

Well, let's take our bibles and turn to Hebrews Chapter four, verses 14 to 16. We started a series last week called Total Grace. We're trying to get our head around the whole concept of God's grace. We tend to have a very wimpy idea of grace. We tend to kind of believe that the front end of the Christian life is loaded up with grace. But that's true but grace is much more than that. Grace is how our God handles us in life and for all of eternity those who put their trust in Him. And we want to broaden our understanding of grace and understand that the Christian life is really an expression of total grace.

And we looked last week at Ephesians 2, Saving Grace and this week, we're going to look at Strengthening Grace. Grace doesn't just bring us to faith in Jesus Christ, it gives us the ability to keep our faith in Jesus Christ, and we can enjoy God's strengthening grace. It's found here in Hebrews 4:14-16. So, let's stand as we read together a message I've entitled, 'Made Strong'. I don't know how you're feeling this morning or what your situation in life is, but if you're a little bit under water, so to speak, you can be made strong. Christ can strengthen you for the fight, and I can't think of any better passage that speaks to God's strengthening grace than Hebrews 4:14-16.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was on all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." So, reads God's word, you may be seated.

It's assumed in the south, that every preacher enjoys fried chicken, and it's generally true especially Baptist preachers. Well I was reading about this poor fellow, who was in the south doing a Revival but he wasn't really hot on fried chicken, and yet that week, during the Revival, wherever he went he was fed fried chicken, Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night. And Friday night, the last night of the Revival, he was being treated to some hospitality by a kind family in the church. He sat down in the dinner table and there you had it. You know, mashed potatoes, green beans, and you got it, fried chicken.

And he was asked to give thanks. So, he prayed this prayer, "Lord, I've had it hot and I've had it cold. I've had it young and I've had it old. I've had it tender and I've had it tough, but thank you Lord tonight, I've had enough." I like that. But on a more serious note, I think we've all come to a place in life or we all will come to a place in life at one time or another where we've had enough. We kind of run out of steam, we're low on resolve. We're exasperated and exhausted. We're ready to surrender, whether it's in raising a family, the pursuit of a career, the building of a lasting marriage, the keeping of friends, the fighting of an illness, the conquering of a disability, refusing temptation, church life, our walk with God.

We can become exasperated and exhausted to the point of surrender. There are times when we're so worn out, we want to walk out. We've had enough. Now speaking of those seasons in life and they do come, it's interesting in the book of Proverbs chapter 24 and verse 10, the Bible says this, "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small," but we have to acknowledge at times our strength is small. We get run down. Life drains us to the bottom of our resolve, but here's the good news, we can be made strong. Our small strength can be swallowed up in His great strength and that's the good news.

We can be strong through faith in our God because in Joshua 1:9, what does God say, to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, for I will be with you and I won't fail you and I won't leave you." What about Ephesians 6:10? "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." I like this one 2 Timothy 2:1, where Paul says to young Timothy, who was given to timidity and anxiety. He says, "Timothy, be strong

in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And I want to pivot off of that last verse, because the Bible does promise strengthening grace. “Timothy, be strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Last week, we looked at the fact that there is saving grace, Ephesians 2, but now we're going to look at the fact that there is strengthening grace, Hebrews 4. There's grace that brings us to faith and there's grace that supplies the strength to continue in the faith.

You see grace is divine energy. Grace is God's favorable work in us, strengthening and sustaining us for all that He has for us. What about 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul says this, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace, which was with me.” Grace is God's energy at work in us. You get a similar thought over in 1 Peter 5:10, if you want to write it down, I'll read it for you. Here's what we read, “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, listen, strengthen, and settle you.”

Timothy, stand in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says that whatever he is, whatever he's accomplished, it's the grace of God working in Him and with Him. The God of all grace can strengthen us. There's not only saving grace, there is strengthening grace. We're going to look at this morning that idea in Hebrews 4:14-16. Now before I get there, I just want to remind you, we're in a series called Total Grace. I want to remind you that grace is the manner in which God handles us throughout all of the life and beyond into eternity.

It's too often, we have a view of grace that's one dimensional. We kind of stay at the baseline of our understanding of grace. It's grace that forgives us. It's grace that justifies us. It's grace that brings us to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and that is a wonderful thing. That's absolutely true, but we've got to get off that baseline. Grace is much more than that. It's not one-dimensional. It's a many splendored thing. It's like a jewel. It's like a gem, hold it up and you'll see all kinds of sides to it. If you remember, I outlined where we're going in this series. There's Saving Grace, Ephesians 2. There's Strengthening Grace, Hebrews 4. There's Serving Grace, Romans 12. Sacrificing Grace, 2 Corinthians 8. Suffering Grace, 2 Corinthians 12. Singing Grace, Colossians 3. Speaking Grace Colossians 4. Schooling Grace, Titus 2.

