Our Great High Priest
Hebrews 4:14-16
1610

Turn in your Bibles to the 4th chapter of Hebrews if you will for just our study tonight, Hebrews chapter 4. The title of this particular section as far as my particular notes are concerned is "Our Great High priest," "Our Great High priest."

Let's bow together in just a moment of prayer. Father we just pray that You'll show us what truth is in this text that is just for us. Father that I might not just teach that which is in my mind to teach but that I might open my mouth and the Spirit of God might teach that which is needful to be taught. Father we just pray that we would see again the majesty and the beauty and the glory of our blessed Christ, that our hearts might be drawn to Him in a new and a fresh kind of love. And those who are here who have not yet fallen in love with Jesus Christ might also be drawn irresistibly to Him and this might be the night when they begin that eternal love relationship. Instruct us by the Spirit, bring our minds into captivity don't let us wander, don't let us be distracted, don't let us be lazy in studying the Word of God, may we be disciplined to be attentive. Speak to us Father as we know You wish to, and we give You the praise and the glory for it in Jesus' name, Amen.

In recent months there has been a cigarette ad on the radio, formerly was on television and it's, it...th, the plea of the advertiser is directed to the unsatisfied smoker. And the plea of the advertiser is, "Come up, come all the way up to Kool." And in an infinitely more serious manner the Holy Spirit in Hebrews chapter 4 is saying to unsatisfied men who are already dissatisfied with everything that's been going on in their lives in the past, and are already turning away from those dissatisfactions of an empty life and He is saying to them, come all the way up to putting your faith in Jesus Christ totally. That's the picture of Hebrews chapter 4.

Really that's the picture as far back as chapter 3 verse 7 where He begins this plea that men who have turned from Judaism, those to whom He writes, would not just turn from Judaism but to Christ, that they would come all the way to saving faith in Christ, and we've been over that now for the past two weeks. And for all of the verses from S:7 through 4:iS that we've studied, that whole section, we find the Holy Spirit giving the same warning, the same plea for men not to just turn from the old patterns not to stop short of salvation and find their hearts hardened and that they've departed from God, but when they have turned from the old life, from the old patterns, from Judaism as in this case that they also turn to Jesus Christ coming all the way to saving faith. And throughout the verses that we've studied we have seen the warning of the Holy Spirit that if they don't come all the way to saving faith they will die spiritually and eternally. And the illustration that He uses is the illustration of Israel who left Egypt, they turned from the old life, they were led out of Egypt but they never went into the promised land because of one thing, what was it? Unbelief, and therefore their carcasses died in the wilderness. And so the Holy Spirit says, don't be like Israel who left the old patterns but never entered in to rest because of unbelief, don't come away from the old without coming all the way to Jesus Christ. That is such a tragedy because once you fall back you have become an apostate. and you've departed from the living God. That's the warning essentially of this that we have been studying, in fact chapter 4 verse 11 as we saw last week summarizes it when it says, Let us make haste or let us hasten or let us give diligence, "therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after

the same example of unbelief." That is like the children of Israel did in the wilderness. What is the Holy Spirit saying then to this Jewish group of people to whom He writes? He's saying to them, you, some of you are Christians but some of you have just turned from Judaism and you've never really committed yourselves to Christ. Like so many people today who go to church, who go through the motions, who maybe have religious feelings and maybe aren't too bad when it comes to citizenship and morality but they've never committed themselves to Jesus Christ, they've never entered into salvation rest and all that it implies. And it's been a negative message, hasn't it? I mean it's been as negative as you can get, it's been believe me or you're doomed, that's what it's been. It's been entered into rest or you're...enter into rest or your carcasses will die in the wilderness, it's been negative. And in verse 12 we saw that the Word of God, that piercing, revealing sword will become a sword of execution for the unbelieving, we saw in verse 13 that no unbelieving individual will escape the scrutiny of God's eye everything is naked and open to Him. And so the Holy Spirit has been pleading from chapter 3 verse ? to chapter 4 verse IS for that man who's on the knife of decision, that man who's standing on the brink of making a commitment to Christ, He's been pleading with him to come to Christ because of what will happen if he doesn't, because of the great tragedy when man turns his back on God whom he knows to be true.

But may I hasten to add, and that brings us to our text which is just a brief four ver...three verses tonight, that salvation is also offered on a positive basis, on a positive basis. Salvation is not just a prevention policy, it's not just to keep you out of hell, it's also a very positive thing, isn't it? Salvation isn't a matter of saying. well, hooy, am I glad I'm out of hell this life is a real drag but at least I don't have to die and go to hell.

That's, that's not it. So many times people accuse, you know, us of preaching fire and brimstone and hell and damnation and that's all that Christianity is all about but that's not all it's all about.

That's only a sensible warning because it happens to be true. But salvation is also offered to men on a very positive basis, and that positive basis is in verses 1?, 15, and IS. And this is really the continuation of the same warning to the same individuals hanging on the edge of decision but this time He speaks to them not in negatives but He speaks to them in positives. He says. come all the way to rest, don't halt in the middle, don't just turn away from the old patterns, don't just walk away from Judaistic traditions and in your mind assent to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, and in your mind assent to the fact that the Gospel is true and hang there in the middle, come all the way into God's rest, not only because of what will happen if you don't, but because of what will happen if you do. You see it's a positive, isn't it? And what will happen if you do is based on who Jesus is. If there was no other reason in the universe to be saved just who Jesus is would be reason enough, right? Just to come into a living relationship with Him would be reason enough.

