

# Hebrews 4:14-16

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/heb/heb-4/hebrews-414-16/>

*Our high priest is sympathetic and available to help us persevere in our faith. We can have confidence to approach God because He is for us.*

In the previous verses, the Pauline Author warned his readers by explaining to them the ability God's Word has to discern all their thoughts and intentions, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit. He has just exhorted them to be diligent to the end in order to enter their rest, which is to possess the inheritance they have been granted. They are God's people but will only possess the reward of their inheritance if they mix the hearing of God's promises with faith, and so walk in obedience.

He is now encouraging them to overcome difficulty and trials by relying on Jesus, who is our High Priest and intercedes for us:

*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 (v 14).*

We as believers have everything we need to be able to be diligent until the end and receive the reward of our inheritance. We have all we need in Jesus. Jesus was God in heaven but took on the form of human flesh and came to earth to live as a human (Philippians 2:5-7). He learned obedience even to death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). Therefore, God rewarded Him by making Him Son (ruler) over all the earth (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 1:5, 8, 13).

Jesus has now *passed through the heavens*. Since this is followed by the phrase *Jesus the Son of God*, who is our *high priest*, this likely refers back to the images presented in Chapter 1 where Jesus is rewarded as Son (Hebrews 1:5) in a heavenly setting (speaking of angels). Jesus is then given an eternal throne and a scepter to rule over all creation (Hebrews 1:8). Hebrews 1:13 shows Jesus sitting at the right hand of God the Father, who rules from heaven over all creation. The Father placed the Son above all.

It is this Son, who is the ruler of all, who is also our *great high priest*. Jesus is both king and priest. Jesus has been given all authority as the Son over creation (Matthew 28:18). And the same person who has the authority to rule over all is also our high priest and intercedes for us.

It isn't just that we have a *high priest* who will approach the great ruler hoping to gain favor for us. It is that our *high priest* is Himself *Jesus the Son of God*. There is zero probability that *Jesus the Son* will turn down Jesus the *high priest*, for they are one and the same person. This is, therefore, the confidence we can have that Jesus is FOR US, and not against us (Romans 8:31).

Later in Hebrews we will be told that Jesus ascended into heaven, into the true tabernacle of which the earthly tabernacle was a mere copy. In that true tabernacle, Jesus has opened the way into fellowship with God through the sacrifice of His own body. This allows each believer to approach God for repentance and forgiveness, and to receive the cleansing of our conscience (Hebrews 9:11-14, 10:19-22).

To *hold fast our confession* means to hold firmly to our faith that Jesus has our best interest at heart. This reflects the admonition from Moses that the path to righteousness is to believe, confess, then take action to do the commands of God (Deuteronomy 30:14). The Apostle Paul quoted from Deuteronomy 30 to emphasize the same basic idea, that belief leads to confession which results in righteous actions. He summarized this point in Romans 10:9-10. Paul calls this the “righteousness based on faith” (Romans 10:6).

Jesus has already ascended into Heaven and is ready there to help us in our walk. Jesus is our perfect *high priest* who has experienced every temptation we might encounter:

*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* (v 15) (Matthew 4:1–11).

Although He never sinned, Jesus was tempted, making Him a perfect *high priest* because He is able to *sympathize* with our own struggles against sin. He overcame temptation and was obedient to God. He was without sin, so He was able to take on the sins of the world (Colossians 2:14). But He knows what it is like to be tempted. He strove against difficulty and temptation even to the point of bloodshed and death (Matthew 26:38; Hebrews 12:4). He is therefore able to *sympathize* with our struggles and give us help.

Our perfect *high priest* is in Heaven, sympathizing with our weakness, and wants to help us in our need. Jesus is not glaring down upon us—Jesus is rooting for us to succeed and wants to help if we will call on Him. In Christ, we have everything we need to be faithful and obedient to God. He has given us the Holy Spirit to provide power to live His resurrected life through our walk of obedience.

Although the Pauline Author warned his readers about the piercing knowledge of God, who will judge the thoughts and intents of our hearts, he now encourages them that they should *draw near with confidence to the throne of grace* (v 16).

This is because we have a sympathetic high priest, Jesus, who desires to help us succeed and join Him as a son (Hebrews 2:10). Jesus desires that we share with Him the glory and honor of reigning over the earth in harmony and service (Hebrews 2:5-10).

Because we have this sympathetic high priest *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (v 16).

We can have *confidence* in approaching Jesus when we have *need*. We can have *confidence* approaching His *throne* because it is a *throne of grace*.

The word *grace* in the phrase *find grace to help in time of need* translates the Greek word “charis” which means “favor.” We can see this in Luke:

“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor [“charis”] with God and men.” (Luke 2:52)

The inference here is that when one of God’s children approaches Him desiring help, God desires to provide it. His *throne* is a *throne of grace* or favor toward His people. Even in His discipline

of His children God does it because of His love, and because He has their best interest at heart (Hebrews 12:5-6). Therefore, each believer should have *confidence* to approach the *throne*. The *throne* has seated upon it the Father as well as the Son (Revelation 3:21).

We are often tempted to disobey God and go our own way and Jesus fully understands our weakness. We can expect to find *mercy* and *grace* when we approach God asking for help, because of the high priesthood of Jesus. It is important to recognize that the help will be what is actually in our best interest and might not be what we would prefer. This is an essential part of the confidence that must be held fast in order to please God.

Jesus desires to cleanse us from any sin that we might commit, that we might have our conscience cleansed (Hebrews 10:19-22; 1 John 1:9). The cleansing process might be painful; confession is difficult. But we greatly benefit when we receive forgiveness from our God and high priest by faith and have our fellowship with Him and others restored.

In His teaching of the model prayer, Jesus emphasized that our fellowship with God also depends on us forgiving others and restoring fellowship with them (Matthew 6:14-15). This is an awesome message, that when we fail and fall into sin, we can have our fellowship with God restored through our sympathetic high priest, Jesus. He can help us to *receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (v 16).

All these passages emphasize the amazing fact that Jesus has given us the freedom to choose. Jesus wants us to choose to love Him, by choosing to follow in the footsteps He has prepared for us. Jesus wants us to succeed and will help us. This obedience is the path to our greatest fulfillment, which is to be restored to our original design to reign over the earth in fellowship and harmony with God and others (Hebrews 2:5-10).

But God leaves it to us to choose. We can trust Him and follow in faith, or we can follow our own way. Faith is believing what we do not see as though we do, and believing what we do not have as though we possess it (Hebrews 11:1).

There will be no faith in heaven, for in heaven we will know by sight. This life on earth is the only opportunity in our existence we will have to serve and know God by faith.

This life on earth is therefore a once-in-an-existence opportunity God has granted us as a precious gift. Jesus desires to bless us in a way that is beyond our ability to comprehend (1 Corinthians 2:9). The warnings in the book of Hebrews are given to holy brethren (Hebrews 3:1). God gives them to His people to urge us not to miss out on this amazing opportunity to know Him by faith. And Jesus stands ready to help us as a faithful and sympathetic *high priest*.

### **Biblical Text**

**14 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. 15 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. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**