

Hebrews 4:12-16; "Exposed Before God" October 27, 2024

- I. Welcome & Review
  - A. Good morning! Ohayogozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni.
    1. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*
  - B. Before continuing any further, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School classrooms.
    1. (2<sup>nd</sup> Service) As well as our Bible English class.
  - C. As the kids make their way out, will the rest of you please open up your Bibles and make your way to the book of Hebrews chapter 4?
    1. If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, feel free to reach down and borrow one of the Bibles we have situated throughout the sanctuary underneath some of the chairs around you.
  - D. Over the past few weeks, we have been considering the promise God gave of entering into His rest.
    1. Beginning in chapter 3 and throughout chapter 4, the author of Hebrews spoke of how the promise of rest, that was mentioned by David in Psalm 95, was a promise that was still available to the Jews of his day in the first century.
    2. That promise of rest David mentioned in Psalm 95 looked back to the children of Israel and their inability to enter into the rest of the Promised Land. And the author reminded his audience that the children of Israel did not enter into that rest because of unbelief. (**Heb. 3:19**)
    3. God had promised how He would go before them and how He would help fight their battles for them. He promised that He would bring them into a land that was flowing with milk and honey, a land of blessing and provision, a land where they would enjoy rest from all of their enemies and enjoy the peace of God.
    4. But the children of Israel didn't believe God. Instead of believing God and looking to Him—instead of trusting His promises—they looked at the giants in the land and they believed the negative report of the 10 spies who said they would be squashed like bugs if they tried to enter into the land God had promised them.
    5. The author challenged His own audience that they learn from the mistake of their forefathers and heed God's word, to believe upon the promise of rest made available to them and to enter into that rest.
    6. Last week in our study we noted how for both the first century believer and ourselves as Christians and followers of the Lord, that our true rest is not found in a day of the week; the Jews rested on the weekly Sabbath. But the Sabbath was just a shadow of things to come; the substance was of Christ as Paul clearly stated in Colossians 2:16 & 17.
      - a. Paul said, "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." (**Col. 2:16-17**)

7. Nor is true rest found in a physical earthly location like the Promised Land. True rest is only found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus is our Sabbath; He is our rest. We rest in the completed work of Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary.
- E. This week we're going to look to finish off chapter 4 of the book of Hebrews as the author continues to build His case for the superiority of Jesus Christ.
  1. In our text this week, the author continues to encourage us to enter into the rest made available to us. Verse 11, where we ended last week stated "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience." (**Heb. 4:11**)
  2. The author states that we must be eager to enter into that rest. That we shouldn't delay, nor fall according to the disobedient example of the children of Israel who didn't believe God's promise; they didn't believe God's Word.
  3. In our text, the author is going to explain how God alone knows our heart and how He knows those of us who have been obedient to enter into the rest of Christ, and those who have yet to enter in. Those who are still wavering at God's promises, and being disobedient to His Word.
- F. Our text is going to be Hebrews chapter 4 verses 12-16 and the title of our message is going to be "**Exposed Before God**".
  1. I'd like to ask that you rise to your feet in honor of God and His Word as we read through our text this morning.
  2. I'm going to read through the entirety of our text from my Bible, do your best to follow along in your own.
  3. The author of Hebrews continues his letter with the following in chapter 4 verse 12... (*R & P*)

## II. Introduction & Outline;

- A. Our text this morning is both a concluding remark on the rest of God and a transition to a subject matter that he will continue to explore in the chapters to come regarding the priesthood of God.
  1. Though small, our text this morning is packed with some very important truths, truths that the audience must carefully consider; truths that we today must take time to consider and apply to our own lives as well.
- B. After building his case that the promise of rest still remains, the author challenges his audience to enter into that rest and to continue in that rest.
  1. Now the author is writing to a group of first century Jews who had placed their faith in Christ, but were experiencing a wave of persecution and trials because of their faith.
  2. And some were being tempted to revert back to their old ways of living; living under the Mosaic Law and following a bunch of rules and regulations that the rabbis had come up with as a way for them to try and fulfill the Law.

