"A Caring PRIEST You can Trust"

Hebrews 4:14-16

9/8/96

Introduction:

***Be confident in your Great High Priest!**
(Jesus cares for you!)

I. Our Great High Priest Saves; Have Confidence in Your PROFESSION of Him (v. 14)

("Let us hold fast our profession")

Your confidence in Jesus should remain steadfast because of:

A. WHAT He is: *"Our Great High Priest"*

B. WHERE He is: *"Passed into the Heavens"*

C. WHO He is: *"Jesus, the Son of God"*

II. Our Great High Priest Sympathizes; Have Confidence in Your PRAYERS through Him (v. 15-16)

("Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace")

Available and Attainable:

A. Mercy (He does not give us what our sin deserves)

B. Grace (He does give us what we don't deserve)

Conclusion:

"A Caring PRIEST You can Trust"

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Introduction:

Hymn: "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus, no not one. . ."

***Be confident in your Great High Priest!**
(Jesus cares for you!)

I. Our Great High Priest Saves; Have Confidence in Your PROFESSION of Him (v. 14)

("Let us hold fast our profession")

"Then" (therefore) - Having urged us all to examine the genuineness of our faith (to see if we really believe God's Word - 4:1-13), the writer now urges us to hold on to that faith we profess.

Many professing Jewish Christians were tempted to return to Judaism ("The Hebrew Christians who received this letter were sorely tempted to return to the religion of their fathers. After all, any Jew could travel to Jerusalem and *see* the temple and the priests ministering at the altar. Here was something real, visible, concrete. When a person is going through persecution, as these Hebrews were, it is much easier to walk by sight than by faith. Some of us have doubted the Lord under much less provocation than these people were enduring." - Wiersbe, p. 46).

Having shown Christ to be superior to prophets (1:1-4), angels (1:5-2:18), and Moses (3:1-6), God now shows Him to be superior to the Old Testament priests and priesthood.

Beginning now in 4:14 and continuing all the way through 10:23, the writer shows Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest (with 5:11-6:20 being a parenthesis [an interjected thought] in between).

God begins and ends this presentation of Jesus Christ as High Priest the same way; by exhorting the readers to have persistent faith in Him.

4:14 - *"Let us hold fast our profession."*
10:23 - *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith."*

Note: the thought of 10:19-23

"Hold fast" - (*krateo)* to strong hold on. The emphasis of this word s on the strength of our faith in Christ.

This exhortation is similar to the words God gave to Joshua - *"Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed"* (Josh. 1:9)

"Profession" -(*homologias)* - Confession; lit. to say the same thing as another; to agree with.

When it comes to salvation, we who are saved agree with God regarding the way into eternal life.

In the book of Hebrews the term *homologias* is not referring to confessing sin, but to confessing faith; to profess belief in God's salvation.

NOTE: Heb. 3:1 - *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus"* . . . Heb. 10:23 - *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he is faithful that promised;)"*

"These Hebrew Christians were tempted to give up their confession of faith in Christ and their confidence in Him (SEE 3:6, 14). It was not a matter of giving up their salvation, since salvation through Christ is eternal (5:9). It was a matter of their public confession of faith. By returning to the Old Testament system, they would be telling everyone that they had no faith in Christ (SEE Gal. 2:11-21). This kind of unbelief would only bring reproach to Christ's name." (Wiersbe, p. 48)

We can grip firmly the faith we profess because of the character of the One our faith is in. This one worthy of our profession is none other than Jesus Christ.

Your confidence in Jesus should remain steadfast because of:

A. WHAT He is: *"Our Great High Priest"*

"We have" - This High Priest is personally ours. He does not say, *"There is a great high priest,"* but rather, *"We have a great high priest."* Showing how personally related to us Jesus is.

Three classes of priests:

1) "Priest" - Many from the tribe of Levi who offered sacrifices and interceded for the people

2) "High Priest" - One man, who once a year went into the Holy of Holies with blood, on Yom Kippur

3) "Great High Priest" -Exclusive office of Jesus Christ
At Calvary, the priesthood was abolished by God.

The ultimate sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10:14), and the tearing of the Temple veil (Mt. 27:51) marked the end of the priesthood and sacrificial system. Any ecclesiastical priesthood today is an abomination to God! (Both Catholics and Mormons have a priesthood)

The veil was ripped from *"top to bottom,"* showing God did the tearing and not man (Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38).

As ***"the Great High Priest,"*** Christ is the sole mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5).

Any religion with priests who mediate between men and God is an open defiance to the finished work of Christ and His role as the Great High Priest.

B. WHERE He is: *"Passed into the Heavens"*

"Passed into the Heavens" - Our Great High Priest does not work at a manmade temple somewhere on earth, but rather is exalted beyond the first and second Heaven (air and space), and is seated in the third Heaven on the right hand of God the Father (Heb. 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2).

Aaron and his successors ministered in the Tabernacle and then the Temple, but Jesus ministers in a heavenly tabernacle which is far better than an earthly one.

C. WHO He is: *"Jesus, the Son of God"*

"The Son of God" - A title of deity (Just as Christ's title "Son of Man" identifies Him with man, so the title "Son of God" identifies Him with God). (Even the Father calls Him *"God"* - Heb. 1:8).

He is not merely a Son of God, but stands unique as "the" Son of God.