We've a long way to go. There's eight sides to this gem we call grace. We're going to look at one more facet of it this morning, strengthening grace. God wants to supply what you need in your difficulty, in your trial, whatever that might be. It's grace that calls us to Christ. It's grace that calls us to change. It's grace that calls us to persevere and it's grace that will give us the strength to pull it all off. Didn't John Newton talk about saving grace and strengthening grace when he talked about how he once was lost, but now he's found? And then he talks about the grace that will bring him home after many dangerous toils and snares.

There's grace that brings us to Christ, and there's grace that brings us home to Christ, and there's grace for everything in between those two points. I like what Tony Evans says, “Learning about God's grace is like opening one of those huge cellophane-wrapped gift baskets at Christmas. Every time you think you've found all the goodies in the basket, you reach in a little deeper and find something else good just waiting to be discovered and enjoyed.” Good analogy. That's what the doctrine of God's grace is like. You rummage through there. “Oh, there's grace that brings us to salvation.”

Then you rummage a little bit more there's grace that will strengthen us for the times in life where we have trouble and trials, and there's grace that allows us to sing at midnight like Paul in the prison in Philippi, there's all kinds of grace if you keep rummaging. So, let's look at strengthening grace. Before we

look at these verses in particular, let's put them in their context. Let me go wide first. Let's look at a wider context. This is a book written to Jews who have come to faith in Jesus Christ. Hebrew Christians. And by now, it seems according to Hebrews 10, the heat is being turned up. They're facing persecution. They haven't yet resisted the blood, but the heat's been turned up. Some of them have been disinherited and disinvested.

It's tough times for these Hebrew Christians. Some of them are also struggling with the simplicity of Christianity. There's no temple. There's no Levitical priesthood. There's no sacrificial blood. There's no temple choirs. There's no robes. There's no bells. There's no smells. Christianity seems so simple, unsophisticated, if we might put it like that, and they're beginning to ask questions, and some are being tempted to go back to Judaism. And the writer of this Epistle, this letter, writes to exhort them not to do that. Why would you go back given the fact that Jesus is the great high priest?

Speaking about priests, "And Jesus was God tabernacling among us," talking about temples. "And Jesus offered a sacrifice for sin that was full and forever," talking about the blood of goats. Why would you go back to the shadow, when you have the substance? Why would you go back to the Old Covenant when you have the New Covenant? Jesus is better than Aaron, better than Joshua, better than Moses. Don't do that. In fact, we'll see in this passage that he'll make an argument, "Don't go back. Don't give into that temptation because Christ, the great high priest was tempted and one of His temptations was to renege on God's will."

When he fought that idea in the Garden of Gethsemane, the bitter cup, the cross, the suffering. So that's the wider context. You're not alone in your struggle. Jesus struggled and was tempted but remained faithful and therefore, you need to hold fast to your confession of faith. Then there's the immediate context. Back up into verse 13, "Having spoken about God's word and how that it exposes our thoughts and the intents of our heart, we are reminded that the God who wrote that word that exposes us will someday expose us also," because according to verse 13, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight but all things are naked and open in the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account."

The preceding thought speaks of the exposure we feel when we understand the holiness of God. When the light of God's glaring righteous and holy character is shown on our lives, we feel naked, exposed, undone. Is not how Isaiah felt in Chapter VI of his prophecy? "I'm undone. I'm a man of uncleaned lips. You got me. I can't hide that fact." Well, if that's true, and it is true, isn't it interesting you go from verse 13 to verses 14, 15, and 16 where we're told to not hide our sin, but to confess our sin and go through to the throne of grace and find mercy for it. See, when our sin is exposed, we go scurrying away from God at times, riddled with guilt and fear and thought of his condemnation. The opposite is being encouraged here.

Yes, your sin is apparent. You are exposed. God sees you for what you are, but you can come to His Son and find forgiveness. So that's the wider and immediate context. I like what Luther the Protestant Reformer said of that idea of running to God, "After terrifying us, the Hebrew writer comforts us." After pouring wine into the wound, He pours oil." So, let's look at our text. Three things, the exhortation, the encouragement, and the expectation. Let's jump right in, the exhortation. What is the exhortation? It's, "Let us hold fast our confession," verse 14. That's the exhortation. The word 'exhortation' means to urge, to appeal, to come alongside someone and to cheer lead them in a certain direction.