3. People were being tempted to turn away from faith in Christ, and to turn back to the works of the Law.
  4. In the beginning of the chapter the author mentioned the possibility of falling short of entering into God's rest. (**Heb. 4:1**)
  5. In verse 11 he warns of the possibility of falling according to the example of disobedience left by the children of Israel.
  6. These are serious warnings. The people needed to make sure they didn't fall short, that they didn't fall into the example of disobedience.
  7. How could they know for sure if they had entered into God's rest or not?
- C. That is what our text looks to lay out here. How can we know the condition of our heart, how is it possible to know for sure we've entered into God's rest?
1. In our text this morning we're going to look at five different things that are involved in exposing our true condition and what must be done about it.
- D. We begin with verse 12 where we will note how being "Exposed Before God" involves "**The Piercing Word of God**". Take a look at verse 12 with me once again.

### III. Hebrews 4:12; The Piercing Word of God

- A. Here in verse 12 the author brings up the word of God and it's ability to expose our true condition. The author gives a number of descriptive words pertaining to the Word of God. Let's take just a few minutes to look at each one.
- B. The author begins by stating that the Word of God is living.
1. This is not some dead piece of literature. It is alive. It is active; it works in us and through us.
    - a. The bible describes how it works in the hearts and lives of those who believe upon it (**1 Thes 2:13b**)
  2. When it speaks of the Bible as living it speaks of the idea of it being enduring, or eternal as opposed to something that is dead or passing away.
    - a. The apostle Peter states that the Word of God lives and abides forever. (**1 Pt. 1:23**)
    - b. The prophet Isaiah teaches us how "the grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." (**Isa. 40:8**)
    - c. Jesus said that "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." (**Mt. 24:35**)
  3. God's word will last forever; it will never die; it will never pass away.
  4. Not only is the word of God living, but it is life giving. It gives life.
    - a. The psalmist declares in Psalm 119, "For Your word has given me life." (**Ps. 119:50b**)

- b. By the Word of God, God spoke the universe as we know it into existence. Life as we know it is a direct result of the word of God being spoken forth. Life comes from life.
  - c. Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." (**Jn. 6:63**)
5. It is life giving and life changing as well. The Word of God has the power to change lives; to make sinners into saints.
- a. Romans 1:16 affirms that the gospel message, God's word to us, is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (**Rom. 1:16**)
- C. Not only is the Word of God living, but it is powerful as well.
1. The Greek word for powerful is the word "energes". It's where we get our English word "energy" from. The word of God is full of energy.
  2. The word powerful carries with it the idea of being effective. It isn't just alive and full of energy, but otherwise powerless to really do anything, no, not at all. It does exactly what God intends it to do.
    - a. Isaiah 55:11 tells us that God's word will not return to Him void, but it shall accomplish what [God] pleases, and it shall prosper in the things for which [He] sent it." (**Isa. 55:11**)
  3. God's word is effective in so many different areas of our life.
    - a. The Word of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, fore instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work. (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**)
    - b. The word of God equips us and trains us and makes us complete.
  4. It is effective in bringing God's judgment against those who disobey.
    - a. Jeremiah describes God's word as a fire and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. [**Jer. 23:29**]
  5. God's Word does indeed is powerful. There is nothing else like it.
- D. God's word is sharper than any two-edged sword.
1. This was quite the statement during that day and age. The sword that the author refers to here is the Roman foot soldier's sword; the Roman gladius.
    - a. This sword changed the way warfare was waged. The Roman gladius was a short sword, about 20 inches in length. Previously, most armies armed themselves with large swords used for slashing.
    - b. But the Romans started equipping their soldiers with this small double-edged sword in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and it proved to be extremely effective against their enemies.
    - c. But the significant thing about this small sword was that it had tapered points that were excellent for thrusting.

