58-023

A Priest is on the Throne

Hebrews 4:14-16

November 15, 2026

Oh, good evening, everyone. Go ahead and turn to Hebrews chapter 4. As I mentioned last week, the pastor has come to his main point in Hebrews, really this sermon put into print that he preaches to his congregation about the high priestly ministry of Christ. That's his focus in this entire epistle, and he's starting right here in Hebrews 4:14 to 16 to show believers the benefit, the benefit that we have when Christ is our great high priest.

I'm going to start this evening by reading those verses again. Then we're going to take a little trip through some pertinent Old Testament texts and prophecies, because I want us to appreciate how precious this doctrine is, but also how radical it was for the readers, the original readers of this epistle, that Jesus is our great high priest. And what a shift they had to make in their thinking.

So we'll start in Hebrews 4:14 to 16 and read those verses. “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us take hold of our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things like we are, yet without sin.

“Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” As we've said, in Hebrews there is no other place in Scripture that reveals the doctrine of Christ's high priestly ministry like Hebrews does, and specifically that Christ, who is our King, that at the same time he serves as our great High Priest as well.

You know that we covered verses 14 to 15 last time, and though we want to charge right into verse 16, I have been arrested in my thinking by four words in verse 16, which caught my attention and kind of held me fast. And so I'm going to do the same to you. All right. What four words are those? They're the words, “the throne of grace.”

The throne of grace: profoundly important words, and they would have stood out rather prominently to these Hebrew Christians who read this for the first time. I realize that for

us, they're somewhat invisible to us because they're so familiar, because these concepts are familiar to us.

And then when they are so familiar, kind of invisible, we fail to see how radical they are and how meaningful they are. So I'd like us to take a little bit of a brief tour of some Old Testament prophecy just to see and appreciate what it is that we have received in Christ. And for the sake of clarity, I'm going to kind of divide our time tonight between the historic survey of high priestly prophecy and then move into, back into this text, Hebrews 4:14 to 16, and talk about its present benefit for us.

So here's the first outline point number one: the prohibition of the priest king, the prohibition of the priest king. We start in that prohibition of the priest king. And, what, by that I mean one person serving as priest and king. There was a prohibition in the Old Testament about that.

So we start with the division of powers, and then a little bit later we'll talk about the union of those powers. Well, starting with the division of powers that separated the king and the priest; so if you have your Bibles in hand, go ahead and turn, keep a finger in Hebrews 4. We'll come back to it.

But go ahead and turn back to 2 Chronicles, chapter 26. 2 Chronicles 26 for Hebrew Christians steeped in the Old Testament, can you see why it might be hard for them to see it clearly? They're slow to accept, embrace, practice, what their pastor is trying to teach about this priest king concept. Maybe not, but I hope to show you tonight why it was difficult for them to receive this.

There were ancient Mesopotamian kings, Egyptian Pharaohs, these back in the day, they considered themselves to be the embodiment of the gods, and they took a role of a priest king. They had in one person, one man, priestly and kingly functions, joined in a single person, and he was there to represent the gods to the people.

He was the very embodiment of the gods. So they invested themselves with divine authority. They exercised an incredible degree of power over life and death, over people's fortunes. They obviously found that useful in keeping people subdued in fear and wonder. So there was an aura around these kings, these priest kings back in the day, back in the ancient times.

And this is not at all what God wanted for his people. He wanted Israel to keep kingly and priestly roles and offices separate from one another. When God brought Israel out of Egypt, Moses was Israel's prophet. Aaron was Israel's high priest. But

who is Israel's king? God. So he served that function. He served that role, and he intended it that way.

That separation between king and priest was mandated by law, or really by creator creature distinction. But in the Law of Moses, it was held by case law, and rigidly so, anticipating the time when there would be a man who would serve as king.

Deuteronomy 17 talks about the time in the future when Israel would have a monarchy, and that happened at the end of Samuel's judgeship, where Israel became a monarchy. Samuel anointed the first and second kings of Israel, Saul first and then David, and they served as kings of Israel, not as priests.

And that point is made clear when Saul usurps Samuel's role early in his reign by offering sacrifice. Remember, he was told to wait until Samuel came, but he went ahead and said, well, the people needed, they were kind of going out of control and I needed to come and offer the sacrifice. Samuel rebuked him for it in 1 Samuel 13. He promised him then because of your sin, this kingdom is going to be taken away from you.

This usurpation, we should call it, of the king into the priesthood was tested again during the 52-year reign of Uzziah, king of Judah was recorded. As I had you turn to 2 Chronicles 26, Uzziah too crossed the line and what happened to him left a

lasting impression upon the people, upon Israel, that reinforced this separation that God wanted between the crown and the ephod or between the crown and the turban you could say.

