

“Drawing Near With Confidence”  
Hebrews 4:14-16  
(Preached at Trinity, January 14, 2024)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Verse 14** opens with the familiar “therefore.”  
**Hebrews 4:14 NAU** - "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."
  - a. The word takes us back as the conclusion to some previous statement. The literal translation here would be, “Since then we have a great high priest . . .”  
The focus is upon Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. Of course, this is true of the entirety of the Book of Hebrews. Jesus is the focus. We've been looking at his infinite superiority over all of the Old Covenant.
  - b. But is there a specific passage in mind? The immediate passage confirms the power of the Word of God. This power is essential before faith can become effectual.  
**Hebrews 3:19-4:2 NAU** - "So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. <sup>2</sup> For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard."
  - c. We also have an affirmation of God's omniscience in **Verse 13**. Nothing can be hidden from Him. Intimately connected with His Word, He searches to the very heart of man.
  - d. But these verses don't express the heart of **Verse 14**.
2. In order to get to the heart of this verse, we need to go all the way back to **Chapter 2**.  
**Hebrews 2:17-18 NAU** - "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."
3. In these verses we are reminded that Jesus Christ became high priest for the sake of the elect, His brethren, in order to make propitiation for their sins. We find Jesus intimately connected with His people.
4. But **Verse 14** also reminds us that Jesus has ascended to His throne. He has passed through the heavens. This points to two essential truths.
  - (1) As High Priest, Jesus ascended into heaven to offer His own blood upon the heavenly tabernacle for the sins of His people.
  - (2) After the resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven where He has been coronated and seated upon His throne of majesty.

5. Jesus has ascended. He is high and lifted up. But is He still near His people?  
**Hebrews 4:14 NAU** - "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."  
 The answer is YES! The author is setting before us a powerful consideration.  
 Jesus is on His throne. But He is not unaware of the condition of His people.  
**Hebrews 4:15 NAU** - "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin."
6. "Therefore" – since we have this great high priest what impact should it have upon our lives? The author's point is to stress the great confidence we should have as a result of our High Priest who has entered into our human condition. I want to set before you this confidence. I trust each one of you have this confidence, shed His own blood as our great High Priest, and is now seated at the right hand of majesty on high.  
 If you have this great confidence, may it become stronger. If you don't have it, may God grant you the peace and confidence that can only come by trusting Jesus Christ.
- I. The Source of our Confidence - "since we have a great high priest"
- A. The author is continuing to describe the infinite superiority of Christ.
1. We've seen His superiority to the prophets, to the angels, to Moses, and now we're going to see His superiority over the Old Covenant priests. We'll see more of this in the coming **Chapters**.
  2. In **Verse 14** He is called the *great* High Priest. μέγας – Jesus is a Mega-Priest. Earthly priests entered the Holy of Holies over and over year after year to pour out the blood of animal sacrifices. Jesus entered once and for all to offer His own blood atonement. The Old Covenant priests entered into the earthly tabernacle. Jesus entered into the heavenly tabernacle.
- B. Jesus is the Great High Priest in the heavens, yet He is with us.
1. He became like us so that He might deliver us from our sin.  
**Hebrews 2:17 NAU** - "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."
  2. He is mindful of our weakness. He personally experienced all of the experiences of our humanity.  
**Hebrews 4:15 NAU** - "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses."  
    - a. We have physical weaknesses. Jesus knows them. Jesus knew hunger and thirst. He knew exhaustion and weariness. He knew sorrow. He knew pain and suffering.
    - b. We are also engaged in spiritual battles. We are in a spiritual war. Satan attacks and assaults us.
  3. Jesus experienced the personal temptation of Satan.  
**Hebrews 4:15 NAU** - "tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin."  
    - a. Jesus temptation was real but His psychological response to it was different. We are sinful by nature; our inward lusts draw us to sin.
    - b. Jesus did not have a sinful nature – no inward lust to sin.