- d. It was the perfect weapon for close quarter combat. Not only was it good enough to be used for slashing, but also it was small enough to be used as a weapon to thrust into the midsection of opponents.
  - e. Few weapons in world history have had such great tactical importance. For over four centuries the gladius was one of the most defining weapons of all of Rome.
2. Understanding the significance and the effectiveness of this weapon, it is all the more intriguing to hear the author describe the word of God as being sharper than any two-edged sword; including the mighty Roman gladius.
- a. The Word of God is sharp and can cut through anything.
  - b. The word sharper in the Greek is a comparative adjective with the word “temno” which means to cut or hack something to pieces.
  - c. The Greek word used here speaks of something that is able cut more decisively, as if by a single stroke. Not only can it cut through anything, it can do so with one single decisive stroke.
3. The word of God has the power to cut through all the garbage, all the smokescreens we try to use, the defenses we try to use to excuse our actions, or to justify our actions. The word of God cuts right through it all and gets to the heart of things.
- E. Which brings us to the next description of the word of God the author uses here in verse 12. The word of God is piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow.
- 1. Like the Roman gladius that had that sharp tapered point, so too the Word of God is sharp and is able to pierce through, to penetrate into the deepest recesses of our bodies.
  - 2. It is able to divide between soul and spirit; the inner parts of our spiritual body. Our soul and our spirit are difficult to separate, they are difficult to distinguish one from the other. The Bible often uses these two words somewhat interchangeably. The word of God is so sharp, so penetrating, that it is able to divide between soul and spirit.
  - 3. It is able to get into the hardest to reach places of our inner bodies; our joints and even the marrow that is hidden within the bones of our skeletons.
  - 4. The picture is quite clear, God’s word is able to penetrate into the deepest darkest, most hidden recesses of our entire being.
  - 5. There is no place that it cannot penetrate to and through.
- F. Lastly the author describes the word of God as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- 1. The Greek word used here for discerner, is the adjective “kritikos” which is where our English word critical comes from. Something that is critical is something characterized by careful evaluation and judgment.

- 2. The Greek word “kritikos” comes from the Greek word “krites” which means “a judge”. The word of God is fit for judging.
  - 3. A lot of people don’t like others to judge them. They’ll often claim that we have no right to judge them. And will even try quoting scripture saying “Judge not lest ye be judged” which comes from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. (**Mt. 7:1**)
  - 4. But here is the thing. While you and I may not be able to judge in and of our own selves, God’s word is fit for judging. We can evaluate the actions of others as it pertains to God’s Word. We can assess whether or not something is sinful based upon what the Bible clearly says and teaches us.
    - a. I’m not judging people when I say that drunkenness is a sin, or that fornication is a sin, or that lying is a sin, or that pride is a sin. The Bible is judging them. The Bible, God’s Word, is judging the matter. It is what says what is right and what is wrong.
  - 5. The word of God is a discerner of two things listed here in verse 12; it is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart.
    - a. You and I can’t see the heart of people. We don’t know what is going on in the hearts of men at all times.
      - i. Only the Lord knows those things perfectly. God said to the prophet Samuel, “the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (**1 Sam. 16:7b**)
      - ii. So we don’t always know what is going on in the heart of men. Sometimes we are giving samples of what is going on in the heart. Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. (**Lk. 6:45b**)
      - iii. Sometimes people speak things and we know what is in their hearts for their mouths reveal it. But we can’t always know. Some people are good at keeping their mouth shut and not letting us see what’s really happening on the inside.
    - b. And we cannot know the intents of the heart either. People can say they have the best of intentions when they do certain things, but God alone through His Word is able to discern, to judge the intents of the heart.
- G. So, we see that **God’s Word exposes us all**. It is active and effective at slicing through all the disguises and all the facades we put up. It gets to the very heart of us and even judges the thoughts and intents of our hearts.
- 1. The piercing word of God is able to see and judge what no other person can see or judge. It gets way beneath the surface and gets to the root of things.
  - 2. When I think of the fact that God’s word is able penetrate into the deepest parts of my heart that thought terrifies me.

