

**Text:** Hebrews 4:14-16

**Title:** Be Faithful to the Faithful Great High Priest

**Truth:** We must maintain fidelity to Jesus because of the kind of priest that He is.

**Date/Location:** November 28, 2010 at FBC

## **Introduction**

The message of the previous verses was to be diligent to enter God's salvation rest because the Word of God discerns the innermost parts of our being and God Himself sees us as an open book. God and His Word are effectively similar in this area of discernment, the message coming as it does from God. I might not have made as clearly as I could last time that verse 12 is speaking about the Word of God, and verse 13 shifts to God Himself. There is a distinction, but the difference can be lost in the great similarity of these two "x-ray machines." The bottom line is that God knows those who belong to Him, those who have entered the rest and those who are pretenders.

Verse 14 where our study begins today does not seem to be too closely connected to the previous verse. This is because from 3:6-4:13, Hebrews has been concerned to warn us, using the OT example of disobedient Israelites, that it is still possible to miss God's rest. There is no "faking it until we make it," because God and His Word will sniff out the reality that is in our heart, that is, if we are really believing in Christ or not.

Verse 14 shifts back to a previous emphasis on the Son as high priest from 2:17 and 3:1. This shift can be seen as a conclusion to the previous section that had to do with Christ's greatness compared to Moses. It can also be seen as a transition into the following chapters (5-10) that deal a lot with Jesus as High Priest.

## **I. Hold Fast our Confession, 4:14-15**

### **A. The exhortation: hold fast our confession**

1. Holding fast means to not let go, to adhere strongly. It is an ongoing thing.
2. The confession is our statement of allegiance to Jesus Christ; it is how we are bound to him.
3. With this allegiance it comes with a responsibility of continuous fidelity.

### **B. The reasons: why we should hold fast to our allegiance to Jesus**

1. We have a great High Priest.
2. He is in heaven.
3. He is Jesus, the Son of God.
4. He knows our weaknesses.

The phrase "without sin" can be taken two ways. It can mean that he did not sin in any of the temptations, which is definitely true. In fact, he could not sin given His perfect constitution. He did not have an internal sin nature (flesh) to interact with the external world of sin or the devil, so he did not in fact sin as is made clear in many Scriptures (2 Cor. 5:21, Heb 7:25, 1 Peter 2:22).

The phrase "without sin" can also mean he was tempted in all points like we are, excepting that he never personally did sin or had to deal with the

multiplied tests that come after we sin. I lean to this interpretation myself. He stopped short of a complete likeness to man in the only area where He could not have that likeness, and that is in the area of sin.

The bottom line is that He experienced that kind of suffering and can thus be a merciful and faithful high priest for us (2:17-18).

The negative form of the statement answers the objection “how can Jesus be sympathetic when he is not here?!” But turning the statement around into the positive form really encourages us: “We DO HAVE a High Priest who DOES sympathize with our weaknesses!”

## II. Come Boldly to the Throne of Grace, 4:16

A. Boldness comes from what we read earlier.

1. We cannot hide anyway, so we might as well come, 4:12-13.
2. We have a go-between so we don't have to be afraid of coming, 4:15
3. Our priest knows our weaknesses and compassionately bids us to come to his throne which dispenses and is founded upon all grace.

B. The throne of grace is God's throne.

C. The situation is one where mercy is needed...not just initial salvation where mercy is definitely necessary, but any time in the believer's life when there is a need. God provides in His mercy a timely help.

D. The way we come is through prayer. We ask for God's mercy and grace and help, and Christ will advocate for us so that we can receive those things.

About this confidence of receiving answers to our prayers, see Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, Acts 10:43, 1 John 5:14-15, James 1:5-8, 5:16.

## Conclusion

In the book of Hebrews, we read some warnings from the negative side, and some exhortations or admonishments from the positive side.

On the sobering and more negative side, consider 2:1-4's “how shall we escape” and 3:12's “beware lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief” and “lest any of you seem to have come short of it” (entering his rest) in 4:1.

On the happier side, consider the verses we are looking at in this sermon—look at the great high priest that we have. What reason do we have *not* to continue to follow Him? He cares about us, was tested like we are, yet overcame those temptations and did not sin. How could we not continue to hold fast to Christ and come to him to seek help in our times of temptation?

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