

TEXT: **Hebrews 4:14-16**

SERIES: **BETTER- Hope from the book of Hebrews**

TITLE: **He Helps the Helpless**

Hook: There are all kinds of stories of people needing help:

Example 1- Mom rescues teen @ crash

Example 2- Mel helps me reach the top shelf of the spice cabinet

Sometimes the help is time saving, other times it's life saving.

The Obvious Truth- Each one of us needs help

To parent, to stay married, to keep it together, to heal from loss,
to endure through pain, to not succumb to sin, to defeat temptation...we-need-help!

Right off the bat I want to present to you the Main Takeaway for our time together-

BIG IDEA: There is help for every need, every time, in Jesus

That's what I am hoping to convince you of today, through the scripture,
because here's the dilemma I see

The Dilemma- We *don't* go to Jesus every time for every need

The writer of the book saw this in his day also, which is why we have this encouragement in these three short but powerful verses.

OUTLINE:

- **V14- A Call to Commitment**
- **V15- A Comfort to the Weak**
- **V16- A Call to Come**

A Call to Commitment

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

“**therefore**”- (V13) since *NOTHING* is hidden from God,
and *EVERYONE* will one day have to give an account

AND because we have a “**GREAT High Priest**”- unlike any before

The High Priest interceded on behalf of the people to God;

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) into the Holy of Holies to plead our case in God's presence (had to be repeated every year)

He's “**passed through the heavens**”- gone where no other human representative could go,
not only into the H.o.H. but into the very throne of God

This verse finally gives us a call to action: “**hold fast to our confession**”-

BE COMMITTED TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS

“Hold fast”= seize; adhere; remain committed to

Don't miss this:

We are instructed to 'hold fast' because there is opposition wanting to pull us away

Illustration: Nivea at the playground.....HOLD ON!

If there was no gravity, there would be no reason to say hold on.

There would be no reason to call us to hold fast if there was no force of opposition trying to pry us away from Jesus. But the author of Hebrews knew, and we know, that here is.

At least 2 forms:

External Opposition:

- **1 John 2:16** For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions—is not from the Father, but is from the world.
- **1 John 5:19** We know that we are of God, and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one.
- we face pressure from a world system that denies Christ and wants nothing more than to move us away from Him, controlled ultimately by the devil
 - I am not saying everything out there is the devil....what I am saying is that the devil is out there and will use everything
 - IT IS WELL- *“Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blessed assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.”*

Internal Opposition:

- **Galatians 5:17** For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want.
- **Romans 7:21-23** So I discover this law: When I want to do what is good, evil is present with me. ²²For in my inner self I delight in God's law, ²³but I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body.
- There is a battle, a war, going on inside every Christian.
The new nature VS the old nature; the spirit VS the flesh.
 - Added to that is our own shame and doubts stemming from not fully realizing who we are in Christ
 - IT IS WELL *“My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!”*

Since we have this inevitable, daily opposition seeking to drag us away from Jesus- Hold on with everything you have, as if your life depended on it, to what you believe about Jesus

Endurance is possible!

We are never commanded to do what we are not enabled to do.

The very fact that we are commanded to hold fast our confession means that it is possible in His strength to hold on at any moment.

A Comfort to the Weak

¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

Jesus, as our high priest, can plead our case well, because He knows what it is like to be us, He too has felt the weight and pull of the opposition of this world. He's been **"tempted..as we are"**

Which leads me to an important theological distinction is made in this verse-.

Temptation ≠ Sin

We tend to think that we could only be tempted with sinful desires, but we could be tempted with good things but that are out of place.

How could Jesus ever relate to a teen boy tempted with lust or drugs/ drinking?

Because Jesus' desires have been tempted also.

In the wilderness and at gethsemane, his desires to avoid the cross;

in the desert his desire to satisfy his flesh and eat after 40 days of fasting.

He was tempted but not tainted

Jesus always resisted temptation to the end. He never gave in to it.

That does not mean He was not really tempted, or it was any less of a temptation.

"We would hardly be helped by one who knew what it was to be human but fell as we have."

– Thomas R Schreiner

"What we, and they needed was not a fellow loser but a winner; not one who shares our defeat but one who is able to lead us to victory; not a sinner but a savior." – Hughes

Which is why the text says that Jesus *can* **"sympathize with our weaknesses"**

Most translations used sympathize; (NIV uses empathize)

The Greek is 'sympathēsai' = to be affected with the same feeling as another (co-suffer)

Where empathy carries the sense of suffering IN, sympathy is to suffer WITH-

Modern scholars like Brene Brown (non-christian) claim that to be empathetic is better than to be sympathetic. But the distinction on Heb 4:15 is an important one.

If a sufferer is drowning, an empathetic helper may attempt to jump in and sink with them. A sympathetic helper, on the other hand, will take hold of a floating device and reach that person to pull them out.

Great article on the differences yet importance between the 2:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/do-you-feel-my-pain>

Jesus has more sympathy than you can imagine, more than you are comfortable accepting.

Imagine that you are dying of thirst, moments away from death by dehydration, when suddenly you climb over a sand hill and there before you as far as you can see to the left and to the right and beyond the horizon

before you is an ocean of fresh water, deeper than the space between the land and sky. More than you can ever drink in a million lifetimes-

That's how we should approach his sympathy- He is able to sympathize with you in every way

When you feel the shame of sin, the guilt of failure, the pain of suffering, the wound of misery, in that moment, run to the truths of Hebrews 4:16-17

We didn't just need someone who empathized with us, suffered as us, was even tainted with sin as us- but who couldn't help us; we needed a savior, someone who sympathized with us, suffered with us, was **tempted but not tainted** as us.