3. The Bible says that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (**Jer. 17:9a**)
  4. Jesus said, “from within, *out of the heart of men*, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” (**Mk. 7:21-23**)
  5. That is what our hearts are capable of. And our hearts are exposed before God through His Word.
- H. But that isn’t the only thing exposing us. Take a look at verse 13 where the author describes **the piercing eyes of God**.
- IV. Hebrews 4:13; The Piercing Eyes of God
- A. As if the piercing Word of God was not enough we also have the piercing eyes of God looking straight through us as well.
1. No creature is hidden from His sight. Who’s sight? Him to whom we must give account. And who is that?
  2. Well, it’s God. The book of Ecclesiastes ends with this final conclusion, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.” (**Ecc. 12:13-14**)
  3. God is going to judge every single thing we’ve ever done, every work is going to be brought into judgment, even the secret things that you’ve done that nobody else knows about, God knows about them and He is going to judge them whether they are good or evil.
- B. God is all-seeing. There is nothing that is hidden from Him. All things are naked and open to His eyes.
1. That word naked is used figuratively here of the idea of being stripped of anything to hide behind. There won’t be anything to help cover up what is judged by God. You can’t hide behind any façade you’ve created, any mask you wear around certain individuals. All will be laid bare.
  2. The word “open” is quite an interesting word the author chooses to use here. It is only used this one time in all of the NT Scriptures. It’s the word “trachelizo” [trakh-ay-lid-zo]. And it comes from the word “trachelos” which means neck.
  3. The word translated as “open” here is a whole lot more descriptive than you may think. This word “trachelizo” literally means to bend back the neck. The idea is that the neck is bent back so that the throat is exposed and laid open.
    - a. This word was used of wrestlers bending back the necks of their opponents in an attempt to subdue them; to knock them out. Like wrestlers and fighters today who look for opportunities to slide in a rear naked choke hold. Bending back the neck so you could cinch the hold in.
      - b. It could also be used to talk about taking someone captive with the idea of holding a knife or other sharp instrument to their neck. Someone taken captive and held at knife point. The hostage is completely vulnerable, completely open to attack, the captor has complete control of the situation.
      - c. Another way in which this word was used was in connection with animals that were being offered as sacrifice before the altar. The necks of these animals would be exposed by pulling them back and then they would slit the throat of the animals, slaughtering them as an offering to be placed upon the altar.
- C. We are going to have to give an account of every deed we’ve done, every word we’ve spoken, every thought that has entered into our minds, and every affection that has captured our hearts. We’re going to be held accountable for it all.
1. God is going to judge us. But the interesting thing about God’s judgment is that He is going to judge us by His Son, Jesus Christ.
    - a. Acts 17 calls us all to repent “because He [referring to God the Father] has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” (**Acts 17:31**)
    - b. Who is this One whom God has ordained as our Judge and has risen from the dead? Well, it’s His Son of course.
  2. God is going to judge us, but He’s going to do so through His Son.
    - a. Jesus Himself acknowledged this truth saying, “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son” (**Jn. 5:22**)

- b. Romans tells us of this appointed day referring to it as the “day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” (**Rom. 2:16**)
- D. This is so important for us to understand and realize. With our lives laid bare before God, we would be hopelessly lost.
1. His piercing Word and His piercing eyes know all and see all.
  2. We are left defenseless, powerless; our sins would hold us hostage and we would have absolutely zero chance of ever surviving the judgment of God. Our only hope is in this One whom He has appointed as Judge.
- E. Read with me verse 14 as we continue our study.
- V. Hebrews 4:14; The Pierced Son of God
- A. Jesus Christ is not only our Judge, but He is also our Great High Priest.
1. Now, this idea of Jesus being our Great High Priest will be something that the author will continue to build upon in the chapters to come.
  2. For now, we simply are going to acknowledge what Christ does as our Great High Priest.
    - a. The high priest was the one in charge of making atonement for the people of Israel. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter into the Tabernacle of God, later the Temple of God, and pass beyond the veil that separated the holy place from the most Holy, or the Holy of Holies.
    - b. This is where the ark of the covenant was placed and was said to be the place where God would come and meet with His people. It was symbolic of God’s resting place. Of course, a Tabernacle or Temple is not able to house the Almighty God, but it was symbolic of His resting place in heaven, His throne in heaven if you will.
    - c. The high priest was only permitted to enter into this location on this one day out of the year in order to make atonement for himself and for the nation of Israel.
    - d. A censor full of coals from the altar would be brought in hand along with a hand full of incense and the high priest would place the incense upon the censor filled with coals creating a plume of smoke that would fill the Holy of Holies and cover the mercy seat that laid upon the top of the ark of the covenant.
    - e. The High Priest would then take the blood of a bull that had been offered as a sin offering for himself and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. Then he would take the blood of the goat that was offered as sin offering for the people and proceed to sprinkle it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.
    - f. This was all done as part of a detailed ritual that would atone for the sins of the people. And the high priest was responsible for doing this every single year on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month; the Day of Atonement, or what today is called Yom Kippur.
3. Our text highlights the fact that Jesus is our Great High Priest. He is great because He is better than the high priest who would enter into the holy of holies once a year to offer the blood of bulls and goats as a means of atoning for the sins of the people.
- a. Jesus instead of offering up the blood of bulls and goats that were powerless in getting rid of sin or taking away sin, offered up Himself as a sacrifice. (**Heb. 10:4**)
  - b. Instead of offering the blood of bulls and goats, He offered His own blood to pay the penalty for our sins. “He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (**Isa. 53:3-6**).
  - c. That word wounded in Isaiah 53:5 literally means pierced. In the ESV, NIV, NASB, and nearly all the other modern day translations that is how it reads.
    - i. “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities;” (**Isa. 53:5a; NASB**)
  - d. This all took place upon the cross of Calvary of course. Where His hands and feet were pierced through when the nails were driven between them and fastened to the cross.
4. Though the Word of God and the eyes of God pierce *through* us, we have One who was pierced *for* us; Jesus the Son of God. He is the **pierced Son of God** that makes atonement for us.
5. Jesus died upon the cross for our sins and when He did, we are told that the veil that was in the temple was rent in two from top to bottom. (**Mt. 27:51a**)
6. That barrier that kept everyone from entering into the holy presence of God was destroyed, torn in two.
7. Instead of passing beyond the veil to enter into a symbolic representation of God’s resting place, Jesus Christ actually ascended into heaven passing through the heavens as described in verse 14 of our text today and took His place at the right hand of God.
8. Jesus now sits in heaven, before the very throne of God, and intercedes on our behalf, not just once a year like the high priests of old, not just on the Day of Atonement, but each and every single day He is there interceding on our behalf.
- a. The Scriptures state that Jesus is at the right hand of God making intercession for us. (**Rom. 8:34b**)