People think, well if it's, you know it's not as much fun to be a Christian cause you don't get to go out and do all those things that your nature drives you to do, you know? And so if there wasn't any hell a?1 ya...who would want to be a Christian man, you could live it up and go to heaven. I'll tell you something, being a Christian is sc much more glorious that if there wasn't even a hell and we all automatically went to heaven being a Christian would still be tb? way to go. Just to walk in the fellowship of the living Christ. And so there's a positive in the offer of the Gospel and we're going to talk about that tonight. We're to receive Jesus Christ, we're to enter into God's rest not only because of the fear of Him, because of His beauty as well. Not only because of His wrath but because of His grace. Not only because He's a judge but because He is a merciful and faithful High priest. And both sides ...and I'm sure both sides of the coin are equally important, I'm sure many of us could give

testimonies if we had a testimony time tonight, and some would say, well I, I came to Jesus Christ because I heard a message about the person of Christ and He was, He was so winsome and He wa? so beautiful and I was drawn to Him, others of us could say, well I came to Jesus Christ because I was afraid of what was going to happen because of my sins. You see there are both sides of it and both sides are involved in salvation.

But here's the positive call, and as I say I think it's apart of the continued warning. And it's directed again to the intellectually convinced who know that Christianity is valid but who aren't saved.

Now let's look at verse 1! and pick out a couple of things in our introduction here and then we'll get into the text in a moment, specifically connected to our outline. The call to enter salvation is twofold here in this particular passage, the first part of the call comes at the end of verse 14, "let us hold fast our profession."

The second part of the call comes in verse 18, the first part, "Let us, come boldly unto the throne of grace." Now there's a twofold word to the individual who has left the old patterns but is hanging on the edge of committing himself to Christ. And the first statement is, "let us hold fast our profession." Now these individuals had professed, that is they had professed with their mouths and maybe even in their minds that the Gospel was true, that Jesus Christ was real, these Jewish people in this group to whom the writer of Hebrews writes. Now as I've said many times he's writing mainly to ects these warnings to those who know the Gospel to Christians but .rnterJ

pel but haven't come all the way. And isn't that what we have in the church today, the real and the false who are maybe hanging on the edge of decision. And so he says to them, hold fast your profession, they had made an intellectual assent to the Gospel, they believed it. Now you've met many people like that, you've met many people who believe it all but have never committed themselves to it.

And that's just exactly what ya have here, but the problem was these Jewish believers who had come away from Judaism were being then persecuted by their, by their own people, they were being ostracized, they had been unsynagogued, that is put out of the synagogue, excommunicated if you will, they had lost the rights and privileges of their own society and their own family, they had been ostracized and put out and so the persecution was beginning to hit and they were thinking of turning around and going back to Judaism. That would have been deadly, that's the characteristic of an apostate who departs forever from the living God having known the truth turns his back and walks away from it, and that's the ultimate tragedy, and so the first warning is this, hold fast your profession don't turn around and go back, you see. Don't go back. The second warning is, come to the throne of grace, you see. It's a two part call to salvation, the first part don't go back, hold on to what you've got this far, don't release that initial profession that you believe the Gospel. In 1!, the ldth verse of chapter 3 he says, "We are partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." In other words to begin with you've got to really hold on to that profession, a believer who is a true Christian is one who holds on to that initial profession. So what he's saying to them is, you've made the profession in your minds, hold on to that thing, don't let go of it. An apostate will fall back, a true believer will never let go of that profession, never.

He'll confess Christ and keep on confessing Christ to the end of his days. So he says don't go back. True salvation is characterized by those who remain, like he says in verse 0 of chapter S, "Whose house we are, if we remain." If we remain. And so there's simply those two steps. And you know

there is such a danger in this first thing.

Ah, somebody coming all the way up to the point of salvation and then turning back, and that danger is carefully outlined for us by our blessed Lord in the ISth chapter of Matthew, because in verse 18 He explains the parable of the sower and the seed, verse 1g...

verse 18 simply says, it's the parable of the sower, and verse ig "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which receives seed by the wayside."

Some people hear the Gospel, they mentally assent to it and they believe it. But they don't dig into it to find out the real meaning and Satan snatches it away. Verse 20, "But he that received the seed on stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and immediately with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he's offended." And he turns back.

Verse 22, "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this age," the care of this age.

