

Introduction:

Do you have clout?

The answer is it depends on **who** you know. That's how Mike Royko explained the meaning of the word.

If you were raised in Chicago, you would no doubt recognize that name.

For over 30 years **Mike Royko** was the voice of Chicago to the nation. At the height of his career over 600 newspapers carried his columns.

After he died in 1997 his family and friends published 110 of his columns (out of almost 8000 he wrote) in a bestselling book called *One More Time*.

A column from 1967 discusses the proper meaning of the word "*clout*." It seems that someone sent him a copy of *Vogue* magazine that included a survey of people with "*clout*."

The list included President Lyndon Johnson, Ho Chi Minh, and the Pope.

Royko called it "*a surprisingly dumb thing to write. And they have a lot of nerve stealing an old Chicago word and distorting its meaning*" (p. 17).

I am told that everyone from Chicago knows what *clout* is.

Clout is basically what makes the city tick. *Royko's point is that clout never goes down, it always goes up.*

- *Clout* is what you have if you can call city hall and make a parking ticket disappear.
- *Clout* is what you have if you can get a private meeting with the governor.

Or to use Royko's examples:

- A Chicago police officer might have enough *clout* with a ward boss to get a promotion to sergeant.
- The ward boss might have enough *clout* with the mayor to get a sweetheart contract for his brother-in-law.
- And the mayor might have enough *clout* with the White House to get an extra \$10 million in pork barrel money for the city. That's clout.

It's a grand old Chicago word.

If you've got *clout*, it means you've got a friend in high places.

We all understand that because we all need help from time to time.

- Maybe we can't get a job interview, or we can't get in to see the doctor or we need some help at city hall.
- We need someone who can cut through the red tape and help us when we can't help ourselves.

*In this sermon I hope to encourage you from **Hebrews 4:14-16** that Jesus is exactly the friend we need.*

We love to sing "*What a friend we have in Jesus*," but is there anything to those words at all?

Our text gives us the answer. Jesus is the friend we need because he is the Right Person with the Right Past in the Right Place.

To use Mike Royko's word, we've got *clout* in heaven.

May we now stand and read our Bibles together?

Scripture Reading/Text: Hebrews 4:14-16

Prayer: Pray for me now as I preach on the subject:

"A Friend in High Places!"

I. **The Right Person—V. 14**

Hebrews 4:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

Most of us are at a disadvantage when we read this verse because we don't have a clear notion of what a high priest is.

The main thing we need to know is that the high priest was the **number one** person in the Old Testament religious system.

There were various levels and orders of priests in Judaism, but there was only one **high priest**.

His chief job was to represent the nation of Israel on the *Day of Atonement*.

He is the right person to hear our prayers because he has entered the Holy of Holies in heaven.

He is Jesus (his human name), and he is also the Son of God (his divine title).

The same Jesus who once walked on the earth is now in heaven, having opened the way to God by his own eternal sacrifice.

II. The Right Past—V. 15

Hebrews 4:15 (KJV)

¹⁵For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.

The King James Version says that Jesus is “*touched with the feeling of our infirmities.*”

He is “*touched*” by the weakness of our feeble flesh.

Whatever touches us, touches him.

To say “*I feel your pain*” has become a cliché today, but in Jesus’ case it is true.

He is moved by our sorrow, aware of our tears, and touched by our failure.

He knows what we are going through.

Sometimes when we are in the middle of a hard time well-meaning people will say, “*I know what you are going through.*”

In my opinion that is often a cruel thing to say.

How can you be sure you know what another person is thinking or feeling?

I think it’s better not to say that because if you really do know what another person is going through, your heart will make that clear to them.

And if you don’t, it’s far better not to say anything at all.

[**Illus**] In May 1995, my stepfather died after a two-year illness...

We are accepted by God only based on what Jesus Christ has done.

That’s what our text means when it says that [Jesus] is *touched with the feeling of our infirmities.*

He knows our pain, he sees our weakness, and he understands what we are going through.

Because he was a “*man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*,” he truly knows what we are going through.

God has given to every Christian a card that says, “*Admit to the Throne Room of Heaven.*”

We are accepted by God only based on what Jesus Christ has done.

Because Jesus knows how sinful we really are, we don't have to play games when we pray.

Our text contains one final truth that should encourage us when we pray.

Jesus is not only the *Right Person* with the *Right Past*, but He is also in the *Right Place* to give us the help we need.

III. **The Right Place**—V. 16

Hebrews 4:16 (KJV)

¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

When we come before that throne, we will not be turned away.

[Illus] Many people think of God's *throne* as like the *principal's office* in high school...

When we come to God in Jesus' name, he's glad to see us.

He knows who we are, he calls us by name, and he welcomes us before the throne. “*My child*,” he says, “*what can I do for you today?*”

That's why we are to come with *confidence* or *boldness*.

There are many times in life when the only thing we can do is to cry out, “*God, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Jesus, have mercy.*”

It's a wonderful thing to feel complete freedom to come into God's presence.

Conclusion:

I come now to the bottom line, and it is good news for all of us.

We've got *a friend in high places*.

In the words of Mike Royko, we've got *clout*. *We've got connections in heaven.*

We've got a *friend* at the throne of grace who delights to answer our prayers.

He's the Right Person with the Right Past in the Right Place.

Because he feels your pain, he can sympathize with what you're going through.

Nothing you say will surprise him. Come boldly. Come often.

Come to the throne of grace and pour out your heart to God. You will not be turned away

Prayer:

Invitation Hymn: (Big) # 430 "*I must Tell Jesus*"

*Bruce Beach—1/12/14 am. @ OBC

*I re-worked an original sermon posted by Ray Pritchard at *Keep Believing Ministries* and used by permission.

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