

Hebrews 4:14–16

I'm Coming With Confidence

TSC, Standalone

MPT: Because of Jesus our High Priest we can draw near to God with confidence.

MPS: Why can you come? Jesus. How can you come? Just as you are. Who can come? Anyone.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hebrews 4...as you turn there...

Big shoutout this weekend to my **wife**, my **3 daughters**, and my **mama**! *"Why the shoutout?" you ask.* Well this weekend marks the beginning of **Women's History Month**...a month where we celebrate women who have and continue to create an impact in our **churches, homes, and communities**. So, listen, for the men in here today, can we acknowledge and celebrate the incredible gift our sisters in Christ are. Ladies, we **see you** and we **appreciate you**!

Which btw ladies, if you have not already you need to get your ticket right now to the SWC coming up in April!...

CONTEXT

Hebrews 4...you there? PJD showed us last weekend how even in King David's heinous sin against **Bathsheba** and her husband **Uriah** that Jesus still chose to go by the name "Son of David"...that **no sin** is greater than **God's ability to save**.

So this weekend I wanna dive into a **related** idea that's **simple** but it's also **foundational to your walk of faith**, and that's **the basis of our relationship with God**. See, when it comes to your relationship with God I don't want you to have **spiritual anxiety**—thinking you have to **perform perfectly** to approach God or, on the flip side, believe the lie that **you've done something so awful it precludes you** from ever having a close relationship with him again. **I want you to have confidence in your faith** and Hebrews 4 is here to offer it to us

This is actually a text I preached at ESC last year for our students, but the Lord laid Hebrews 4 back on my heart to share with you this weekend.

Hebrews 4:14-16 (stand and read)

¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (read this last verse together) ¹⁶Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

See, Hebrews was **written to build up the spiritual confidence** of a group of people who were **struggling in their faith**. From the **outside** they were being **persecuted for their faith** and on the **inside** they were **servicing God out of fear he would leave them if they didn't live perfect lives**.

One really interesting note is that **no one is exactly sure who wrote Hebrews**. Scholars have debated for thousands of years: **Paul?** Maybe **Apollos** or **Luke?**

- (The only thing we know for sure about Hebrews is that **the author loved coffee: HE-BREWS**. I know, that was a **latte**.)

Let's pray and ask God to bless our time in the Word and my dad jokes...

PRAY

Father, your power is made perfect in our weaknesses. So take the weakness that is my preaching this morning and would you put your power on display?

INTRODUCTION

I don't know about you, but one of the most irritating things in the world to me is when a website which I know I've logged into before doesn't autofill my information...therefore I go to type in my information which *I know* is correct, only to be hit with one of these bad boys: **The password or email you entered is incorrect**. We've all experienced this—knowing we are smarter than the computer and *knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt your password is correct—cuz we've all had the same passwords since MS*, right? Your first password **at age 13** was like "Nirvana12" and now **you're 38 years old** and it's just "12N1rvanA!" (Human beings are incredibly creative people, aren't we?)

Now that's not the worst part...no, **the worst part is having to hit the dreaded "Forgot password" button**. Because when you hit that button you know you're in for a scavenger hunt...

- *You changed your password 5 months ago*. No I didn't.

- Security questions: *What did you eat for breakfast on August 17, 2002? What does the fox say? (ding-ding...)*
- Recovery account is your mom's AOL email of which she ran out of AOL hours back in '99.
- *Prove you're not a robot. "I'm not a robot." That's exactly what a robot would say...*
- **Pretty much always ends in getting your account locked**...(all of that just cuz you were trying to log-in to Summit's site to set up recurring giving!)

I tell you that cuz in a lot of ways, for a long time, **having to answer all those security questions and go through all the steps** was what most people assumed it was like if you wanted to try to draw near to God or if you wanted to connect with him. This is what we see throughout most of the OT, which is what Hebrews is often drawing from.

For thousands of years God had provided this **sacrificial system** to act as an avenue for **reconnecting with his people** after **Adam and Eve's sin broke fellowship between God and mankind**. And even though the entire system was built on faith (not on works!), because it was so **intricate and detailed**, it was easy for folks to fall into an **unhealthy spiritual mindset of thinking**, *"Man, if we don't follow this huge book of rules juuuust right—if we mess up at all—there's no help for us!"*

And honestly that's not much different than how many of us **functionally approach God today**—thinking that we have to do all the right things and don't do any of the wrong things in order for God to accept us. Maybe you're new to this whole church thing and your understanding of Christianity is just that: if you want God to be pleased with you then **do the things on this list and don't do the things on this list**. **For a long time, this is what I thought Christianity was...**

- Showing up on Sunday morning.
- Letting your good outweigh your bad—"yes ma'am, no ma'am"
- Knowing John 3:16.
- Throwing a little \$\$ in the offering plate.
- Praying before meals.
- Making sure I asked for forgiveness each night for all the sins I committed that day to ensure the slate was clean.

