

**Jesus – Our Great High Priest**  
**Hebrews 4:14- 16**

**Intro:** There is one thing I have noticed since I have been a Christian; most people don't want to admit they have any weakness of their flesh or any struggles in their walks. All too often they try to hide behind masks and many people feel uncomfortable around so-called Christians because they feel they just could never measure up to the superiority of people within the church. But admitting that we have weaknesses and struggles to one another makes us real and can actually be an encouragement to us because we realized we are not in this alone.

In our text today the writer gives us three reasons having Jesus as our Great High Priest can give us peace, joy and strength when we face difficulties in our lives.

**[Read Heb 4:14 – 5:10/Pray/Dismiss Jr. Church]**

The Holy Spirit continues to appeal to the unsaved who have heard the gospel and know that their old life is not satisfying but have not yet trusted Christ. He has been saying, in effect, "You know your dissatisfaction with your old lives. You know the superiority of Jesus to prophets, angels, and Moses, and the dangers of not trusting Christ and of your need for Him. What is keeping you from making the final decision?" Hebrews 4:1-13 was an urgent appeal not to delay in accepting God's salvation, His perfect rest, in Jesus Christ.

Until now the appeal has largely been negative: if you do not believe, you will be doomed—forever apart from God and His rest. God's Word has been shown in its all-seeing and judgmental role, as a two-edged sword (4:12).

The danger of hell is certainly real, and any preacher—especially when trying to reach the unsaved—is not true to the gospel if he avoids this truth. Because it is true, and because it is so terribly important, it must be preached and taught. Avoiding it is not only being unfaithful to God's Word but also being unfaithful to the needs of the unsaved. To cry "Fire!" in a crowded building where there is no fire is not only against the law but extremely cruel and dangerous. But not to cry "Fire!" when a building is in flames is even more cruel and dangerous. Done in the right spirit and way, warning unbelievers of the dangers of hell is one of the greatest kindnesses we can show them.

The message now turns to the positive side of the gospel. Salvation does more than keep us out of hell. Many people have a picture of fundamentalism, or evangelicalism, as having no message but "Hell fire, brimstone, and damnation."

Salvation not only saves from spiritual death, it brings spiritual life. It should be sought not only because of what will happen to us if we do not accept it, but because of what will happen to us if we do. What happens to us when we accept it is based on who Jesus is. If there were no other reason in the universe to be saved, who Jesus is would be reason enough. Coming into a living relationship with Him is the greatest experience a person can have. To walk in the fellowship of the living Christ would be a glorious thing even if there were no hell to escape. So we have reason to receive Jesus Christ and enter into God's rest not only because of fear of His judgment but because of His beauty, not only because of His wrath but also because of His grace, not only because He is a judge but because He is also a merciful and faithful High Priest.

Three reasons why having Jesus as our Great High Priest should give us peace, joy and strength not only in times of trouble but at all times.

**1. AS GREAT HIGH PRIEST; JESUS REPRESENTS US BEFORE GOD'S THRONE OF GRACE V. 14**

*A. Whom do you go to when you are hurting?*

- 1) Think of the greatest crisis you ever faced.
  - (a) Where did you turn?
  - (b) Spouse, parents, a friend, professional help?
- 2) Do you gain anything by going to Jesus?
  - (a) Christians often relate to him on a first-name basis.
  - (b) Is this valid? Does it matter?

*B. Jesus is great. 4:14*

1) *He is our Great High Priest.*

- (a) Jesus represents us before God.
- (b) He has "access" you cannot buy here on earth.
- (c) **ILL:** At the very end of the Civil War, a dejected confederate soldier was sitting outside the grounds of the White House.  
A young boy approached him and asked him why he was so sad.

The soldier told how he had repeatedly tried to see President Lincoln. He wanted to tell the President that his farm in the South was unfairly taken away by the Federal soldiers. But each time he tried to enter the White House, the guards crossed their bayoneted guns in front of the door and turned him away.

The boy motioned to the soldier to follow him. When they approached the guarded entrance, the soldiers came to attention, stepped back, and opened the door for the boy. He proceeded to the library where the President was resting and introduced the soldier to his father.

The boy was Tad Lincoln.  
The soldier had gained access to the President through the President's son.  
How much more should we rejoice in our access to the grace of the King of kings.#750

2) *Jesus has gone through the heavens to the supreme place.*

- (a) He is present with us through the Spirit.
- (b) He is preparing a place for us.
- (c) He is preparing us for that place.
- (d) He is interceding for us.

3) Therefore hold firmly to your faith we profess.

- (a) "Profession" means what we claim to believe.
  - (1) Many Christians claim very little.
  - (2) Louis Palau and Muslim taxi driver - no Christians ever talk to him about Jesus. This is why taxi driver is convinced Christianity is dying and Muslims will take over. [Charles Colson used instead, memory error] #3670
- (b) Don't just "claim" it, live it.
- (c) Have convictions about what you believe.
- (d) Hold to them, through thick and thin.