- b. Jesus is described as our Advocate with the Father. (1 Jn. 2:1b)
  - c. And later in the book of Hebrews the author will describe How Jesus always lives to make intercession for us. (Heb. 7:25b)
- B. The fact that we have this advocate, this Great High Priest, who made atonement for our sins through the shedding of His own blood and entered into the very presence of God where He is constantly interceding for us changes everything.
1. This same high priest that made atonement for us is also the same person God has chosen by whom we will be judged.
  2. And that is why the author pleads with his audience to hold fast their confession. They need to keep the faith. Things may be getting tough for them as they face various levels of persecution, but none of that really matters when we considered the bigger picture.
  3. The reality of it all is that without Jesus Christ, they would all be hopelessly lost and doomed to eternal judgment. The word of God and the eyes of God see all and nothing is hidden; all will be revealed. And they will be judged by it all, they will have to give an account of it all. And the only possible outcome of God's judgment is that they are guilty and deserving of death and hell.
  4. And the same is true of all of us. Without Jesus we too would all be hopelessly lost. Our only hope is in Jesus. In His work as the pierced Son of God. The Great High Priest who **made atonement for our sins** and intercedes on our behalf.
    - a. Because of what He did, we can have hope. Because He took the punishment for our sins upon Himself; dying in our place we have an opportunity to be forgiven of our sins, an opportunity to have the stain of sin wiped away from us. Our ledger is made clean by the blood of Jesus Christ.
    - b. And upon that day when we come face to face with our God and Judge we will not have to give an account for our sins, because Jesus already dealt with our sins upon the cross of Calvary.
    - c. That is why it is so important to keep the faith, to hold fast to our confession. We believe that by grace through faith we have been saved. (Eph. 2:8)
    - d. That through placing our faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, our sin problem is resolved.
    - e. But if we abandon Christ and forsake Him, if we never enter into the rest He offers us, or depart from Him and the rest He gives, we're back in that situation where we have the piercing Word of God and eyes of God judging us and laying out all our sin in plain sight.
  5. You'd be a fool to give up eternal security in heaven in order to avoid temporary persecution on earth. And so we must hold fast our confession.

- C. But there's more that we need to understand in the realm of being exposed before God. Take a look at verse 15 where we read of **the sympathetic Priest of God**.