"the deceitfulness of (what?) riches." He wanted his own thing, he wanted to do his own thing and he wanted money, and all that the world offered choked the word and he became unfruitful. There are three illustrations, my dear friends, of people who came all the way and made a profession and then fell back. Only the fourth, "But he that received seed in the good ground is he that heareth the word, understandeth it, who also beareth fruit, bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." Some Christians are more productive than others but they're all Christians. You know it's an interesting thing that if that's any kind of a measure we can say that one out of four people who make an acceptance of Christ initially are for real. One out of four who make the profession remain true.

people always say, well how come it is that people make a commitment to Jesus Christ and then they, they seemingly fall apart, they seemingly go away? Read it again, it's all right there. And so what is he saying? He's saying, don't be of those who come to that point of a confession and that point of a profession and then fall away, step one is hold on, to that profession. Then step two comes in verse 10, don't just stay on step one but, "Let us. therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace," that's the second step move toward God, now that's as simple as it can be presented. You've heard the Gospel, you know the Gospel, you know the truth of Jesus Christ, hang on, don't turn your back on God and walk away, don't do it. Come all the way. And the word proserchomai, a very familiar Greek word, a very common Greek word is used commonly in the New Testament of the sinners approach to God, very common word, and that's exactly what he's saying. Sinner, don't go back, but don't just stand there either, come all the way to the throne of grace, come if you will all the way up to Christ. It's a simple invitation, isn't it? Hold fast and come on. And that's the invitation right here. And you might be saying in your mind, oh yeah, well why should I? Why should I come on? Well for the last two weeks he's been telling you. you ought to come because of what'll happen to you if you don't, right?

But now he's going to tell you, you ought to come because of what'll happen to you ii you do. You'll be introduced our great High priest.

I'll tell ya, I don't know how anybody could resist an intimate love relationship with Jesus Christ. It's available, it's reason enough to come because Jesus is who He is.

That brings us to verse 14 at the very beginning, look at it, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest." That's the real key. Why is he calling them to salvation? Because of what'll happen if they don't come now, because of Jesus Christ and what He can do in their lives. This is a...incidently this is the real point of the whole Epistle of Hebrews, the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the entire Epistle of the Hebrews the priesthood of Christ is exalted because this is the whole issue, don't you see?

Men are here and they're locked in sin, God is there and He's locked in holiness, and somebody's got to mediate in the middle. right?

And it's gotta be a somebody who knows God and a somebody who knows man and can bring them together, and that's what a priest is. did you know that? And so what is it that we need, what is it that he wants to present to these Jewish people? That Jesus is that great High priest who brings God and man together in a love union. And that's why throughout the whole Book of Hebrews the priesthood of Jesus is exalted. Back in chapter 1 we saw it, didn't we in verse S? When it says, Christ acting out His priestly ministry, "upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins." That's a priestly act, the cleansing of sin, making sacrifice, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." We saw it in chapter 2 verse 1? where it says that He was, in the middle of the verse, "a merciful and faithful high priest."

The Priesthood of Jesus Christ is the theme of the whole Book.

Even in chapter 3 it calls Him. verse 1, "the High priest, Jesus.?

And here we come in chapter 4 and who do we meet again? Our great High priest. And we're going to keep on hearing this, especially when we get to chapters 7, S. g and all in there it's just going to be the priesthood of Jesus Christ expounded in great detail. And don't you see this is the key thing because it is Jesus Christ, the marvelous person of Christ, the great High priest who brings God and man together. That was always the task of the high priest, you see, to usher men into the presence of God, and when the high priest would go into the holy of holies once a year on the day of atonement and offer the sacrifice there he was of...in effect bringing the sins of his people into God to be atoned for. He was bearing the people before God. And if one was to be a perfect High priest He would know God perfectly and He would know men perfectly and Jesus knew both. Jesus knew God perfectly for He was God, Jesus knew men perfectly !or He was man therefore He becomes the absolute perfect High priest, who brought God and man together in His own form and who continues to bring God and man together by faith. And so the Epistle of the Hebrews rings clear all the way through with the claim that Jesus is God's eternal High priest, who can bring us to God. He's already shown, hasn't He? That Jesus is superior to the prophets.

He's already shown as we've seen it that He's superior to the angels, that He's superior to Moses, that He's superior to Joshua, and now He is about to, to start an argument that shows that He is superior to every high priest including the best of them all, Aaron himself.

And don't you see that He wants to show that the new covenant is better than the old and so He shows the supremacy of Jesus over every other individual connected with the old covenant. And Aaron really was the high point of the whole deal because he was the one who mediated between men and God, and Jesus is greater than Aaron.

He is our great High Priest. Ah, the idea of the word great means ideal, no weaknesses, none of the frailties of the other priests.

And because He is such a High Priest He calls upon men to come into God's rest.

Now, I want you to see three features tonight that make Jesus our great High priest, and these are rich, rich truths. Three features that make Jesus our great High priest. Number one, His perfect Priesthood. Number two, His perfect person, and number three, His perfect provision. Because His priesthood was perfect and His person was perfect and His provision was perfect, He is therefore our great High priest and there's none like Him, none like Him.

First of all His perfect priesthood. Verse 14, "Seeing, then, that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Why should I hold onto my faith in Christ even though it's only a professed faith, why should I not go back? Because we have a great High priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. How can you walk away from a High priest like that? Now you say, well what is the importance of the phrase that is passed into the heavens? Well that's really the key to everything. The Greek here and it's, it's a na...

unique word but it has incorporated in the word dia which in the Greek means through, and it should read this way, "Our great high priest, that is passed through the heavens." And that's very interesting. Because Jesus when you remember He had ascended and we was begin...we were beginning to talk about that this morning, Jesus ascended He passed through the heavens, did He not, into the presence of God? Now on what basis did He have the right to enter the presence of God? On the basis that He had perfected His work on earth, correct? He had done a perfect work in John 17, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." philippians said that when He got there God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Why? Because He perfectly accomplished His priesthood work. He operated a perfect priesthood, He performed a redemptive act that brought God and man together in an eternal relationship. do you know that's something no priest could ever do? The best a priest could do was atone for sins for one years time, and every year and every year and every year, another Yom Kippur, another day of atonement, another day of atonement, and not only that every day, every day, every day.

day in, day out, thousands and thousands and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of slain animals. But Jesus Christ operated on a per...on a perfected priesthood whereby one act He sanctified forever them that are His, and He accomplished in a perfect priesthood what every other priest, all in combination could not accomplish.