Look at 2 Chronicles 26 starting in verse 16. "When Uzziah became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to Yahweh his God. He entered the temple of Yahweh to burn incense on the altar of incense. Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with eighty priests of Yahweh," I love this, "men of valor.

"They stood against Uzziah the king and said to him, 'It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to Yahweh, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are set apart as holy to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you've been unfaithful d will have no honor from Yahweh God.'

"But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priest in the house of Yahweh, beside the altar of incense. And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him,

"And behold, he was a leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because Yahweh had smitten him. So King Uzziah was a leper

to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of Yahweh. And Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land."

You may remember that the year king Uzziah died, is the same year that God appeared in Isaiah chapter 6 to Isaiah and called him into ministry. It's this 52-year long reign, Isaiah is prophesying at that time. And this is the time in Uzziah, his heart was filled with pride. Otherwise a good king, but he, his pride got the best of him.

So again, these Hebrew Christians, as they're thinking about Saul usurping Samuel's sacrifice, and Samuel's role; as they're thinking about King Isaiah and what happened to him, how he usurped that role.

And then their pastor is telling them that this Jesus is a king priest, a priest king. They're having trouble with that. They're having trouble accepting it, embracing it, practicing it. They're having difficulty. And I hope you can see that.

So what is the problem that you can see in joining the kingly and the priestly offices? Another way to ask it is why did God want to keep them separate? Why would he want to do that? The answer's in the text and we see that the reason God

wants to keep these two offices separate, these two roles separate, king and priest, is because of the corruption potential.

It's not just a potential, it's a promise in sinful fallen men. The reality of corruption, the depravity of fallen mankind, we, and we only need to look no further than the corruption of the Jewish Temple in the days of Jesus Christ himself. It's to see that during that time in the Sadducees that ruled the temple were so absolutely corrupt, wed to secular power, the whole thing tied in together to create this Nexus of not only corruption, but also of oppression of the people.

And So what started out as sacrifice and changing money and all that stuff at the temple turned into this oppressive burden where because of the sins of their soul, the priests, through the authority of the state, extracted money out of people and created even greater burdens for them.

So it turned into this wedding together of secular and state power, or the wedding together of the priest and the king with the influence of men and their corruption always turns into a tool of great, great oppression.

We've taken our constitutional model from the Judeo-Christian view of the inherent depravity of fallen men and the

need we see rightly, we see to separate the powers of our rulers. The Jews are the first to tell us about that. Show us that.

So the Jews are looking ahead to a Messianic age, and they expect, one person is going to occupy the kingly office and another person is going to occupy the priestly office. And together those two figures in the Messianic age would oversee and minister to Israel's civic and ceremonial life in the future.

They expected the first person, the Messianic king, to come from the tribe of Judah, descend from the royal line of David. And they expected the second person, the high priest, to come from the tribe of Levi and this descend from the priestly line of Aaron, specifically through his son Eleazar. That's what they expected, two separate people.

With that in mind, flip over to Psalm 110, Psalm 110, and we'll see that after the clear separation of powers and after the prohibition about a priest king, here we see in Psalm 110 the union of these messianic offices, the union of these roles of priest and king.

And if we consider how the Jews were tempted to read the text, Psalm 110 erroneously, prior to Christ's coming, kind of

helps us to see the nature of the struggle in the book of Hebrews; how they were tempted to return to what's familiar, to revert to an old but erroneous view that they had.

Psalm 110 is the most often quoted portion in the Old Testament by the New Testament writers. And Psalm 110, verse 1, specifically, is the most quoted Old Testament verse by the New Testament writers. But Psalm 110, just look at verses 1 to 3. "Yahweh says to my Lord," this is David writing. So it's Yahweh says to my Lord, my Adonai, "sit at my right hand until I put your enemies as a footstool for your feet. Yahweh will stretch forth your strong scepter from Zion."

So what's a scepter? It's what's held in the hand of a king, right, saying, "have dominion in the midst of your enemies. Your people will offer themselves freely in the day of your power, in the splendor of holiness from the womb of the dawn. The dew of your youthfulness will be yours."

In that first portion he always speaks to David's Lord, literally Yahweh, that is the divine name, says to my Adonai. This is so, he speaks to David's Lord as a Co-regent, as a king, with a scepter, with power. Yahweh fights his battles, subdues his enemies, makes him a footstool for his feet. But this is clearly a kingly figure.

The second portion is similar verses 5 to 7. “The Lord is at your right hand.” That is, Adonai is at your right hand. “He will crush kings in the day of His anger. He will render justice among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will crush the head that is over the wide earth. He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore He will lift up His head.”