If you go to Hebrews 13:22, the writer tells us, this whole letter is really a word of exhortation. That's why throughout Hebrews you'll hear this little phrase, "Therefore let us go on to perfection." "Let us

come to the throne of grace.” “Let us hold fast our confession of faith.” Throughout this letter the writer is giving these folks a proverbial kick in the seat of their spiritual pants. He wants them to persevere to the end. He wants them to endure in the race. He wants them not to turn back to perdition. In some ways, this whole letter is some spiritual smelling salts to revive them in their resolve to follow Jesus. Because after all, Jesus is superior to Moses, superior to the angels, superior to Aaron.

Let me look at this little phrase for a moment with you. “Let us hold fast our confession,” verse 14. That's what they're exhorted to do. Now the word ‘hold fast’ is an interesting Greek word. It's used in the gospels to speak of people that clung to Jesus, like the woman who clung to Him after His resurrection. That's our word, ‘she grabbed Him by the ankles almost.’ That's the word, she clung to him. See Him in Acts 3 when there were those who clung to the apostle Peter and John. They were looking for something. That's our word. Now what is physically true has a metaphorical reality in the spiritual realm, just as we cling to people, it also speaks of a commitment or a clinging to Christ and His gospel. And that's how it's used throughout the book of Hebrews.

They are to remain committed to Christ. They are to hold fast. They're to cling to the Savior. In fact, I think I've told you this story before when June and I were flying once from LAX to Cleveland. We were towards the back of the aircraft. I was on the aisle seat, June was in the middle, and this dear lady was over against the window, and as the plane started up and moved towards the runway for takeoff, you could tell this woman was a nervous flyer. And eventually, June said, “Are you okay?” And she says, “No. I'm not doing well. I hate flying. I wish I didn't have to fly.” And she was literally trembling.

And June took her by the hand and said, “You know, you're gonna be okay,” and then not knowing where the lady is from or who she was, she nevertheless said, “Well, can I pray for you?” The lady said, “I'd love that.” So, June prayed for her. It seemed to calm her down a little bit, but at this stage, the lady is grabbing her by the arm. We take off. Within a minute or two, I look over and the woman was fast asleep on June's shoulder. This is true though and is still clinging onto her arm.

Now, June let that go for about 60 minutes. I was almost going to say, she's a better woman than me, but I'm not a woman, so she's a better person than me and that I would have found some way to go, you know, bump her or “I'm sorry that's just the way it rolls.” But she suffered that thing for 60 minutes and literally later told me there was marks on her arm. The lady had kind of dug in out of fear.

That's our word, she was holding fast, clinging. That's the word here and we're to cling, to hold fast to our confession of faith in the Lord Jesus. This is isn't just remaining committed to Jesus, this involves holding on to your public confession. Notice hold fast to your confession of faith. There's nothing private about our faith in Jesus Christ. If you haven't gone public about your love for Jesus, you're not in a good place because if you don't confess him before men, He won't confess you before the father.

As one writer Raymond Brown says, “This is not merely an appeal to endurance but an exhortation to fearless witness. Don't be robbed of your faith. Advertise it. Hold it fast and hold it forth.” That's the idea. Hold it fast and hold it forth. Now, for them that was becoming a challenge. We read in Hebrews 10 that they were disinherited. I want to guess, businessmen lost business. I'm going to guess they lost friends, family. That's on the Jewish side of things. And then they like every other Christian, they were up against the Roman authorities and their dislike for Christians. No doubt it would have been easy to just live in the shadows. To be quiet.

To you know, confess a private faith, but they must go public with it. They must not be robbed of it. They must advertise it. They must hold it fast and they must hold it forth. Same with us. Same with us. In fact, we've often said here at Kindred, there's three ways in which you ought to go public with your faith, in words, in works, and in water. In words, where you confess with your mouth that the Lord Jesus is Lord. Romans 10:9-10. Your workmates have heard you talk about Him. Your family has heard you talk about Him. Your friends know that You are a bonafide born-again Christian. You don't hide that fact. You're not a secret disciple.