VI. Hebrews 4:15; The Sympathetic Priest of God

- A. The idea of being completely exposed before God is a very uncomfortable and vulnerable feeling. We feel great shame because of how often we have fallen short, how often we've failed to fulfill His righteous requirements.
- B. But there is something very important for us to note. Jesus understands. He sympathizes with us.
  1. He doesn't look down upon us and belittle us because we've fallen short of the glory of God. He knows how hard it is to live a perfect life.
  2. He came and He lived amongst us as a human. He lived in this same world we live in and He experienced the same sort of trials and difficulties and temptations that we do.
- C. Jesus Christ was tempted as we are. He was intimately aware of our weaknesses because He became like us.
  1. Jesus took on human flesh. He had a human nature. He was 100% man while at the same time 100% divine. He had a human nature and He had a divine nature. He never stopped being God, but He allowed Himself to also experience what it is like to live as a human.
  2. He was born as a child just like us. He grew up in a home with a mother and a father who taught him the basics of life. He had to learn how to read, how to write, how to work hard in labor. He lived as humans live. He knew what it meant to feel hunger, to feel thirst, to feel heartache and sorrow. And He knew more than anyone else the power and temptation of sin.
  3. For the power of temptation often ends for people when they give in to it, but Jesus was different. He experienced the same temptations that are common to all men, but He never once gave in to those temptations. He never had the release of pressure by giving into temptation. He, more than anyone else who ever walked this earth, knew the power of sin and the weaknesses of the human flesh.
  4. He was tempted in all ways just as we are. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"; He faced them all just as we do. (1 Jn. 2:16)
  5. At the onset of His earthly ministry Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He fasted for 40 days and nights. And during that time the Devil came and tempted Jesus.
    - a. He tempted Him to turn stones into bread to satisfy the hunger He was feeling after fasting for 40 days. The lust of the flesh, to satisfy His flesh's hunger for food.
    - b. He tempted Him by setting Himself on the pinnacle of the temple and telling Him to jump and prove God's Word that talks about His angels

and how they'll watch over you and protect you. Basically tempting Jesus to prove God's care and affection for Him. The pride of life, the temptation to show how important He was to make God work.

- c. He tempted Him by offering Him all the kingdoms of this world if Jesus would only bow down before Him and worship Him. The lust of the eyes; presenting all the kingdoms of the world with their splendor and offering them to Him for simply bowing down.

6. Jesus never gave in to the temptation. He never gave in to His human flesh, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. He was perfect, proven over and over again to be sinless.

D. Jesus knows our weaknesses, He understands how it is that we continually fall short. He doesn't look upon us in disgust or look down upon us shamefully. But rather, **He looks upon us sympathetically**. He knows how difficult it is, he understands our failings, our weaknesses. And He loves us still. Isn't that amazing?

1. How grateful I am to have a High Priest that not only atoned for my sins and intercedes for me, but who understands me and looks upon me sympathetically in love and grace.

E. And that is why the author makes this incredible proclamation in verse 16 about **the gracious throne of God**. Read it with me.

#### VII. Hebrews 4:16; The Gracious Throne of God

A. Because the Son of God was pierced for us and made atonement for our sins and because we have a sympathetic high priest that understands our weaknesses and can sympathize with us, we can now come boldly before the presence of God. We can enter into His throne room and find, not a throne of judgment, but a throne of grace.

1. Our sins have been dealt with; they have already been judged upon the cross of Calvary. We don't have anything that prevents us from entering into the presence of God and the rest He promised us.
2. The sins which once alienated us from God have been removed. Instead of appearing naked before the Lord, we appear clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
3. We have exchanged the filthy rags of our sinful works for the righteous robes of Christ. Now, when we come before the Father He looks and sees the Son. He sees the righteousness of Christ that was accredited to our account.
  - a. The Bible states that "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (**2 Co. 5:21**)
  - b. Ephesians 2:13 states, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." (**Eph. 2:13**)
  - c. We were once alienated from God because of our sins. But because of the righteous blood of Christ, our sins have been removed and we

have a right standing before the Lord and we can enter into His presence unashamedly.

B. And as we come to the throne of grace what will we find? What will we receive?

1. Verse 16 states that we will obtain mercy. As I have often stated, mercy is not getting what you do deserve.
  - a. We deserved death. We deserved judgment. We deserved hell.
  - b. But God's mercy does not give us what we deserve.
2. We will also find grace to help in our time of need. While mercy is *not getting* what you *do deserve*. Grace is *getting* what you *don't deserve*.
  - a. How does this work out for us? Well, instead of death we are given life. Instead of judgment there is encouragement. Instead of hell, it's heaven.
3. **We can enter into the rest God has promised us** because of the work of Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest.
4. We need not fear being exposed before God when we've placed our hope and faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.