- c. Satan tempted Jesus in the same way he tempts us – with lies and cunning deceits urging Him to sin.
  - d. When we are tempted, however, there is also an inner desire to heed the devil’s prompting – we have a natural lust.
  - e. With Jesus the temptation was an outward stimulus but there was no inner evil or lust as an incentive to co-operate with the voice of temptation. This in no way lessens the reality of Jesus’ temptation.
- C. These Hebrew Christians formerly had confidence in the priesthood of Judaism. But it was an inferior priesthood.
- 1. They had to offer sacrifices over and over, year after year. The sacrifices could not make the ultimate satisfaction for sin.
  - 2. The Old Covenant priests also had to make atonement for themselves. They too were corrupted by sin.
  - 3. Jesus, on the other hand, was perfect and offered a perfect atonement.
  - 4. Jesus is the perfect, only, sufficient Savior.  
**John 14:6 NAU** - "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."  
**Acts 4:12 NAU** - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
- D. The source of our confidence is Jesus Christ.  
 There is no other way of salvation. Christianity claims exclusivity.
- 1. We have no one else to deliver us from sin.
  - 2. We have no one else to assure us victory over our battles.
  - 3. In Christ our fears fade into confidence.
- II. The Action of our Confidence – Confidence produces courage.
- A. “Let us hold fast our confession” – Verse 14
- 1. The author’s point is, since we have such a great high priest, what effect should it have upon our life?
  - 2. These Hebrew Christians were being persecuted because of Christ. Their faith was costing them dearly. Some were turning to their former religion of Judaism. Others were being tempted.
  - 3. Having such a great high priest who reigns for His people, we should have the courage to press on through every circumstance.
  - 4. Why would these Jewish Christians forsake the perfect High Priest for that which was temporal, that which was a foreshadow of the fulfillment.
  - 5. But notice the object to which we hold fast.  
**Hebrews 4:14 NAU** - "let us hold fast our confession."  
    - a. The word for “confession” is ὁμολογία  
 ὁμό - a prefix meaning “the same” λογος - word
    - b. We hold fast to the substance of our faith, the substance of what we believe. We tenaciously hold to the truths of God’s Word. As Luther boldly proclaimed, “Here I stand.”
    - c. That’s why we call our statement of faith our Confession. It is a statement of what we believe the Scriptures teach. We hold to the “same words” as orthodox Christianity.

**2 Thessalonians 2:15 NAU** - "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of *mouth* or by letter from us."

6. This is the essence of what we read in **Jude 1:3**  
**Jude 1:3 NAU** - "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."
  7. The ultimate confession to which we hold is Christ. We have confessed Him. This should be the greatest of all pledges. We have called upon the name of Christ.
- B. "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace" – **V. 16**
1. Jesus is more than sufficient. We can come before God's throne of grace with confidence. What is the "throne of grace?" This is a clear reference to the reign of Christ. He has ascended to His majestic throne in glory. We have the right to approach His throne.
  2. The word is *παρρησία* – courage, confidence, lack of fear. The KJV translates it "boldness."  
We don't approach the throne of God with carelessness, or arrogance, or irreverently. But we can come boldly.
- III. The end or outcome of our confidence - "that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."
- A. There is mercy and grace associated with drawing near to Christ's throne.  
"so that we may receive and find grace"
1. Those who approach the throne of grace in faith and repentance find the mercy of Christ in abundance. There is forgiveness and reconciliation. This is true for all who trust Jesus Christ. All are commanded to flee to the throne of grace.
  2. Having received the mercy of Christ there is now abundant grace to help us in our weakness and in the struggles of the Christian life.
  3. We find help in our hour of need. That need may be physical or spiritual. In the context He is ready to offer aid when we cry out as we are tempted. He was tempted in all things as we are and helps us in our time of need.  
**Hebrews 2:18 NAU** - "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."
- B. These Christians were suffering. Their suffering was real, and it was intense.
1. They were being tempted to return to their former life in Judaism. It was a life free from conflict.  
How could they continue to endure their persecution? How could they resist the temptation?  
Was there a source of comfort? Was there a place of strength? Was there any help in their time of need?

2. There is hope in our Great High Priest. The author says we can receive mercy and grace. We find help in time of need.  
**1 Corinthians 10:13 NAU** - "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."
3. The tempter is always a danger in the Christian life.  
**1 Thessalonians 3:4-5 NAU** - "For indeed when we were with you, we *kept* telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know. <sup>5</sup> For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain."
4. There is hope and confidence in Christ.

#### Conclusion:

How do we draw near to the throne of grace?

1. We approach the throne by prayer. The word for "confidence" originally referred to boldness in speech. We have boldness to approach God in prayer.
2. We approach the throne in confidence.  
Confidence because we have a Savior who has delivered us from our sin.  
Confidence because we have a Savior who is sympathetic to our weakness.  
Confidence because Jesus Christ is all powerful and is able to help in time of need.
3. This is the throne of grace that keeps us persevering. Jesus keeps us because He is our Redeemer. He is our Great High Priest. He came to deliver us. We are the objects of His great love. Let us hold fast to Him.