And it's an interesting thing too to keep this in mind, that when He passed through the heavens and He entered into the presence of God He did something that no priest could ever do. And that's the marvelous thing, when He got into the presence of God, chapter 1 says, "he sat down." Now what is that the sig...what's the significance of that? Significance is that He finished His work. You don't sit

down till it's done, in fact in the holy of holies were there any seats? Only the mercy seat and you didn't dare sit on that. But when Jesus accomplished His perfect work He sat down, it was done, it was done. No more sacrifices ever needed to be made. And it's an interesting thing that it was right at that time the destruction of Jerusalem that the whole nation of Israel ceased their sacrifices, and do you know that since 70 A.D. they have not performed sacrifices and they don't do it any more. and if you ask them why they're not too sure why, but we know why, because Jesus accomplished in a perfect priesthood the end of all the sacrificial system and consequently there's no need for them anymore. And so Jesus Christ entered a heavenly holy of holies, and He remained there. The Old Testament priest on the day of atonement would take the blood and he would go through three areas, he would go through the door into the outer court, through the door into the holy place, through the veil into the holy of holies, he passed through into the third place.

And he only did it once on the day of atonement and he sprinkled blood on the mercy seat. The record of that is indicated to us in Leviticus chapter 18 verses 2 to lg and also later on in the chapter.

It tells all about it you can read it in detail. But let me tell you something interesting, before the high priest could ever go in there, before he could ever go in to sprinkle the blood for the people he had to do the whole thing for himself first because he was a sinner too. He had to go through the whole rigmarole for himself, atone for his own sins by putting the blood there' then he could go back and take care of the people, and once he got in there he had to do his job and get out of there. If he stayed there past the time of the day of atonement he would die, for he was a sinner and he had no right in the presence of God, except by the graciousness of God once a year could he enter the holy of holies where the Shekinah glory of God dwelt. But Jesus, our great High priest who passed not through the temple or through the tabernacle but through the heavens also went through three things. The Bible says that there is a third heaven, right? The first heaven is the atmospheric heaven the Bible says the clouds of heaven, the birds of heaven.

The second heaven is the stellar heaven the Bible talks about the stars of heaven, and the third heaven is the abode of God, First Corinthians, pardon me Second Corinthians 12:2. Second Corinthians 12:2 speaks of the third heaven where God is. And so Jesus Christ passed through heaven number one, heaven number two, and entered into heaven number three and God didn't tell Him, look You've got 24 hours to get this over with and get out. When He got there what did He do? He sat down. It was done, it was accomplished, He made a perfect atonement for all sins for all time. And all other sacrifices before that were but pictures of that perfect sacrifice. The ascended, resurrected Christ carried Himself past the two outer heavens into the abode of God and when He got there He sprinkled His blood on that divine eternal heavenly mercy seat, and you know what?

God said, I am satisfied, forever. In Hebrews 12, I love this. verse 24, "And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Jesus Christ sprinkled blood in a far better way than any man, even the wonderful sacrifice of Abel which pleased God. How much more was God pleased with what Jesus did. how much more was God satisfied?

And I love First peter 1:2 which says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, (listen) unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

Can't you imagine what a reunion it was in heaven, when Jesus Christ had accomplished perfect atonement, entered into God's heaven. and God said, I am satisfied, and never another sacrifice ever needs to be made, never. Remember the man a few weeks ago I told you about in the philippines who crucifies himself every year to make atonement for his own sins? No, don't need to do that, God is satisfied, Jesus sat down the work was done. And so Jesus Christ is our great High priest who accomplished a perfect priesthood. In the Book of Hebrews the perfections of our priest are exalted, let me just show you what it says about Him, about His priesthood in 7:25, don't try to follow me I'll just jump through some of these. 7:25 says.

"Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest was fitting for us, (listen to our High priest) who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." That's a great High priest. And then in S:1, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum:

(Here's the key to the whole Book) We have such an high priest."

And that's even in the Jewish vernacular. "He's seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." And then you go over to chapter 0 verse 12, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place. having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh' How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Can't you see how superior the sacrifice of Christ is. If the earthly sacrifices accomplished something, what must that one have done? And then in chapter ? verse 24, "Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands," He's not like those old priests going in the tent or the tabernacle, "but he's entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God (listen to these two words) for us." Do you like that? He took His blood in there and said, on the behalf of John MacArthur, Father I want to sprinkle My blood, and God says, I'm satisfied John MacArthur's redeemed. And He did the same thing for everyone who comes by faith to Him, such a great High priest. You see the pattern of the Scripture is simply this, that God has set in order blood to be that which atones for sin. The death of an individual, "the wages of sin is death," therefore death and the sacrifice of life is the atonement for sin. the pattern of atonement. The Bible says that the remission of sin is based on the shedding of blood in Hebrews, and so Jesus Christ shed His blood on our behalf that God might be satisfied as He paid the price for our sin, and we by faith in Him find that sacrifice covers our sin.