Functionally, my faith was in my performance. My confidence level in how God viewed me depended solely on how well I was doing spiritually that week. It would rise or fall **on my faithfulness**.

Let me tell you, that's a **restless** place to be...always wondering *Have I done enough? Am I doing it right? Did I do it in the right order? Did I live up to the expectations? Have I sacrificed enough? Is God happy with me?...or have I been locked out of your spiritual account?*

Or maybe for you, you've **completely given up on trying to please God**. You've thrown your hands up in despair and said, *"You know what? This whole thing is too much. I've got enough stress in my life as it is and I'm not adding in an **impossible-to-please-God** to all of that. Let me just focus on **paying my bills, not cussing people out in traffic, and being a decent human being**. That's hard enough."*

At the end of the day, here's what I'm getting at: **it's hard to have confidence in something that's constantly changing**. Write this down: **The foundation of faith is confidence in Christ.**

- Confidence doesn't come from doing something better; confidence comes from believing in someone better.

Here's my prayer this weekend—in fact, repeat it after me: **I'M COMING WITH CONFIDENCE!** Say it with confidence!...stick your chest out a little bit when you say it!

One of the biggest debates in my household is over REST. Best place to take a nap?: Bed or couch?)

Hebrews 4 is all about rest—the ability to **spiritually rest** because you have **confidence** that **God is with you**.

How can we wake up each and every day and **confidently "draw near"** to God? Look back at v14 and let's see...

WALKTHROUGH

¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

*In the last year how many of you have traveled out of the country? When you go out of the country you have to have a **PASSPORT**.*

- Your passport is your **official documentation** that **authenticates your identity** and **authorizes you to enter somewhere**.
- Your passport is the way you get from **where you are** to where you'd **like to go**.

When it comes to your relationship with God, **your priest is your passport**. That's what v14 said, it said **¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.** See, this is the first reason you can draw near to God with confidence:

1) I'm Confident Because My Priest Is My Passport

When it comes to your relationship with God, **your priest is your passport**. You're like, "Uhhh...I didn't think we had priests? Don't we just have pastors?" Correct. But let me explain (this is gonna be like **Theology 201** for a minute but I promise it leads to **Life Change 101**, so stay with me!)

At the most basic level, a priest in the Bible had two jobs:

1. Represent people to God
2. Represent God to people
 - a. *They also seemed to **cook a lot of meat**, which I think is pretty awesome, but that's neither here nor there, so I digress...*

Priests would **represent God to people** by revealing and reminding everyone of God's holy character.

Then a priest would **represent people to God** by going before God on behalf of the people to **pray** and **offer sacrifices** that had all these **super specific** and **tedious** instructions on how to approach God. Sacrifices where the **blood of the animal** would be accepted by God **as punishment for the sins of the people**...leading God to not punish *their* sins but to instead say, "Hey, you deserve death LIKE these sacrificed animals, but I've taken your sins and allowed these animals to die in your place."

See, the priest had to do all this because **God is holy** and he cannot dwell or be in the presence of anything that is not **perfectly holy**. So to **remove the barrier of unholiness a sacrifice had to be made**.

Anyone in here who would claim to be perfect? You say, "Well I'm not perfectly holy, so how am I supposed to draw near to God?" Rewind back to **Hebrews 2:17**, "Therefore [Jesus] had to be made like [us]...in every respect, so that he might become a **merciful and faithful high priest** in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

"Propitiation" (someone say "propitiation"--BLESS YOU).

Propitiation is the awesome truth that God's wrath against us, because of our sin, was **satisfied with Jesus's sacrifice on our behalf**...the sacrifice which ultimately puts us back in right relationship with God.

See, Jesus didn't just **perform sacrifices** like a priest; Jesus went to the cross and **became the sacrifice for us**. Jesus's death on the cross satisfied the wrath of God toward us by offering the **perfect sacrifice once and for all**, which is what **Hebrews 9:12** tells us: **He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.**

- We no longer need a **human representative** (like an OT priest) on our behalf because **Jesus was our once and for all representative** (which is why he's the GREAT HIGH Priest). That's **Theology 201**...

Now don't miss this, because it's **Life Change 101**: Not only did Jesus **represent us and our sin** before God, taking the punishment we deserved...but then he **chose us, crowned us, and clothed us** in *his* perfect righteousness, so that we now have instant access to God the Father, meaning we can draw near to God anytime we want or need. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you can **come boldly into the presence of God** cuz you are now **wrapped and clothed in Jesus's perfect righteousness and holiness**.