Jesus, being both God and man, can, as Great High Priest, reconcile man to God.

God wants us to have on the helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17) - Not to doubt, but to know that we have eternal life (I Jn. 5:13).

Do you have that blessed assurance?

Because of His position, pre-eminence, and person, Christ is worthy of our confidence.

II. Our Great High Priest Sympathizes; Have Confidence in Your PRAYERS through Him (v. 15-16)

("Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace")

V. 15

"Not . . . cannot" - a double negative makes a positive; Jesus is touched.

"Touched with the feeling" *(sumpatheo)* - to suffer along with; "to share the experience of someone, to sympathize with someone. The word is not to be understood in a psychological sense, but rather in an existential sense. The exalted One suffers together with the weakness of the one tempted." (Michel, cited by Rienecker, p. 677).

"Infirmities" - areas of weakness; struggles wherein we lack strength. Vulnerable areas of our life that are easy prey for temptation.

"In all points" - In all areas that could be tempted (Mt. 4:3ff)

--Lust of the flesh (body)

--Lust of the eyes

--Pride of life (I Jn. 2:16)

"Tempted" - (passive) Jesus was tempted from <u>without</u> (by the world [Mt. 19:3; Mk. 8:11; Jn. 8:6] or Devil {Mt. 4]).

"Yet without sin" - Two possible ideas: without a sin nature; or without sinning.

Jesus never missed the mark of His own divine standard. Jesus is the only One who never ever sinned (Heb. 7:26; I Pet. 2:22; II Cor. 5:21; Is. 53:9).

Jesus could only be tempted (passive) by someone <u>outside of Himself</u>.

[His natures--divine and human--were sinless (Heb. 4:15, 7:26; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:22). Therefore, His temptation could not come from within Himself as it does with mortal men (Ja. 1:13-15). Rather, the source of temptation had to come from without.]

Jesus could only be tempted in respect to His <u>human nature</u>, not His divine

nature.

Christ's human nature had needs (appetites for food, drink, sleep, etc.), but His divine nature had no needs and no unsatisfied desires. Therefore, His divine nature could never be a target for temptation. Such an attempt would be foolish.

Christ was "in all points tempted like as we are" (in respect to His human nature).

Because of Christ's divine attribute of holiness (absolute separateness from all sin and impurity), sin was an impossibility.

If this is so, was the temptation legitimate (real)?

Yes, because it is possible to attempt the impossible.

Though Christ was not able to sin, His temptation was nonetheless real and awful.

Important principle: "Only the sinless Individual can know the power of temptation in its full intensity, because only that individual endures until the temptation is broken. We who fall never know the full power of temptation, simply because we yield before we experience the full measure of the demonic onslaught. Christ knows all there is to know of Satan's power to tempt, simply because He withstood the full measure of such temptation." --Bookman, notes, p. 25

Many wonder how Jesus could know what we go through if He never experienced sin. A surgeon can know all about heart surgery without ever needing surgery himself. Jesus never sinned but understands sin better than any man (MacArthur, p. 113).

V. 16

Many times people are reluctant to go to someone they view as unapproachable, harsh, unbending, unforgiving, unmerciful (EX: the boss of Larry Tims, who was the boss of Joe Carlone, who was the boss of me at Stanley Works). Many people have this warped view of God.

"Most ancient rulers were unapproachable by the common people. Some would not even allow their highest-ranking officials to come before them without permission. Queen Esther risked her life in

approaching King Ahasuerus without invitation, even though she was his wife (Esther 5:1-2). Yet any penitent person, no matter how sinful and undeserving, may approach God's throne at any time for forgiveness and salvation--confident that he will be received with mercy and grace." (MacArthur, p. 115).

"Therefore" - Because Jesus is sympathetic (v. 15), we can have boldness in going to Him in prayer.

"Boldly" - with confidence. Confidence in what?

1) that Jesus bears, cares, and shares with us in our weakness; 2) that Jesus will not reject one who genuinely comes to Him; 3) that Jesus will answer our requests regarding victory over sin.

"Unto the throne" - not to the confessional booth, but straight through to headquarters! Directly to God.

"The throne of grace" - the gracious throne of the throne from which grace flows. Although God is to be feared (10:27, 31), He (unlike Allah) gives grace (unmerited kindness) to the penitent. Because God's wrath against sin has been propitiated by our Great High Priest, we can now approach Him without fear.

There was a Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:17-22) in the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament Tabernacle, but no common person could enter. Priests could go up to the veil, and the High Priest once a year could go beyond. Yet we can go anytime and under any circumstance to enter the Throne of mercy and find help.

Available and Attainable:

A. Mercy (He does not give us what our sin deserves)

"Mercy" - God's withholding of judgment and wrath (Heb. 8:12). Everyone who sincerely asks for mercy receives it (Ex: the Publican - Lk. 18:13).

B. Grace (He does give us what we don't deserve)

"Grace" - not the grace of salvation, but the grace of strength to live

victoriously.

*"**To help**"* - to help specifically with the area of temptation; to help in our area of *"infirmity."*

The Lord helps by not allowing us to bear more than we can endure and by providing an exit door from temptation (I Cor. 10:13 - "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but god is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.")*

*"**In time**"* - at a good time; at the right time; God's help is well-timed . . .
"Just when we need Him most."