1. What does it mean that he has “passed through the heavens”?

2. How does this contrast with the earthly high priests who served in the Tabernacle or Temple?

Day Three

1. According to verse 15, what two important truths do we learn about Jesus as our high priest?

2. Why is it significant that he was tempted “in every respect” yet remained “without sin”?

Day Four

1. What repeated exhortation appears in verses 14 and 16?

2. What is the connection between “holding fast our confession” in verse 14 and “drawing near” in verse 16?

Discuss the Text!

Session 7 Discussion: Confess!

Jesus is able to “sympathize with our weaknesses.” And has been “in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” But sometimes we hide our sins because we are ashamed or do not think of Jesus as able to sympathize in our weaknesses. Talk as a group about weaknesses and temptations.

1. Icebreaker: What are the weaknesses in your life that you find easy to see Jesus sympathizing with you?
2. Is there a weakness that you find harder to believe that Jesus is able to sympathize with?
3. Do you remember a “time of need” when you needed mercy and grace?
4. In times of need, do you approach the throne of grace with confidence?
5. What is one practical step you can take this week to bring a weakness or temptation to Jesus in prayer rather than hiding it in shame? How can this group support you in that?
6. Kid Talk (For Home): Has there ever been a time you did something wrong and felt too embarrassed to tell God or me about it? Why do you think it's sometimes hard to admit when we mess up? Remind them that Jesus knows what it feels like to be tired, sad, left out, and even tempted — because He lived here on earth just like us. Because of that, we never have to hide from Him.

Takeaways:

1. Let us hold fast our confession of “Jesus, the Son of God”.
2. Jesus, as the Great High Priest, is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.
3. Therefore, with confidence, we will find mercy and grace to help in a time of need.