- THAT'S THE GOSPEL: Jesus takes our **sin** and gives us his **righteousness**!

This is how you **draw near to God with confidence**:

- I draw near on the **basis of Jesus**.
- I draw near by the **blood of Jesus**.
- I draw near cuz of the **sacrifice of Jesus**.
- I draw near because Jesus Christ—my priest—is my passport. Jesus is my **official documentation** that **authenticates my identity** as one of his own and **ensures admission and acceptance** into the presence of God.
- Jesus is how you go from **where you are** to where you'd **like to go**, which is straight into his presence! See he's not *just* my passport, he's also my destination!
- Your **passport into his presence** has been **paid for, stamped, identified, delivered, and authorized** by your High Priest, King Jesus!
 - And listen to me carefully, this passport can be picked up by ANYONE. **ALL who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**. Jesus's death on the cross made God the Father accessible to anyone who trusts in that sacrifice.

We don't need a **bishop** or a **priest** as a mediator...God himself provided the **one Mediator** between himself and man in Jesus, giving us direct access to God.

And when we draw near, you know what we get?¹

- **Prayer**: the privilege of
- **Fellowship**
- **Power**
- **Protection**
- **Joy**

That's the first reason you can **come with confidence**—your priest is your passport.

¹ <https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/draw-near-to-god-hebrews-1019-22>

But let's get real for a minute. All that sounds great, right? I mean as we read Hebrews 4 there's a part of you that's probably like, *"I don't really have any issues with Jesus being a High Priest—that makes sense. What I don't think, though, is that he has any idea about how my life really is. As a High Priest he might understand a lot of lofty spiritual things, but does he understand me at all? Sure, he secured my eternity, but what difference does that make for me today?"*

This is where what was good gets even gooder. Look at v15: **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.** Jesus as our **sinless High Priest** means we can approach God; but Jesus as our **sympathetic Savior** means he approaches and understands us. And that's the second reason we can come with confidence...

2) I'm Confident Because My Savior Is Sympathetic

Friends, our ground of hope is not just Jesus' **sinlessness** (it's not less than that!), it's also his **sympathy**.

IDK about you, but I'm not expecting to read that in v15. Up to this point—if we had read through the first few chapters of Hebrews—we've been reading how Jesus is the **great high priest** who has **passed through the heavens**; the **greater Moses**; the **perfect, sinless substitute**, the **Son of God**; he's **God in the flesh**...so I'm not expecting it to say, *"And you know what?--In all his perfection and power and priesthood, he understands your temptations and weaknesses."* Like, I don't read about this **all-powerful, all-seeing God** who **rules the cosmos** and think, *"He gets us."*

- Our tendency is to feel like the **more difficult** life gets, the **more alone** we are...the further we sink into **pain**, the further we tend to sink into **isolation**. And what the Enemy wants you to believe is that **you're alone**. That nobody else **struggles** like you do. That **something's wrong** with you. That nobody would love you if they knew *THAT* about you.
- But what does it say?...right before v16 tells us to **draw near confidently**, v15 says **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.** He says we can draw near cuz our Savior understands our **weaknesses** and our **temptations**.

Isn't that amazing?!? God doesn't look at you in your struggles and say, *"Seriously?! Grow up."*

- No, he looks at your weaknesses and says, *"I get it. I've been there."*
- **You cannot surprise Jesus with your temptations!**

And then look at v16: **16Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

- **Mercy** is simply *not* getting what you do deserve; while **grace** is getting something you don't deserve.
- **Mercy** is help *after* you've fallen; **grace** is help *to keep you from* falling.

And when we draw near to God you're met with **mercy, grace**, and a **Savior who sympathizes** with your struggles! That's mind-boggling. Stop and think: Jesus went through everything we go through...**yet without sin**.

You're like, "*But if Jesus never actually sinned (v15 says he was 'without sin') does he really know what my struggle is like?*" Great question. In a sense, I'd actually argue that because we give into temptation so easily that **we never experience the full brunt of it**.

- Think about it like this: **growing up every summer we went to the beach—Crescent Beach, Four Winds Hotel, Condo 1A**.
 - Now I love the beach...it's one thing to get hit by a 4 foot wave and feel the strength of it. It's another to get pummeled by an 8-footer.
 - A 4 foot temptation might be enough to knock you over in the water...while Jesus endured getting slammed by 10-footers and never faltered.

