

Week 10: FORMED Series

Approaching God With Confidence

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

This week's sermon:

Ross main idea: *"Because Jesus is our Great High Priest, we no longer need to approach God in fear, uncertainty, or shame. We can come confidently into His presence and receive exactly what we need."*

Ross suggested that things within us: fear, uncertainty and shame cause us to stay away, thinking that we'll be rejected and/or punished. BUT this scripture tells us that believers can: draw near confidently and receive mercy and grace from Jesus.

Scholarly Insight:

Guthrie Helpfully Outlines:¹

"The structure of the passage may be depicted as follows:

Basis for exhortation 1: Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,

EXHORTATION 1: let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. expansion of basis for exhortation 1 and

Basis for exhortation 2: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we—yet was without sin.

EXHORTATION 2: Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence,

Motivation related to exhortation 2: so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Cockerill provides these comments on the text:²

"The combination of "mercy and grace" powerfully pictures the total adequacy of the benefits God's people receive when they enter God's presence through this "merciful" (2:17) High Priest. "Mercy" is reminiscent of God's covenant love and unfailing faithfulness demonstrated in the history of Israel and culminating in Jesus Christ. Through God's "mercy" the faithful are forgiven and released from their sins. The words translated "find grace" are often used in the Greek OT

¹ George Guthrie, Hebrews, (Zondervan Academic, 2009), pg 174.

² Gareth Lee Cockerill, The Epistle to the Hebrews, (Eerdmans, 2012), pg 228.

of finding "favor" in someone's eyes. As noted above, this "throne of grace" is a place where God's people meet with God's favor and acceptance. "Grace," however, is much more than passive divine acceptance. "Grace" is the new reality of redemption freely available for God's people through the death of Christ (2:9) and mediated by God's Spirit (10:29). God's "grace" provides the power to overcome temptation and to live faithfully in all the circumstances of life. God's "help" is "timely" because it is available twenty-four hours a day—whenever his people face trials and temptations. His "help" is sufficient to enable his people to "hold firmly to the faith" they "profess" despite opposition and persecution."

For Reflection:

1. As you reflect on the sermon and the notes above, what stands out to you?
2. The passage promises "grace to help us in our time of need." Do you have a testimony of when God's help arrive exactly when you needed it?
3. When you think about approaching God in prayer (perhaps times of need or struggle), have you ever felt something holding you back? Fear of punishment? Shame from your past actions? That your needs are unimportant to God? Do you think God welcomes us near rather than pushed away or rejected?
4. The passage says Jesus "was tempted in every way, just as we are." Have you ever thought that you are alone in your struggles and weakness? Does knowing that Jesus faced real temptation (not just observed it from a distance) change how you think about going to him with that? Though he was tempted he overcame!
5. The language shifts from "we have a high priest" (basis for trust) to "come boldly" (our response). What's the difference between timidly approaching God and coming boldly? Would anything change in your prayer life if you actually believed you were welcome?
6. The "throne of grace" reimagines the mercy seat (where the high priest met God). How does it shift something in you to know that God's throne isn't a place of judgment waiting for you but a throne *of grace*—designed for mercy?
7. The passage begins with "hold firmly to the faith we profess." What does it look like to "hold firmly" when circumstances are tough? Do you think that reading these verses and grasping that Jesus is our high priest and mediator help you?
8. As you go into this week: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if there is anything that is hindering you from approaching God and receiving his grace and mercy. In light of this passage, can you think of one small step you could take to intentionally draw near to Him?

Pray for each other:

Jesus, you know our all of our weakness and failings, and yet you welcome us into your presence; thank you so much for your love and forgiveness. Help us to put aside anything that hinders us, whether fear, shame or doubt and come boldly to your throne of grace. Help us to trust you, having faith that we'll find exactly what we need—your mercy, your favour, your strength for everything that we face. Amen.