And so Jesus Christ entered into heaven. not any earthly tabernacle.

Then I love this. in 10:12 it says, "But this man," but this man, and the verse before he says, "Every priest standing there ministering and offering, can never take away sin; But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." Can you imagine that? I mean priests were up and at it all day long, but this man once, and He sat down forever. God said, I'm satisfied that takes care of it. Chapter 12 verse 2 says that after "He endured the cross, despising the shame, he was set down at the right hand of the throne of God.? Do you see He accomplished perfect redemption, didn't He? perfect redemption, no wonder it says back in chapter 4, Our great High priest who didn't pass through the tabernacle, didn't pass through the temple on a temporary basis and have to leave again, He passed through the heavens and when He got there He sat down,

and God said. I'm satisfied, and Jesus Christ accomplished the atonement of all sins of all time for those who come by faith and accept what He did for them. But that's the point, you've got to believe it, you've got to come all the way to total faith in Jesus Christ so that it applies in your behalf. The millions of gallons of blood that ran all over the altars of Israel for hundreds and hundreds of years, the sprinkled blood that stained and crusted on the mercy seat year after year couldn't do what the one great High priest did in one great act for all time, and then entered into heaven, into the heavenly holy of holies, showed the sacrifice to the Father and sat down on His right hand forever.

And you know why He's sitting there? Because He's interceding for us, isn't He? It wasn't like the old priests who had to come back out again and couldn't go back into God's presence for a year, Jesus stays there and He just keeps interceding for our behalf. You know that's why there's never the possibility as a Christian that two sins could ever get stacked against you because as fast as you commit them Jesus Christ intercedes to make sure they're not held against you. The Bible says, "If we are confessing our sins, he's (faithfully) faithful and just to keep on cleansing us." The Bible indicates that the intercession work of Jesus Christ in First John 2, "If any man sin, we have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Who takes care of the issue, He stays at the right hand of the Father taking care of our sin. And so does paul say in Romans 8:84, "Who shall lay any charge to God's elect?" Who's going to accuse us of anything? Jesus Christ is up there taking care of that. constantly interceding for us. Oh, what a marvelous truth. And so Jesus Christ, that great High priest has accomplished what no other high priest could accomplish the actual total and forever obliteration of sin, in terms of guilt. Now may I hasten to add that that doesn't mean we don't sin anymore it just means that we're forgiven, because God is satisfied with Christ having paid the penalty. So because of His perfect priesthood He has then given us the right to enter God's rest. And so the Spirit calls and the Spirit says on the basis of the perfect priesthood of Jesus Christ come to the throne of grace, hold on to the profession that you have made.

Now let me add a footnote at this point that I think is important. In the Book of Hebrews is really the end of the Judaistic system, for sure I mean it ended really in the Gospels with the coming of Jesus but here the nails are hammered into the coffin. And the Judaistic system was based on a priesthood. you see interceding between men and God and when Jesus came and did the final act as a priest it was over, the whole Judaistic system collapsed at that point, it became null and void, it became ah, obliterated, and the formality of Judaism today is a sinful formality in the sense that it is rebelling, and I want to show you what I mean by that. The Apostle paul knew in philippians 8 that the priesthood as such had ended, and that Christ had brought in a new thing and the old forms were gone, for in philippians 1...8:1, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit," you see the old forms are over with, watch out for the legalizers, watch out for those who want to come in and push the Judaistic system on you with the sacrifices and the trappings and the whole shot. watch out, we're the ones that worship Him in the Spirit, "and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." That is we're not hung up on circumcision and all the forms that are ours because we're Jews. We are worshiping in the Spirit the person of Christ. Now he says, "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh." I mean if you're talking about Judaism man, I'm right on the inside, right? Verse 8...5, "I was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; touching the law, a pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." paul says now if you're going to get real

hep on the flesh in keeping the Judaistic system I'm right in there, I kept the whole thing. But I love verse 7, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted (what?) loss for Christ.

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." You see, that's gone he says, that's all gone, I let it all go, it doesn't matter anymore.

That whole system has been nullified. Now watch this, all worship, watch it, all worship or pretended connection with God by men calling themselves priests, whether Judaistic, Catholic or pagan is sinful.

It is an open defiance of the finished work of Jesus Christ. It is equal to that rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram whom the earth opened up and swallowed because God was so angry. There is no place, there is no place in the economy of Christianity for a priesthood, there is none, that is a direct affront to the full and final priesthood of Jesus Christ Himself, is it not? Any priesthood on earth now, watch it, implies that the atonement for sin has not yet been made. Do you and I have to go to some other individual to go to God for us? No. What does he say in verse 18, "Let us, come boldly unto (some priest? Unto what? Unto) God's own throne of grace." And so I say all earthly priesthood and ritual is over. We only need one great High priest, in fact the, the Bible even says we're a whole kingdom of priests, all of us together. We don't need anybody else. Forget the rituals, forget the trappings. forget the earthly priests, that whole shot is over with. Every man by faith in Jesus Christ enters directly into God's presence, because Jesus has made as the writer of Hebrews calls it, a new and living way.