Jesus experienced the FULL BRUNT of every temptation you and I could ever face because **he never gave into it**. Think about it, he could've easily:

- **lied** to save his life
- **stolen** to help his mom after his father died
- **coveted** all the nice things that Zacchaeus owned
- **dishonored** his parents
- **been mad at God** when John the Baptist was killed
- **used his position and power to take advantage** of those who followed him
- **given in to sexual sin**
- **gloated over his accusers** when they couldn't answer his questions
- **pouted with self-pity** when his disciples fell asleep in his last hour of trial
- taken **revenge** when he was wrongly accused

The list could go on and on...what you should hear from this is that even though **Jesus may not have had modern-day struggles like social media or the internet**, he did live thirty-three years as a human struggling with **ordinary temptations** and **extraordinary circumstances**—mocked, shamed,

betrayed, misunderstood, homeless, tempted, to struggle, gossiped about, slandered, sleepy, sick, hurt, weary, physically harmed, friends that died...

- Not only that, but Satan came to Jesus when he was at his weakest moment offering him **acclaim, praise, wealth, and power**—things we are often tempted to chase after in **careers**, or **relationships**, or in **academics**. And yet, he never gave in or sinned. **Wave after wave** of temptation and weakness and yet he never stumbled!
 - Jesus knows your **sins**.
 - Jesus knows your **struggles**
 - Jesus knows your **shame**.
 - Jesus knows your **battle**...but instead of giving in, he fought it all the way to the end, and he defeated the monster every time.

And instead of **shaming** us for giving in to *our* sin, our Savior **sympathizes** with us struggling with it in the first place. Our pain never outstrips what Jesus himself shares in...which means in your weaknesses and struggles, you are NEVER alone. And that sorrow that feels so **isolating** and so **unique** was, in fact, **endured by Jesus in the past** and is **now shouldered by him in the present**. . . **Jesus literally 'co-suffers' with you.**²

So if the accusation you are hearing in your head right now is that *"You're not good enough. You'll never be able to do enough. You're too weak. Your temptations are too strong."* then you need to **send that thought back to the pit of hell** from which it came and tell the Devil—the Accuser of the Brethren—to go to hell along with it! And when that Accuser comes and tries to condemn you declaring, *"You don't deserve this!"*, you **confidently draw near to the throne of grace** and let him know **"I am a child of God! I have been MARKED BY MERCY and I am being GUARDED BY GRACE. My victory is secure. Because of Jesus:**

- I am **redeemed**.
- I have been **born again**.
- I have been **crucified with Christ** so that I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.
- I am a **saint**, one of the elect, one of God's **chosen** people.
- I am a **member** of the body of Christ.
- I am his **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works.
- I have been **declared righteous**.
- I am no longer a slave to sin, but now I am a **slave of righteousness** and a servant of the one true God.
- I am not only a servant, but also a **friend** of God.
- I am now a **son/daughter** of God through faith.
- I was **once dead. Now I am alive**.

² Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*, 48-49.

And I am COMING WITH CONFIDENCE based on the finished work of Jesus!

CONCLUSION

Friend, you can draw near to God this week—*right now*—with CONFIDENCE because the Bible promises that when you [draw near to God, he will draw near to you](#).³ That when you [seek him with all your heart he will be found](#).⁴

We aren't connected to God by **rules** or **traditions** or **religion**, we're connected by faith in Jesus. You can come to him confidently, not because of **your performance** but because of **Jesus's perfection**.

The question is simple: **Do you have this confidence? If not, why?**

- Is it because you've never accepted Jesus as your Savior?
- Is it because you have some sin you think is keeping you from drawing near to God?
- Is it because of pride in thinking you can do it all yourself?

I don't want you to leave this weekend thinking: *Man, if I can just live up to all those **rules** and all those **expectations** and answer the right **spiritual security questions** then God will love me...if I could just get my life together then God would accept me.*

No matter what you are going through, you can trust Jesus. Instead of hiding from him, **RUSH TO HIM! And what you're gonna find in that moment is that he's already been RUSHING FOR YOU!** Bring your **problems**, your **frustrations**, **anxieties**, and **failures**.

God's not trying to **trap** you, **humiliate** you, or **condemn** you. Quite the opposite: when we approach God on the basis of Jesus our High Priest we don't find **GUILT**, we find **GRACE**...he doesn't rub our faces in our **MESS**, he gives us **MERCY**.

- You don't have to come **formally**, you just come **freely**.
- There's nothing left for you to **sacrifice**, you must just **surrender**.

ALTAR CALL

Here's how we're going to end today:

- Call pastors + prayer teams

³ James 4:8

⁴ Jeremiah 29:13

- Give opportunity to place faith in Christ
- Bow heads. Pray.
- Come tell someone.
- You are sent.