So, in words. In works, faith expresses itself in works. According to Matthew 5:16, we're told that we're the light of the world and we're to do good works and as men see our good works, they will glorify our Father in heaven. So, it's good to serve the Lord here and serve Him on this campus but that's works that men see. That's Monday through Saturday. That's another way to go public. That's another way to hold fast and hold forth, your confession of faith and then in water. Matthew 28:18-20 where we read that Jesus said, "Hey, when you preach the gospel and people are made disciples through trusting Me, you need to teach them everything I've commanded, and you need to baptize them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

I dare you to read your New Testament and find me a non-baptized believer. You read the Book of Acts. As soon as we read and they believed, you'll read and they believed and baptized. If you're not baptized, you're disobedient and you need to be baptized as soon as possible. Listen out for the next baptismal class, go public in words. Go public in works. Go public in water. Nail your colors to the mast. Our enemies are aggressive. They're vocal. The enemies of the gospel are legioned. We need a church that's bold, that holds fast and holds forth.

Like the story I told the guys a week or two ago about John Hancock, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He was one of the signatories to that document. In fact, his was one of the larger signatures. That's why, by the way, when you're asked to give your signature, sometimes somebody will say, "What, put your John Hancock there." That's where that phrase comes from. The reason his signature was bigger and bolder than the others because he did it deliberately. He exaggerated his signature. When he was asked why he did it, he said, "Because I want King George to have no problem recognizing me."

It's pretty bold. You know? He didn't write his signature as a small print on the Declaration. No. It's time for America to be free, to become independent. I'm on board. I am so much on board. I want to make sure that King George knows that John Hancock has made a decision and he's bold in declaring it. I don't remember the statistics, but you all know almost every one of the men that signed that Declaration died in poverty, cost them. That's what's being asked here, of them and because we're reading it this morning and it applies to us, it's being asked of us. It should never be said of the believer that we will go quietly out into the night.

Let's look at the second thought. You're not only going to get the exhortation, you've got the encouragement. You see, they're being exhorted to hold fast. Now there's a price tag that comes with that. There's no doubt about it. The writer of this letter recognizes that you know what I'm asking you to stand in the firing line, but I'm going to give you reasons to do. I want to encourage you as I exhort you. He gives them two reasons. Jesus supremacy and Jesus sympathy. What's his point? As you read verse 14 and 15, "Seeing then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." There's one reason, Jesus supremacy.

The second reason, Jesus' sympathy, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Here's what he's saying. I know you're tempted to go back, but that would be utter folly. Why would you go back to the old Covenant when Jesus has, ratified a new Covenant in His Blood? Why would you go back to the temple when in Jesus Christ God is tabernacling, dwelling among us? Why would you go back to the blood of bulls and goats that can only temporarily cover your sin when behold the Lamb of God has appeared to put away sin?

Why would you go back to a Levitical priesthood that's managed and maintained by flawed individuals like Aaron? Jesus is greater than Aaron. Jesus is greater than Moses, the law giver. Jesus is greater than Joshua, the warrior that settled the people of God in the land that God had promised. Jesus is better than all of that. His covenant is more perfect and His sacrifice more full. Why would you go back? In fact, you get a hint of that, don't you? Seeing then we have a great high priest. It would be folly to settle for that which is inferior.

So, let's look at these two thoughts quickly. Jesus' superiority and Jesus' sympathy. This is the encouragement, to hold fast and hold forth. On the one hand, because Jesus is worth it. I mean if you're going to fight for a cause, fight for Jesus because I just finished the book by a friend of mine who was, before he got saved, was a Protestant terrorist in the troubles in Northern Ireland. He was part of a terrorist group called the Ulster Volunteer Force, the UVF. If you go back to Belfast even now, you'll see murals on particular parts of the city celebrating this organization. He joined that as a young man in the fight against the IRA and he was driven by this thought, "This is a cause worth dying for."

Then he gets caught, put in prison. He meets Christ in prison. Today, he's an evangelist in England. He wrote a book about his life, I just read it. You know what the book's called, 'A Cause Worth Living For'. Politics and loyalism in Northern Ireland, that to me was a cause worth dying for but Jesus Christ, that's a cause worth living for. He's worth it. When you understand who he is, what he's done, and what he can mean to you, He is superior? He is Lord. He is king of kings. That's the argument that's going on here. When you understand who He is, His supremacy, then why wouldn't you hold forth your confession?

This is a cause worth living for and dying for. Notice the phrase, seeing, recognize, consider, that we have a great high priest superior, and here's part of his superiority "who has passed through the heavens." That's language not familiar to us. Priests and passing through the heavens, but in their minds, I think they would have got what he was drawing up, because the Levitical priest, the high priest, once a year made atonement for the people. The day of atonement, Leviticus 16, isn't it? He would go into the Holy of Holies, but as he took the blood of the innocent lamb that would cover the sins of the people, he went through the outer court. Having gone through the outer court, he went through the holy place.