We don't need that. Jesus tore the veil, didn't He? When He died, the veil was rent from the top to the bottom and access to God was thrown wide open, we don't need any priests. And so says the Holy Spirit, you ought to come all the way to the throne of grace just because of the perfect priesthood of Jesus Christ. You don't need anything else, He's opened the way of access to God, and atoned for your sin, all of it.

Secondly, you ought to come because of His perfect person.

And I love this, the end of verse 14 it says, "Jesus, the Son of God."

And then verse 15, "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our weakness, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." You know that name that he gives in verse 14 is really something, isn't it? Jesus, the Son of God. What a combination that is, that's the human, what's the human name?

Jesus, and that's the divine,God the Son. Now as we said earlier a perfect priest would then bring God and man together, and Jesus was the perfect priest because He was God and He was man. Jesus, the Son of God. I love His full title in Mark, I think it's Mark 1, isn't it? Yes, Mark 1:1, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." That's His human name, His Messianic title and His deity, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Now that's a powerful statement to these Jewish readers, very powerful. In that very name is the essence of who Jesus is. You see Jesus, the name Jesus is just a human name, Jehoshua or Joshua as indicated in the Old Testament it means Savior but it is a human name. But then the term the Son of God or God the Son, God the second person of the trinity who manifested Himself in obedience as a Son to a Father, that's His deity. And my dear

ones wouldn't you know that the perfect High priest would have to be a perfect combination of God and man to bring the two together, sure. Would you like to have a living relationship with the God of the universe, it's available, did you know that? Would you like to, to know that you don't have to wander around trying to figure out what existence is all about, that you could have a direct line to the creator of the universe, you can know everything about destiny. You can. because Jesus Christ who knows you absolutely and totally because He felt everything you feel, and who knows God because He is God can bring you together in a living relationship. He's the perfect person.

Now let's look at these two parts His humanity and His deity in verse 15 as they are detailed. First of all looking at His humanity we see in verse 15, "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are," stop right there. Now Jesus Christ is not distant and uninvolved and unsympathetic and you know to the, to the average individual God seems like way off and could care less and uninvolved and so forth and so on, but not so. And the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, that He was divine does not mean that He doesn't know how we feel, that He doesn't know our feelings, that He, that He's a stranger to our emotions, not so. God the Son became man, He became Jesus, in order to be apart of the temptation and the testing and the suffering of men that He might be a sympathetic and understanding High priest. I don't want to go to tell my troubles to somebody that doesn't understand, I want to tell my troubles to somebody who really understands where I hurt, such is Jesus. He is a merciful, faithful High priest. And He's at the right hand of the Father right now interceding for us, He has an unequaled capacity for sympathizing with us in every danger, in every trial, in every, in every situation that comes our way, because He's been through it all.

He endured every form of testing that a man could endure, He went through every kind of a vicissitude, every kind of a circumstance that man will ever know. You say, oh yeah. But, you know and theologians have said this for years, but oohh, that's not too hard for Him I mean He's God, I mean all He has to do is say, I'm God you know, Satan don't bother Me. Or you just kind of shrug it off.

No, you don't understand. Some people say, well He, He doesn't know how I feel because man and I go through that stuff and I'm weak and I fall and He just went right through that temptation like nothing, you know? And they of course forget that being tempted in the garden He sweat as it were great drops of blood, and they forget that standing by the tomb of Lazarus His whole body shook. Jesus was tempted, tested and subjected to every kind of trial that you'll ever know. And let me tell you something friends it wasn't an easier battle it was harder than ours. Let me tell you why, Jesus was a human being in every sense of the word. From a human standpoint He had all that a man has, sensitivity to all of those things was His as it is equal to you. You say, what do you mean by that?

Well, I simply mean that He felt things like people feel them, He was fully a man. You say, well then what does it mean. what do you mean that it's easier for Him, He was still God and that over ruled.

Yes, but it was ea-it was har-I should say that it was harder for Him, it was harder for Him for this reason. Let me give you an illustration. I want to get this clear so I'm going to think so that you'll...that I'll say the right words so you'll get it the first time. pain, now pain is an interesting thing. All of us go through a certain amount of pain whenever we be-we become injured, but we only go through so much pain up to a point and then we black out' right? Or we call it going into shock. Uh, I remember when I was thrown out of the car and I hit the highway, at 75 miles an hour, that I felt pain for awhile and then I didn't feel anything. And your body reacts by sort of turning off the pain. You only feel pain

to a certain point and you don't feel it anymore, and at that point you could be, you know just completely destroyed and you probably wouldn't feel much of anything. So what we conclude from that is this, there is a degree of pain which you will never experience, right? Because your body will turn off your sensitivities before you ever get that far, okay? Now the same thing is true in temptation there is a degree of temptation that we don't really experience, because we succumb long before we get to that point, right? And we've blown it before we ever get to that place. But Jesus Christ had no turn off point, since He never sinned He took the full expression of all that hell could throw at Him, do you see? There was no shock system in Him to turn off the temptation, and since He never fell to it He took it to His extremity in every single case. And He took it all as a man, as a human being. My friends He not only knows what you go through He's gone through things you'll never get to, in the intensity of temptation. There are agonies of temptation that Jesus knows that you don't know. have you ever sweat drops of blood. have you ever done that? Jesus went all the way in temptation, He felt it all, and so when you go to Jesus Christ remember that He knows everything you know and He knows the things that you don't know about suffering. And beloved I say again what the Word says, "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities." We don't have an indifferent Savior, do we? No. we don't.