**AS GREAT HIGH PRIEST; JESUS REPRESENTS US BEFORE GOD'S THRONE OF GRACE**

**2. AS GREAT HIGH PRIEST; JESUS UNDERSTANDS OUR SUFFERINGS V. 15**

**A. Jesus Knows Our Pain – He suffered as we suffer therefore He is able to be our help in times of trouble**

**B. How sensitive are you?**

- 1) Some time ago the "*Times of London*" newspaper reported that when an employee of a law firm in England committed suicide, the firm charged his mother about \$20,000 to settle his work. Included was a bill for about \$2,300 to go to his home to find out why he didn't show up at work (thus finding his body). Plus about \$500 for identifying the body for the coroner, plus about \$250 to go to his mother's home, knock on her door, and tell her that her son was dead. (After unfavorable publicity, the firm withdrew the bill.)
- 2) Henry Drummond wrote: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

**C. Jesus was sensitive to people's pain.**

- 1) Physical pain - Hemorrhaging woman. Mark 5:25-34
  - (a) She suffered with doctors.

- (b) When she touches him, Jesus notices "...**that virtue had gone out of him...**" in spite of crowd.
  - (c) He turned in the crowd and asked who had touched Him; He was aware of a single touch of need even in the crowd.
  - (d) When the women came in fear and confessed that it was her He was sensitive to her pain and suffering.
  - (e) "**Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.**"
- 2) Emotional pain – Nearing the end of His earthly ministry He tries to let His disciples know that He was about to leave them
- (a) And in response to their questions about where He was going; in an attempt to comfort their fear of His soon departure He says
  - (b) "**Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**" Jn 14:1-3
- 3) Spiritual pain - Shepherdless crowds.
- (a) One day out on a preaching tour
  - (b) As He is preaching to them and healing the sick He notices the sheer volume of the people the Bible says there is a multitude.
  - (c) Then it says, "**... he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.**" Matt 9:36

**D. Jesus had pain of his own.**

- 1) Physical pain.
  - 1) Beatings, crucifixion.
- 2) Emotional pain.
  - 1) Opposition, rejection, loneliness.
  - 2) Gospels give more emphasis on mocking than the nails.
- 3) Spiritual pain.
  - 1) "**Why have you forsaken me?**"
  - 2) Weight of sins of world upon him.
  - 3) Literally, he became accursed.
- 4) His pain had a purpose. #953
  - (a) Scapegoat imagery of Old Testament. Leviticus 16
    - (1) High priest takes a goat, lays hands on it (symbolically transferring nation's sin) and sends it away to die.
    - (2) Interesting concept: an innocent victim brings about the removal of guilt for someone else.
    - (3) Theologians call this "**vicarious suffering,**" suffering on someone else's behalf.

**E. III:** During President Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign in 1979, a woman of about 80 spoke out from the audience at the end of one of his campaign speeches. "Mr. Reagan, everything you've said sounds just fine. But what about the old folks? Haven't you forgotten us?"

The man who was to become the oldest president of the United States smiled down at her and replied, "Forget you? Heavens, how could I ever forget you? I am one of you."

No matter how dismal our lot may be, God has not forgotten us. Jesus' coming was God's way of saying, "How could I ever forget you? I am one of you." #2228:

**F. Because He was one of us He knew our suffering**

**AS GREAT HIGH PRIEST; JESUS REPRESENTS US BEFORE GOD'S THRONE OF GRACE**

**AS GREAT HIGH PRIEST; JESUS UNDERSTANDS OUR SUFFERINGS**

**3. AS GREAT HIGH PRIEST; JESUS OPENS THE DOOR TO THE THRONE OF GRACE V. 16**

- A. We can approach God boldly - We can go to Jesus.
  - 1) Let "us" go to him; Any Christian can.
  - 2) We don't need intermediaries who "understand better."

- 3) No priests or saints are necessary.
- B. Throne of grace.
- 1) This is the only place in the NT this phrase is found
  - 2) It points to God's sovereignty, and his love for us.
  - 3) The Old Testament ties special attributes to God's throne:
    - (a) Psalm 89:14 **"Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face."**
    - (b) Psalm 97:2 **"The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."**
  - 4) It is most often seen as a place of judgment or a place to gain mercy
  - 5) We need mercy because we fail so often.
  - 6) But now we have a throne of Grace – a place we can go to boldly to receive what we do not deserve
- C. We can have confidence.
- 1) How bold are you in your relationship with God?
    - (a) We cannot make demands upon him, manipulate him.
    - (b) Yet we can live confidently because God is on our side.

It is said that Napoleon, while looking at some papers, let slip the bridle of his horse, which reared so that the Emperor was in danger.

A corporal of the grenadiers leaped forward and caught the bridle, bringing the horse under control.

Napoleon saluted the corporal and said, "Thank you, CAPTAIN."

"Of what company, Sire?" asked the corporal.

"Of my guards," replied Napoleon.

The young corporal picked up his musket, hurled it aside, and walked across the field toward the Emperor's staff, tearing off his corporal's stripes as he went.

When he took his place among the officers, they asked him what he was doing there.

He replied that he was a captain of the guards.

"By whose order?" asked one of them.

"The Emperor's order," he replied.

A man of less faith might have picked up his musket, stepped back into the ranks, and boasted for the rest of his life that Napoleon had called him captain.

This describes the difference between mental assent and true faith, which takes God at His word and acts upon it. #2663

- D. Our time of need.
- 1) Jesus can help us when no one can.
    - (a) I have often overheard in emergency rooms, "I don't know how non-believers can survive in a time like this."
    - (b) Many ease their struggles by turning to drugs, alcohol, or throwing off restraint.
    - (c) We can ease them by going to our King.
  - 2) Do you turn to Jesus in a crisis only?