



February 18, 2024 || Our Sympathetic High Priest

In our temptation to grab hold of other things for help and hope in the midst of our suffering, we must instead draw near to Jesus - our sympathetic savior - whose unique compassion and care meets us with the precise mercy and grace we need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

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. 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. 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.

1. "Hold Fast" - *Krateo*: to grasp, hold firmly, grab onto and grip tightly
2. Hebrews 10:23

Verse 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.

3. "Sympathize" - *Sumpatheo*: to suffer with, feel compassion, have the "same pain"

"Our tendency is to feel the more difficult life gets, the more alone we are. As we sink further into pain we sink further into isolation. The Bible corrects us. Our pain never outstrips what Jesus himself shares in. We are never alone. That sorrow that feels so isolating, so unique, was

endured by him in the past and is now shouldered by him in the present.... he is your co-sufferer... if you are in christ, you have a friend who, in your sorrow, will never lob down a pep talk from heaven. No - He cannot bear to hold himself at a distance. Nothing will hold him back. His heart is too bound up with yours."

- Dane Ortlund, Gentle & Lowly

"No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good. A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, 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 simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because he was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means – the only complete realist."

- C.S. Lewis

4. Jesus felt the full barrage of suffering & temptation.
5. Acts 9:4

Verse 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.

6. This sympathy is not just an ability... it is his very heart.
7. To Draw Near = to PRAY!
8. Because of Jesus, God's throne of justice is transformed into a throne of GRACE.
9. The word used here is the version of speech that means "ALL speech"
 - Arresia - "no speech" = silence
 - Proresia - "before speech" = prediction
 - Katarresia - "against speech" = accusation
 - Parresia - "all speech" = confidence

10. Context:

- Verse 14 - Hold fast to your only Hope: Jesus our great high priest - He has secured our access to God
- Verse 15 - Who we're holding fast to / drawing near to: Our sinless, sympathizing savior.
- Verse 16 - Draw near to Him to receive the merciful and gracious help you need!

Verse 15 is the WHY of verse 14 and verse 16.

And verse 16 is the WAY we do verse 14: In order to hold fast, we have to draw near!

Application

In your suffering, temptation, anxiety, weariness, and pain - What are you tempted to hold fast to instead of Jesus for help, hope, and sympathy?

Are you drawing near to God to bring your needs to him? Continually? Confidently? Communally?

Hebrews 4:14-16 should radically change *HOW* we suffer.

"He may give us the kind of help we want, but he may not. He will, however, always give us the kind of help we need. That's the cost of hope. Hope means we choose to trust that what our king from his throne of grace distributes to us, when he chooses to distribute it to us, is far better than our lesser hopes in the version of help we prefer."

- John Henderson

Where do you need hope today?

Where do you need help today?

Run to your sympathetic savior.

He's the better hope to hold fast to.

He's the better help to draw near to.