So again, here's David's Lord, his Adonai, at the right hand of Yahweh. He's going to move through the earth, crush kings, subdue nations, rest in his victory. That's the idea of drinking from the brook, to render justice on the earth, justice among the nations. He'll set up the millennial Kingdom.

By the way, these conditions can only apply, only refer to the millennial Kingdom. Uniquely though, and I skipped over it, you'll notice, but placed squarely in the middle of these two kingly enemies subduing sections, David writes in verse 4. “Yahweh has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’”

We're not going to steal the pastor's thunder. He's going to explain the significance of Melchizedek in upcoming chapters. But suffice it to say, Melchizedek represented an even more ancient order of kings prior to the Law of Moses. An ancient order of priest kings with a royal and priestly role, which

Abraham himself assented to, paid tithes to, and that was all prior to the law of Moses.

So for these Jews immersed in the Old Testament, this unique Psalm and this single verse in this unique Psalm, it didn't seem to fit the established separation of powers that they were used to thinking about in their Law. The answer of Jewish scholars, there'd be two offices, king and priest in the Messianic age, in the restoration of the kingdom.

But this, you got to admit, is a little bit tricky for them. Little bit tricky. Again, we're just trying to see this through the Hebrew Christian eyes in the first century, very close to the events of Christ. But in the progress of Revelation, we're about to see, in the words of a post exilic prophet.

So later than Psalm 110, we're going to see that Psalm 110 verse 4 about this priest also being the king is a feature, it’s not a bug. So turn to the post exilic prophet now; the prophet Zechariah; Zechariah, and look at the sixth chapter.

There's a fascinating prophecy here in Zechariah 6, which had to seem very mysterious at the time. But now of course, in the clear hindsight of the epistle of the Hebrews, it's so plain

and obvious to us. But I can tell you when they're reading it, at first glance it's not obvious to them.

Zechariah 6 starting in verse 9, “The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, “Take an offering from the Exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah; and you come to the same day and come into the House of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have come from Babylon. And take silver and gold, make an ornate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.”

Thus far it's a historical reference. It's a historical account, it's narrative. But the crowning of Joshua the high priest with an actual crown, that is to say a crown of a king, would have been totally unfitting and unseemly in the eyes of the Jews.

Aaron and his sons were not to be crowned with any ornate bejeweled crown the kings wear. They were to wear the mitre, the cloth turban of the priesthood. In fact, it's referenced in Zechariah 35. Joshua, the high priest was to have his filthy garments taken off. He was to be clothed in clean robes and put a clean turban on his head that is fitting for the high priest.

Exodus chapter 28 talks about this turban, this fitting for the high priest. So this is something different in Zechariah 6:11. It's something symbolic; it's something prophetic. Keep

reading because here comes the prophetic explanation. Verse 12 says, after they make this ornate crown of silver and gold, they set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehovah, the high priest.

Verse 12 says, "Then you will say to him," there's interpretation. "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, 'Behold, a man whose name is Branch, and He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of Yahweh. Indeed, it is He who will build the temple of Yahweh, and He who will bear the splendor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.'"

So God is referring to the Messiah as the Branch. The branch also referred to in Isaiah and Jeremiah, both of them in a couple different texts there. It's a messianic title. It's a messianic reference, the Branch. The imagery probably comes from David's prophetic oracle in 2 Samuel 23:1 to 7.

Verse 5 in particular speaks of this branching out idea. David has this prophetic oracle, and he speaks about a branch growing out of his line to fulfill the Davidic covenant and bear the fruit of God's salvation. So we see this council of peace between two offices, kingly and priestly, that are joined together in one person. And the prophecy is that this descendant of David is going to build the temple.

His personal involvement is emphasized; it's repeated twice there, given twice, one after the other. He's going to bear the honor of the office. He's going to sit on the royal throne, and he will rule from that throne.

This is the kingly function of a royal office, but he will also be a priest on the throne, reinstituting that ancient priest king office that was typified in Melchizedek. Who is the type and the pattern that points to Jesus Christ.

Priests as we know from our Old Testament reading, high priests in particular did not sit down on the job. They were standing all the time, whether they're priests and Levites who are serving in the temple complex and they're slaughtering animals and gathering blood, and they're standing all the time.

When the high priest goes in once a year on the Day of Atonement to come in there, he does not sit down. He does not get comfortable in the Holy of Holies. He gets in there and gets out. His life's at stake. But here there is a throne on which this priest sits, something very different.