Having gone through the Holy Place, he went through into the Holy of Holies where he spread the blood on top of the mercy seat, which covered the broken law of God, which was a sign that God would turn away His wrath from the people who've broken his law. So, the priest made atonement on that day and he passed through the outer court, Holy of Place, Holy of Holies. But do you understand that we have a great high priest? Who has passed through the heavens and sat down at the right hand of God. We read about that in Hebrew 1:1-3, "That having purged our sins by Himself, He sat down at the right hand of God. This is speaking of Jesus enthronement.

This is speaking of the fact that Jesus right now is in the presence of God at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and His presence indicates that the work is being complete. He passed through the heavens, He

passed through the atmospheric heavens, then He passed through the stellar heavens, and then He entered into the third heaven, which is the presence of God. He passed through the heavens. This is more significant. This is better, greater. The old preacher said, "What, there's the heavens you see by day, the heavens you see by night, and the heavens you see by faith." By faith we recognize Jesus as in that third heaven. That's the whole argument here, isn't it? He's eminently qualified to be our high priest. He's superior.

If I may put it like this. I hope it's a good enough analogy. He's saying, "Why would you go back? Look at the spiritual upgrade we got when Jesus came. We go from the Old Testament to the New Testament. We go from the blood of bulls and goats to the blood of God's own Son. We go from priest to the great high priest after the order of Melchizedek." Spiritual upgrade. I like upgrades, do you not? I mean I like going to an airport, you know I'd buy the kind of low-end cars for wherever I'm going, hoping that they've kind of run down of them, and I'd get a free upgrade, a SUV or a sports car. In fact, I usually go to the counter and will say, "Any upgrades? You know, nine times out of ten, it's get out of here."

You only paid 25 bucks. You know, you go to a hotel. It's a beautiful thing when they say to you something like, "Hey, you know what, we're going to upgrade you. We're kind of out of rooms, but we've got a nicer room and ..." You know, I'm up for it. You enjoy it. I enjoy it. Then you'll maybe get an upgrade on an airline seat or something like that. I know that we're not about to kind of draw an analogy that kind of makes all of that sound a little ridiculous but that's the point. That's the whole argument of Hebrews, better, perfect, forever, upgrade from the Old Covenant. Why would you go back given the superiority of Jesus Christ?

So, you've not only get that as a motivation, you've got secondly, Jesus' sympathy. Jesus' sympathy. That's verse 15. "See then that you have a great high priest who's passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Actually, let me go back to that a moment and just pick that apart because I kind of missed that, Jesus the Son of God. That's the great high priest. That speaks of His humanity and his deity, Jesus, that's the Man, the Son of God. Jesus who's one person, two natures. Fully God, completely man. That he's going to be a priest, a mediator, an advocate, a representative, If He's going to bridge the gulf between man and God that sin has created.

He needs to be Jesus the Son of God because half the bridge is humanity and half the bridge is deity. If He's going to represent man to God and God to man, He needs to be both, and he is. That's the beauty of this. He's Jesus the son of God. As J.C Ryle says the son of God, mighty to save the son of Man, mighty to feel. That's His superiority and it leads to this idea of His sympathy because the writer would want to quickly dispel the idea, well He's exalted. He's passed into the heavens. He's beyond reach. That's a whole different world. That takes Him out of my world. He can't identify with where I'm at.

The writer anticipates that because he's exalted Christ, right? He's the great high priest, passed into the heavens. Jesus the son of God, but He qualifies...look at verse 15, "For we do not have a high priest." Speaking of that same person where He is, who He is, for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness. As we think about His exaltation and His vindication, don't be getting the idea that He's aloof, He's distant, and He doesn't understand. He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. The one who sits on the throne is a sympathetic, faithful and merciful high priest, Hebrews 4:15-16 and Hebrews 2:17-18. He's not detached from the human experience because he shared our humanity, Jesus, the Son of God.

Ensuring our humanity, He faced our temptations, which then according to Hebrews 17 and 18 qualifies Him to come to our aid because he understands. I want to drill down on that for a moment but before I do that, I want to address a question that's often raised, but hold on a minute, I get kind of cold comfort from this because when you read the words and kind of read into the words, hold on a minute, He's the son of God, what does He know about my struggles? If He's without sin, there's a perfection to Him, that's not me, therefore he can't identify with me and I can't identify with Him. He hasn't sinned. He hasn't lived my experience. I want to address both those issues. I think they're wrong by a long shot.