Now this is news to the Jews, because God was holy, God was separate, God was different you know, God belonged to a completely different sphere of being. And God never really got that close to men, you know, God was, was far off and you could kind of just go in there once in awhile and then you gotta get out of there fast, God didn't feel what men feel. In fact the Jews believed that God was incapable of sharing the feelings of men, everything in the Old Testament was stay away, stay away, stay away, Mount Sinai don't go near the mountain, stay away, stay away, stay away, God's at a distance, see?

And so they believed that God didn't feel what men feel. But if it was a problem for the Jews you can imagine what the problem was for the Greeks, for example the Stoics, who were the dominate Greek ah, philosophers, they really had the biggest following, they had...they believed that God's primary attribute was apatheia or apathy. That was His primary attribute, an, I don't care attitude. It said that God couldn't feel...they said in some of their writings, God can't feel joy, sorrow, gladness or grief, He doesn't feel anything. He's just a cosmic blob, see. He doesn't feel anything. And the Epicureans came along and said, no that's not quite true the gods live in intermundia. You say, where's that? Well that's the space between the two worlds. What are the two worlds? I, I suppose the spiritual and the physical, and between those two worlds in intermundia god lived and he didn't feel either world. Complete detachment. Now this is the attitude of the people in the world, the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Jews that God is way off and doesn't feel anything.

Into this world come a lot of Christians saying, listen folks, we've got a High priest who feels everything that you feel. That's revolutionary. You mean there's a God who's big enough to create the whole universe and yet He, He knows where I hurt, little, little tiny infinitesimal small little puny me, and the little dot in the universe?

That's incredible, and it's true. He deliberately underwent every human experience so that you could go to Him and He could say, yeah, I know, I've, I've been there, ha. Our God has been there. I said that we not only have a God who is there but we have a God who's been here. And He knows. The word infirmities is an interesting word, it's not a reference to sin, doesn't mean He can be touched with the feeling of our sin, He never sinned, it says He's without sin at the end of verse 15. But infirmities means feebleness or weakness, that is He knows the natural weakness of humanity, the

liability shall we say, to the power of sin. Jesus knows the liability of human nature to sin, that's what the struggle was all about, see? There was that weakness in the human existence that pushes toward sin and it was that against which Jesus fought, and thus in anguish was victorious. He did not face His trials and His temptations coolly and calmly, He faced them in, in tremendous anguish because He was resisting that human weakness that is apart of human nature. But it says at the end of verse 15, He was without sin, and that means He never sinned. In fact ch?ris hamartias means He was apart from sin, separated from it. He never sinned, never sinned.

There is indicated in these two little Greek words the absolute, entire absence of sin, He did not sin. Not the slightest taint ever even entered His mind. It says in 9:28 of Hebrews, "Christ once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin." You see? He appeared the first time without sin, He'll appear the second time without sin.

You say, what's the point of that? The point is He'll be just as sinless in His glory as He was in His humanity, He never was tainted with a speck of sin. In fact the Bible says in First John that in Him is..."In God is no darkness (what?) at all." None. The Bible says, "God who cannot (what?) lie." And Jesus could no more sin than God could lie, He did not have the ability to sin because He was God. So our great High priest sympathizes with us in testing, but without the sain...the slightest taint of sin. But He knew the weakness that makes us fall into sin. You say. well now wait a minute, I mean ii He had this super power over sin and He never sinned how can He really understand? Well, let me ask you this, if you had a chance to be operated on, wonderful opportunity, would you choose somebody who'd been operated on before and knew a lot about how you get operated on or would you like to have a doctor who knew what the operation was all about? The...if you were going into a court and you wanted to make sure that everything in the courtroom came out, would you like to have a judge who was a criminal along with the other criminals on trial or would you like to have a judge who was moral and he could stand qualified to judge on what a criminal is? You see the problem is to secure sympathy and yet preserve sinlessness, and the solution is temptation of absolute severity without any sin, you see that makes Him eminently qualified.

He knows the gamut of temptation yet He can stand apart in absolute pure moral evaluation and be a fair judge. All our temptations Christ felt, and He didn't feel them with our blunted perception but He felt them with His finite, with His infinite I should say, sensitivity. Mark this thought, sinlessness alone can estimate sin, did you get that? It is sinlessness alone that can estimate sin. And so Jesus Christ didn't sin. He couldn't sin, He had no capacity to sin. But that doesn't minimize His temptations they were all the more terrible because He would not fall, He could not fall, He endured them to the extreme. And He's a good one to stand back and evaluate us because being sinless He has a sensitivity to sin, and He can see it for what it is where we always cannot. I like what it says in Hebrews 12:8 it says, "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." You want to talk to somebody who knows what sin is about you talk to Jesus Christ, you don't even know what that's about in the fullest sense you haven't been able resist to the point of blood. Jesus Christ knows sin, and He knows your weakness and He understands it. You say, well what does this have to do with me? This just simply means that after you've come to Jesus Christ you have one that you can go to who completely understands in every way, in every capacity. In fact the Apostle paul put it this way in First Corinthians 10 he said in verse 18, and this of course is a classic statement, "But there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not tempt you above that you are able, but will, with the temptation, (what?)

make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." Jesus Christ knows the path. Someone has well said, In a trackless wood the one who goes first blazes the way or breaks twigs so others may follow.