So with the authority of the kingly office, the Messiah will build the temple. This is not the second temple, by the way, built by the Exiles. So if the prophesied temple here in Zechariah 6 is not the second temple of post exilic times, and

it's not Herod's temple, by the way, Herod's temple was just beautifying the second temple, the post exilic temple, then what temple is this that the branch will build?

What temple are we talking about here? It's the millennial temple. Millennial temple is being talked about here. It's being prophesied pointed to. So this is the millennial temple that's prophesied in Ezekiel 40 through 44.

Also, Haggai, 2:6 through 9, when Jesus returns at the second coming, this is saying that he himself will build Yahweh's temple. He's going to reinstitute, according to Ezekiel 40 through 44 and through 48 really, he's going to reinstitute temple service, offering sacrifice. He's going to rule as the priest king of the millennial kingdom.

So king and priest. So get this, just a little footnote, an aside in light of a lot of today's modern premillennial prophetic thinking, it's not the Jews of today's Israel who are going to build the temple that Christ is going to return to. It is not the unbelieving Jews of today's Israel, not according to this text. It is going to be the Messiah himself.

So did the contemporaries of Joshua the high priest discern all this in Zechariah chapter 6, in this time? Did they understand this? Hard to say. According to verses 14 to 15, it

says that they preserved the crown that was placed on Joshua's head. They were told to, to keep it as a memorial in God's temple in order to testify to the people of what was to come.

I kind of wonder, was that crown still in existence in Jesus' day when he came into the temple? Was it stored in the treasury of Herod's temple over the several hundred years after it was made?

As long as it did remain, it was a testimony to the Jews of the prophecy here in verses 12 and 13, Zechariah 6, revealing a union adjoining together of these two offices, not now, but later in the Messiah, that he would be Israel's king and Israel's high priest. That's what arrested my attention when I came to this concept of the throne of grace.

Let's go back to Hebrews chapter 4, well I hope that's arrested your attention too; found some purchase in your hearts that we have such a high priest, that we have a high priest who sits on a throne. And as his priestly work is done and there's no need for him to stand anymore, but he goes into the holy of holies, that sanctuary, the heavenly version and he sits down.

He doesn't sit down on some little sofa, he sits down on a throne, a throne for kings, because he is a king and a priest. And listen, I just want to tell you, that is good for us. This

is a really, really a good thing, a really good thing. So back in Hebrews 4:14, kind of have a better appreciation now of who he is, what we have in him.

The first point is the prohibition of the priest king. And this second point is just kind of a little bit of a review of last time: the revelation of the priest king, the revelation of the priest king. I just want to say, we want this.

We want this, to live under the authority of Christ who is the priest king. We are most happy to hear him announce, "all authority in heaven and on earth is given to me." That is good for us. It's hard to appreciate when we live in the world that we live in, when we are raised in the world that we are raised in, a world of representative democracies. Or we could say it's what's shifting right now, is socialist democracies.

The only alternatives to these kinds of democracies are the collectivism of Marxist and communist regimes or just the hard totalitarianism of dictatorships. That's the world we live in. We don't really understand monarchy.

We don't even understand this priest king concept either. But to have one power, one authority over your body and your soul, one power and authority over the material and the

immaterial aspects of your life, one power, one authority and it's this one, this one.

It's a remarkable gift such as this world has never seen or known. Not going to go into detail on this second point, which is kind of review. We covered it last time in verses 14 to 15, but it's the final words of verse 15, "yet without sin," that tell us why this is not only acceptable now, it is necessary that God would reinstitute the priest king.

It is most fitting in Jesus Christ. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us take hold of our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, and yet without sin."

So we covered those verses in three points last time: Who we have, what we confess, how we benefit. In Jesus Christ, we have a great, a megas high priest. He's gone where no other high priest is gone. He's passed from this earth through the heavens. He's made the trip. He's made the journey, and he can do that because he is what no man has ever been. He is Jesus, the Son of God.

And as the pastor's going to show us in the upcoming chapters, Jesus is the only perfectly competent one to serve as a great high priest for reasons that we're going to study, in do course. So I don't want to steal all the thunder of what's coming.

But because of what he has accomplished, which is grounded in who he really is, the incarnate Son of God, the perfect Son of man, representative head, perfect mediator between God and man. We see that he is the only one perfectly sufficient to the task and this is why "we must take hold of this confession." We must hold this confession of our faith and what the doctrine is. We must hold it fast and never let it go. We're to cling to him and hold on for dear life.

So who we have and what we confess, these led to a third point: how we benefit. We benefit from his royal priesthood, because of his perfect sympathy for us, with us. Far from being uninterested in us or aloof from us, Jesus, our great high priest, he practices his priestly ministry with full sympathy toward us, with perfect sympathy.