Number one, although He was God, He was man. One person, two natures. I believe when he faced those temptations, he faced them as a man, and he faced them with the help of the Father, "I do nothing without the Father." He lent on the father. He used the same means that is available to us to indeed face the temptations and face them, down. I believe if you read the gospels honestly, you'll see that he overcame temptation, the same way we can. Then secondly, the fact that he never sinned in the face of temptation, only points to the fact that he experienced sin to a degree and an intensity that you and I know nothing about.

He fought with sin to a point well beyond our experience. We have yielded to sin, sadly. Our thresholds, vary, but at some point, at some time we cross a threshold and we surrender. Jesus never crossed that threshold, which means he experienced the attack of the enemy, the reality of temptation and its intensity in a way that you and I will never be able to understand, but it makes Him a great high priest for us. One commentator kind of drew this analogy, imagine you're in the ring with the heavyweight world champion, you know, in boxing. You know, I don't know who it is now but let's go back to the days of Mike Tyson or somebody like him, and you and I standing face to face with Mike Tyson.

You know, I'll speak for myself. All he has to do is blow in my direction and I'm done. All right? KO'd. Let's imagine someone's in there and they go around with him. Then they go down, or someone goes two rounds, three rounds, four rounds, then they go down. What about the guy that that goes 15 rounds, toe to toe with Mike Tyson? Now, I got a question, which one experienced the intensity and ferocity of that man's ability to fight? Was it the guy who went down the first round, the second round or the guy who stood standing the whole 15 rounds? You know the answer to that. That's the analogy. So, what, you're put off by the fact that Jesus didn't sin? You mean that He went 15 rounds and didn't fall? That means he experienced the attack with an intensity that you and I would go down in the first or second round never experienced.

So, He's a great high priest and He's been tempted and yet without sin. Tempted in all points. I think that's just tempted with all kinds of temptations. It doesn't mean he was tempted with every kind of temptation. He wasn't a woman so, there'd be certain temptations a woman would face, Jesus never faced. He never experienced the temptations of a 40 or 50 or 60-year-old man because he died in his 30s. So, the point of the text is simply He was tested with all kinds of temptations like we are, and He came out of it without sin, and that means that when you go to the high priest that's passed into heaven, you go to someone who can identify and understand.

I mean just physically, emotionally, spiritually, Jesus knew what it was to be hungry, to thirst. Didn't have much by way of material things. The foxes had their holes, the birds of the air had their nests, but the son of man nowhere to lay his head. Didn't have much retirement. Son of a carpenter. Lived on the poorer side of the tracks, so to speak. Limited education. Didn't travel very far. Went out of the country once. Jesus experienced all kinds of emotional issues. Sadness. He faced the hatred of others, the

misunderstanding of his family, disappointment with friends. The disciples drove him crazy. Oh, you, slow to believe and of unbelief. I mean it goes on physical pain, the cross.

Psychological pain and terror in the Garden of Gethsemane. I mean what range of emotions, what path in life, what problem that you face that you can't find something in His life that approximates to that? That allows you to know that when you go and talk to Him, you're talking to someone who's got a sympathetic ear. Who understands where you're coming from. I'm not much of a musician, but I'm told that in some cases if you were to go into to a room with two pianos and you were to strike a middle C on one piano, you'll hear that same note reverberate on the second piano, though you never touched it. It's what they call sympathetic resonance and you know what, Jesus can express that to you. What registers in your life, finds a resonance in His.

That's why the hymn writer said, "What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear." What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. In fact, just this week I was reading a great story by Jill Briscoe, excellent woman teacher. Her and her husband Stuart, originally from England, but adopted the United States like we have. Lived most of their life in Wisconsin. Built a large church there called Elmbrook. She's written many books. My wife June likes to read Jill Briscoe. When the Balkan wars were going on between the Croats and the Serbs and in that part of Europe, she was in Croatia and she was at a kind of church come seminary where refugees from the war had fled.

They were several streets back so they were out of sniper range but they could hear firing going off in the distance. They can hear some explosions because the battlefield wasn't that far away. They were near the border between Croatia and Serbia and she ministered to these refugees. She was to speak later to them and the more she watched them and tried to think about what they'd gone through, she wasn't comfortable with the message she had prepared. So, throughout the afternoon, she was praying simply to the Lord, that the Lord would give her something creative, something appropriate to address.