Do you allow the temptation to captivate you?

Or do you take it captive and make that desire obedient to Christ? (2 Corinthians 10:5)

The reality is we all cave in. Not so with Jesus

FACT: We are weak.....FACT: We face temptation.....FACT: We sin.

FACT: He became weak.....FACT: He faced temptation.....FACT: He never sinned.

A Call to Come

¹⁶Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

“let us approach”... “with boldness”- here is the grandest invitation, the divine welcome!

We aren't cast out because of our weakness, we are invited to come in, even closer!

“Throne of grace”- grace is what defines God's posture towards us; it could have been called His throne of ANYTHING (Holiness, power, authority, judgment, etc.)

V16 is in essence God saying *“I already know that you will blow it; you'll sin, or you'll feel the misery of sin in the world. When that happens, you have a place to turn to”*

You will run into times when you monumentally blow it! When you fail utterly.

Times when you hate yourself; when you wish you could go back and change the past;

when you are so weighed down with guilt and shame and trauma;

And in those moments, where will you go???? Where will you turn?

The natural disposition is to hide from God. To look inward for the answers and sow our own coverings out of wilted leaves.

But when we look to the throne of God, He beckons us, and pleads and calls and says **“COME, you still have a place at my table”**

“In time of need”-

He's available in your time of need-

while you are still high/drunk, intoxicated;

while anger and hate still rushing adrenaline through your veins;

while the porn is still in your search history;

while you are still crying because you did again what you said you never would;

while you feel hopeless and are doubting your faith,

Help is available when we ASK

You must recognize your need & his ability; your weakness & his strength

1 Peter 5:6-7 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you

That phrase (in time of need) translates as one Greek word- εὐκαιρος (eukairos) = *well-timed*

The idea is that at the exact right time, the very second, we ask for it, God sends His mercy and grace to help us.

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength,
a helper who is always found in times of trouble.

For those who have not surrendered to Christ, God's throne will be a place where there is only judgment and wrath; But for those in Christ, God's throne is a place where we find grace and mercy.

MAIN POINT: There is help for every need, every time, in Jesus

There is *never* a good reason NOT to go to God for help

*CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM

Are you in need?

Need of strength against the temptation that relentlessly weakens you;

Need of comfort amid the storm of misery you've been living in;

Need of mercy because you know you deserve judgment;

Need of grace because you can't make it out this hole on your own;

Jesus is both transcendent and tender

He's passed through the heavens, and still, He sympathizes with you.

He doesn't just "GET US", He "HELPS US"

What is your immediate next step in following Jesus?

How will you depend better on the Lord?

How will you rely on him to be a better parent? A better spouse? A better single believer?

BULPEN-

Christ not only fulfills all qualifications of a high priest, he surpasses them.

‘Passed through the heavens’ – first at the incarnation, then at his ascension

Hold fast – κρατέω (krateō) *seize; arrest. to hold (adhere) v. — to remain firmly committed to.* Finite verb, present, active, subjunctive, first person, plural.

Confession – ὁμολογία (homologia) *confession. profession n. — an open avowal (true or false) of some belief or opinion.* Noun, genitive object, singular, feminine.

We are called to remain firmly committed to our stated belief in Christ.

We hold fast our confession.

Dane Ortlund, Gentle and Lowly, Chapter 4- *“All our natural intuitions tell us that Jesus is with us, on our side, present and helping, when life is going well. This text says the opposite. It is in ‘our weakness’ that Jesus sympathizes with us.”*

He is drawn to our distress

Sympathy (and its Latin equivalent *compassion*) literally means “suffer with” (*sym* + *pathos* in Greek; *com* + *passio* in Latin). *Empathy*, on the other hand, means “suffer in.”

One day, every single one of us will stand in the court of God. Without outside intervention, that would be the most perilous circumstance for us to be in. That day is coming, slowly marching closer and closer towards us, until we find ourselves standing there with nowhere to hide anything.

In steps Jesus. Our representative. Our defender. Our advocate.

Because of what He has done, we can now welcome that day in God’s court with anticipation. We are invited to run into the courtroom “boldly”

The sacrifices of the high priests in the OT could only *delay* God’s judgment.

Jesus’ sacrifice *appeased* and *satisfied* God’s judgment.

“Indeed, he experienced the full range of temptation. The delight enjoys offered by saying we’re no stranger to Jesus. He was cognizant of and experienced the attractiveness of sin, realizing that it brought pleasure. He understands every temptation we face since he experienced something similar. Nevertheless, he never surrendered to sin’s power. He shared in our weakness and frailty. But he did not, not even once, give himself over to sin. He always obeyed the will of the Father.” – Thomas R Schreiner

Karma vs Grace

We hold this belief (subconsciously) that God operates in Karma.

If you’re good, I’ll be good to you. If you sin, if you give in, I’ll give up on you, I’ll smite you.

We have to continuously, again and again, put this deeply embedded false doctrine of demons to death, because it goes against everything that Hebrews is shouting from the roof tops:

COME RIGHT UP TO THE FOOT OF HIS THRONE, YOU ARE NOT ONLY ALLOWED,
YOU ARE INVITED, YOU ARE WELCOME, YOU ARE EXPECTED!

We come seeking (Psalm 119 over and over “I seek, I sought”)

Psalm 108:12 Give us aid against the foe, for human help is worthless.

“God's grace is poured out as believers request help when they are overwhelmed.”- Thomas R Schreiner