

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

HEBREWS 4:14-16(TNIV)

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.**

— PART 2 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

① “For we do not have a high priest who is **unable to empathize with our weaknesses**” — I find this verse easier to understand if I reword it from a negative to a positive. This says the same thing in a different way: “For we **do have a high priest who is able to empathize with our weaknesses**”! Simply put: **Jesus. Gets. It. Even if no one else does.** His **empathy** for us is an offshoot of his **love** for us:

PSALM 31:7 (NIV)

I will be glad and rejoice in your **love**,
for **you saw my affliction**
and **knew the anguish of my soul.**

② “but we have one who has been **tempted in every way, just as we are**” — his **empathy** for us is a result of his becoming **like** us, and **experiencing temptation** in the same ways we do:

“When Christ assumed our humanity he became like us, exposed to all the hazardous perils of our life and death. He was not protected from trouble and adversity. When we find ourselves immersed in the harsh realities of human experience, he knows exactly how we feel.”

RAYMOND BROWN, *Hebrews* (BST)

HEBREWS 2 (NIV)

¹⁷ For this reason **he had to be made like them, fully human in every way**, in order that he might become a **merciful** and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he **himself** suffered when he was tempted, **he is able to help** those who are being tempted.

So he is **ABLE** to help us, “because he himself suffered” . . . but there’s more! Because he is a “**merciful**” high priest, he also **WANTS** to help us!

③ *“tempted in every way, just as we are — yet he did not sin.” —*

George Guthrie teases out the implications of this:

“Given the context, however, the author of Hebrews probably has one particular temptation uppermost in his thoughts: **the temptation to break with one’s commitments under severe suffering.** In 2:18, a verse that foreshadows the one under consideration, the author writes, ‘Because *he himself suffered* when he was tempted.’ In a related passage (5:7–8), a text that might be called Hebrews’ ‘GETHSEMANE ACCOUNT,’ he adds: ‘Although he was a son, *he learned obedience from what he suffered.*’ For Jesus the ultimate temptation — and the one to which his response would have vast implications for the rest of humanity — was **the temptation to try to get around his persecution unto death and to turn his back on God’s will, which was leading him to a Roman cross.**”

GEORGE H. GUTHRIE, *Hebrews* (NIV Application Commentary).

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Lord Jesus, our great high priest, we praise you that you are **in God’s presence, and you communicate our needs directly to him.** We praise you that **you are “able to empathize with our weaknesses.”** **You are able to feel what we are going through...**because you also **were “tempted in every way, just as we are”!** You **resonate** with what we are going through...right now! Have mercy on us, Jesus, have mercy. Strengthen us for the challenges and temptations we face today.

Pastor Doug

P.S. We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would love to pray for you! Email us at info@bethanyonline.net

P.P.S. Keep checking our “ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TODAY” webpage — we will try to post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!

P.P.P.S. And watch our **LIVE-STREAM Worship Service** this coming Sunday at 10:30 A.M. for more encouragement.