So, I'll let her say, what she said. "I told them about Jesus who was a baby became a refugee. He was hunted by soldiers and His parents had to flee to Egypt at night, leaving everything behind. I could tell the people began to click with what I was saying. I kept praying like crazy. I continued telling them about Jesus' life, and when I got to the cross, I said, he hung naked. Not like the pictures you see on the cards. They knew what that meant. Some of them had been stripped and searched and tortured."

"At the end of the message, I said all these things have happened to you. You are homeless. You have had to flee. You've suffered unjustly but you didn't have a choice. He had a choice. He knew all this would happen to Him and still He came." She went on to preach the cross. She went on to preach the Gospel and people began to kneel and weep and stretch out their hands towards God for mercy because they were introduced to a God who has suffered and who can bear our pain.

My friend when push comes to shove, when our testimony for Jesus Christ is on the line and our commitment to the gospel is being challenged, we need to hold fast and hold forth and we need to do it with these twin truths ringing in our ears. Jesus is superior. This is worth it, and Jesus is sympathetic. He understands. Let's bring us to our last thought. Not only do you have the exhortation and the encouragement. For a few moments what I call the expectation. This is verse 16, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

There's an expectation. Given his superiority and the fact that He's passed into the heavens for us, that He's at the right hand of God making intercession for those who will come to Him, given the fact that when you come to Him, you're not coming to a throne of granite, you're coming to a throne of grace which means He's going to deal with you graciously. Then shouldn't you have certain expectations? Yeah. You're going to obtain mercy and you're going to find grace. There is an expectation. That's beautiful and I'm glad there's both those things. It's a bit like Psalm 23:6 right? "Goodness and mercy following us all the days of our life." Grace is getting what you don't deserve. Mercy is not getting what you do deserve.

I love it, grace for our steps, mercy for our stumbles. Grace for tomorrow and today. Mercy for yesterday and our regrets. Grace to do right. Mercy when we do wrong. It's all precious. It's all ours if we come for it and here's another expectation. Not only that you'll obtain mercy and find grace, but these things together will help you in your time of need. Write down Acts 27:17. We don't have time to go there, but Acts 27:17, Paul is on a ship, in a storm on his way to Rome and they're facing shipwreck. The storm is so violent that the boat's beginning to come apart. And in Acts 27:17 you'll read about the fact that they get cables to under gird the ship.

On that day when a ship was in trouble they put chains or large cables under the hull of the ship, brought it up on both sides of the ship and tightened them to hold the ship together. The word cable in Acts 27:17 is the same Greek word as help in Hebrews 4:16. In fact, if you have an Old King James and good for you if you have. You'll read it uses the word helps. They used helps to under gird the ship. My translation makes it cables. Yours will be something like that also. But the Old King James helps is the same word. The ship was helped. It was helped to stay together by the cables and under girded. What a beautiful picture.

The storm tossed soul can go to the thrown off grace and find someone there with sympathetic resonance who understands their problems and their pressures. He wants them to obtain mercy and obtain grace that will allow them to stay strong in the storms of life. How are we to come? We are to come constantly, candidly, and confidently we can run through this quickly, constantly. Go back to our text. Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace. The word means face to face with. Speaks of intimacy, beautiful. Come on. Come in close. Tell me what's going on. It's kind of a picture of father, isn't it? Which Jesus that's what God is to us, and we can go and pray to him through his son.

Here's the point I want you to get. The word come is in the present tense in the Greek. Let us therefore come and come and come and keep coming and obtain mercy and mercy and more mercy and grace and grace and more grace and all the help you need because there's always more grace for the humble and the needy, James 4:6, right? Here's a thought. God has all the grace we need for as long as we live. We can keep coming. You can come constantly. When it comes to certain commercial establishments, they have opening hours. Some are open all the time but many are not. They may be open from 7:00 in the morning to 7:00 at night or 6:00 in the morning to 9:00 at night.

I don't know about you but I've got to some of those just a minute or two late. I've got to the bank sometimes on Friday afternoon one minute passed 4:00. They're still inside. The tellers are still at their counters and I'm like and they're like. I remember at Starbucks, I was up in Boise, Idaho preaching. I was kind of by myself. It was late at night. I took a hankering, I didn't know the area that much and you know got to a Starbucks. I didn't realize it was, I looked it up and I think it was 9:00. I got there for like one minute passed 9:00. I stood outside the door again. The guy went and I just stood there weeping, no I

didn't. But you know, it was kind of a bummer of a moment. I was by myself, couldn't even get my favorite drink passed the opening hours.