When Jesus passed through this world He gathered up so many thorns in His own feet that by this we may know the way for us to take.

I always think of the story of the great Swiss patriot who ran into the midst of the army, an army against there were...they were, they were nothing against this great army with the great phalanx of men lined up, this great Swiss patriot ran into to route the army. the only way he could do it was to get behind their initial front line and get inside and as he ran in he gathered into his chest the arrows and the spears that were thrown at him, he plunged through the middle of the line and fell dead and not a foot behind him was the whole Swiss army and they went inside and routed the offending army. And I thought to myself how it is that Jesus Christ went straight into the battlements of hell and gathered into His own chest all of the darts and arrows of Satan and we following in His trail know the path of victory. Whatever Satan brings our way there's victory in Jesus Christ. He understands, He's been there.

It's a wonderful story during, well the great heyday of the Salvation Army many years ago, told by John Wilson. Booth Tucker preached in Chicago in the great Salvation Army place there, and a man came forward afterwards and Tucker had preached on the sympathy of Jesus, and he said to him you can talk like that about how Christ is dear to you and how He helps you and how He's so sympathetic, but he says if your wife was dead as mine is and your babies were crying for their mother who would never come back, you wouldn't say what you're saying. A few days after that Booth Tucker lost his wife in a train wreck, and her body was brought to Chicago and carried to the Salvation Army Headquarters for the funeral. Booth Tucker stood up after the funeral was completed, he looked down into the silent face of his beloved wife, his children's mother and he spoke these words and I quote, "The other day when I was here a man said I could not say Christ was sufficient if my wife were dead and my children crying for their mother. If that man is here I tell him that Christ is sufficient, my heart is bleeding, it is crushed, it is broken, but it has a song and Christ put it there. and if that man is here I tell him that though my wife is gone and my children are motherless ' Jesus Christ speaks comfort to me today." The man was there, and Doctor John Wilson says that down the aisle he came, knelt beside the casket and Booth Tucker introduced him to Jesus Christ. We have a sympathetic High priest. Jesus then. has a perfect priesthood and is a perfect person.

Thirdly and just simply, He made a perfect provision, verse 18, "Let us, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The Holy Spirit exhorts these Hebrews who have only given mental assent to the Good News of Christ to come all the way to the throne of grace and obtain salvation. What throne is it? It's the throne of God, it used to be a throne of judgment, when Jesus sprinkled His blood there He turned it into what? A throne of grace, just as when the high priest went into the holy of holies he sprinkled the blood there, he turned the judgment seat into a mercy seat. so when Jesus entered into heaven He turned God's judgment throne into a throne of mercy. a throne of grace. What was a fiery throne of judgment as you read in Revelation chapter 4 against the ungodly breathing out lightnings and fires and thunders, Jesus transformed into a throne of grace.

That's a perfect provision. What was it that sinful men needed?

Justice, is that what we needed? No we needed mercy, didn't we? We needed grace, and so Jesus made a perfect provision He turned the throne of God into a throne of grace, and brought us mercy and grace to help in time of need. And so we draw boldly before that throne to receive the grace that a loving God has provided for us on the basis of a perfect sacrifice performed by Jesus Christ. Can anyone reject such a High priest? Can anyone turn his back, and go away from such a High priest? Verse 18 ends with this, "find grace to help in time of need." What does that little phrase mean? It means this, to find grace when you need it most before the time is gone.

So what's He saying? Come boldly all the way to God's throne that's been turned into a throne of grace, because of Jesus. Come all the way up, receive grace and mercy when you need it before it's too late, and your heart is hard and God's today is over. Oh, what a High priest we have. He sympathizes and He saves, what else could we ever ask? Let's pray.

Father we thank You that Jesus Christ is ever ready to strengthen us, to comfort us, to heal us' to restore us. We thank You that He has prepared to receive the sin stained one. Thank You that He is ready to dry the tears of a peter, weeping bitterly, He is ready to say to paul opposed with a thorn in the flesh, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Father we thank You for such a great High priest. And we have come to Him and come to You not only because of what happens if we don't but because of what happens if we do, we come into a living relationship with such a High priest. Father we pray that You'll speak to those here who've never come all the way to Jesus Christ, may they understand they're sinners, may they understand that it is the atoning blood of Jesus Christ that paid the sacrifice and that the blood has already been sprinkled on the divine mercy seat all they have to do is believe it and accept it. All they have to do is say, God I believe that Jesus did that perfect work, God I now receive that in my behalf. And it is done forever. Oh, Lord we pray that any who are halting here in the midst of indecision might come all the way boldly, not hesitating, boldly, courageously to the throne of grace, they might receive grace and mercy before it is too late. For Father it is doom if we but receive the justice due us for our sins. And so Lord do Your perfect work tonight, we pray for Your own glory.

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