You can come to Starbucks. You can come to your bank and you can go to Target and go to Walmart at certain hours. The throne of grace opening hours is 24/7, every week of the year, every year of your life. You'll never exhaust the Grace of God. You are to come candidly. The word bold here means frank, open, honest. It's a Greek word that was used of free speech. In fact, one commentator Neil Lightfoot says it's a word, that's a kind of a combination word that means full story. So come and tell the great high priest your full story and speak candidly. Speak openly. Speak emotionally. Speak frankly.

Now I'm not saying to speak disrespectfully even though it's a throne of grace it's still God you're addressing. Be careful. Always hallow his name. In the middle of all of that speak your heart and tell him your problem and you're tired and you've had enough. You don't know where you're going to get the next times advantage here or the next ability to resolve and stay faithful. Draw constantly near and draw candidly near. In fact, Spurgeon speaking of this very text and this very idea of coming boldly says this, "Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above."

He's got the idea of an English monarchy, if you've watched it's something on PBS. You'll see that when someone is standing in a beautiful English manor beside their bed there's like a rope and they can tug it and the bell goes off in the quarters of the servants. They deliver them whatever it is, tea and toast. That's his image. Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above. Some scarcely stir the bell, they pray so languidly. Others give but an occasional pluck on the rope. But he who wins with heaven is the man or the woman who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all their might. Love it.

Don't go sheepishly to God. Be frank, be bold, be respectful. But tell him what's on your heart. Remember the one you're addressing has sympathetic resonance. He knows the temptations we face. He understands the trials we're going through and the same God that strengthened him in the Garden of Gethsemane when he was tempted to give up will strengthen you when you've had enough. Last thought, draw near confidently. We've already identified that to some degree under the thought expectation. You know what, come boldly and come often and come to the throne of grace and be expecting, be confident that you will obtain mercy and find grace. But here's a little phrase I did overlook and left for this thought, "and help in time of need."

Draw near constantly, draw near candidly, draw near confidently that God will give you what you need when you need to the degree that you need it. In fact, this can be literally translated help at the right time. Let's read it that way. I think it's beautiful. That we may obtain mercy and find grace and help at the right time. Timely help, it's help that's tailored to our need and timed to the hour of testing or temptation we're going to go through. I love Deuteronomy 33:25 as we close and the team comes up. As your days so shall your strength be. Whatever that day is. Crying babies, prodigal sons, Friday afternoon when you're handed a pink slip, the betrayal of friends, you feel the very breath of hell itself breathing down on your neck in spiritual warfare.

As your days so shall the strength you need be given to you, timely help. I can't illustrate that better than this and we're done. Corrie ten Boom, wonderful woman of God. If you don't know her story get to know her story. Dutch family, her and her father and her sister and her brother hid Jews during the Second World War. They were betrayed by a friend. They were rounded up with the Jews who were in the home and sent to a concentration camp. Her father dies, her brother, her sister, Betsy. She escapes in a providential mystery where it was a clerical error and she's let go before she was planned to be

killed. In fact, she's buried in orange. You might want to take your kids someday there and tell them the story over her grave. It'd be quite a moment.

When she was young never anticipating what would come, she said to her father, "Dad, I don't think ... Right now I don't feel that if ever push came to shove and I had to die for Jesus I couldn't do it. I don't think I have the strength to do that. The bravery, the courage." To which her father replied, he said, "You know what, Corrie, when we leave Harlem here to go to our loved ones in Amsterdam, when we go to the train station, when do I give you the money for the train? She says, "Dad, when we get there you give me the money for the train. I buy my ticket at the train station just before we get on the train for Amsterdam."

Here's what her father said, "Well, Corrie that's right and so it is with God's strength. Our wise father in heaven knows when you are going to need things, too. Today you do not need the strength to be a martyr. But as soon as you are called upon for the honor of facing death for Jesus he will supply the strength you need just in time. Right out of Hebrews 4, just in time where you can obtain mercy and find grace to help you in the hour of your greatest temptation or trial." It's a wonderful thing. Saving grace is a wonderful thing and strength in grace is a wonderful thing. Two facets to the gem of God's grace. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for our time this morning in the word. What a beautiful passage. What a great reminder. What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear, what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer, and oh what peace we often forfeit, and oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Lord, we thank you, we can be strong, we can be made strong. We don't want our strength to be small in the day of adversity. Thank you for our great high priest who endured the cross and despised the shame. We thank you He can strengthen us to carry our cross and live faithfully in our day until we, too have crossed the finished line and join Him in heaven itself. Lord, we pray these things and ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.