And you think to yourself, you know, I've thought some really bad thoughts. I've said some really bad things. I've been unfaithful where I ought to have been faithful. I was a coward when I ought to been brave and bold. I was unbelieving when I

ought to have been believing. I don't want anybody to know that, see that, because it's so shameful to me.

You've got to know that this high priest, he sees all that. In fact, he saw all that when his father sent him to die for your sins. He is the propitiation who takes away the wrath of God for you. And having taken away the wrath of God, there is none left. All He's got for you left in his heart is favor, is kindness and he understands.

He knows your temptations. He knows your weaknesses, because he's lived it. You got to come near him. You got to come near. And that's what the pastor here is trying to encourage his congregation to do. He's been tempted in all things, as we are, and yet without sin.

Someone who's been tempted just like you and yet fallen into sin cannot help you. He hasn't outlasted the temptations you've faced, but the one who has outlasted all your temptations and stood strong, he's a different kind of person altogether, isn't he?

So we come finally where I want to get to from the beginning, Hebrews 4:16, but I was arrested by that expression in the verse, Throne of Grace. This is how we apply what we're

learning. Thirdly in number three: the exaltation of the priest king.

So the prohibition first, but then the revelation of the priest king, and then, now the exaltation of the priest king. God had once refused to allow the one wearing the crown in Israel to stand before the altar and enter the Holy of Holies.

He was protecting his people from the abuse of power by sinful men. He's so tender toward us as miserable sinners, not adding more trouble to our sins. But that changed when God sent his one and only beloved Son. The revelation of Jesus Christ dissolved the once necessary division between the king and the priest. And so now we come eagerly.

We come with no apprehension at all. But we can come, as verse 16 says, “confidently and boldly.” One lexicographer says this, “This term can also be transited to come with a joyful sense of freedom.” I like that. Our hearts lifted; encouraged to, to draw near, with no limitation, no refusal, no obstacle, with a joyful sense of freedom.

So it's out of that sense of confidence, in that joyful sense of freedom that the pastor is encouraging, inducing, wooing his congregation of faint-hearted Christians to draw near. He says this, “Therefore let us,” he's talking about

himself too, “let us draw near with confidence,” with boldness, with a joyful sense of freedom, “to the throne of grace.” I hope you appreciate that better now.

“To the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Sitting on that throne, is an infinitely competent, perfectly sufficient, deeply sympathetic priest. Yes, he's a king, also a priest. A priest who has lived our life, walked where we've walked, felt what we felt. So we have every reason to draw near in confidence.

This is why he came: is for us to be able to draw near in confidence, but the reverse way of thinking about this and stating this is also true and equally important, not only is our king a great high priest, but our great high priest is also an infinitely powerful king. Jesus began his messianic ministry Hebrews 1:3, 1:3 says, “By addressing our deepest need,” showing the greatest amount of power. “He made purification for our sins.”

He absorbed the almighty omnipotent wrath of God for each one of our sins, each one individually, all of them collectively in his own body on the cross. He absorbed all that. Who can do that? I can't stand before God for one of my sins, even the smallest little peccadillo.

I can't stand before God. I'll be crushed. This one stood, absorbed, died on the cross, received it, and rose from the dead. This is power. He made purification for our sins and after that he sat on his throne, described here as a throne of grace, or if I put it in this language, he sat on the throne of grace, it's like sitting on the seat of free gifts. I sit on the free gift seat: a throne of grace.

As pastors, we are regularly informed and significantly aware of people and their sins and their problems and their difficulties, their sorrows, their pains. And it really starts with our own, knowing our own hearts, our own difficulties, pains, sins.

We understand with the sinners that we serve. We share far more in common with the priests of old, but we don't share a lot in common with the kings. Unless you're a mega church pastor and you're Joel Osteen, then you share a lot in common with the kings. We do not. Faithful pastors do not.

But how often we pastors would love to have the wealth, the power, and the wisdom of the world's greatest kings, so that we could solve the problems that people suffer, deeply, fully, and finally. With great wealth, we could pay all our people's debts, provide for their needs, and give generously enough that they would never have to suffer want again.

They'd have more than enough to enjoy life's pleasures, and more than that, they'd enjoy the greatest benefit that there could ever be for having wealth, which is to give it away and be generous. Jesus said it's more blessed to give than to receive, and that's what the really wealthy get to do. Give, give, give, fund, fund, fund.

With great power we could heal diseases, eradicate cancer, dissolve all the fear, worry and anxiety that is associated with fearful diseases and illnesses and sicknesses. We would love to restore ailing loved ones and accomplish what no doctor can accomplish, by the touch of a hand.

We could deliver people from powerful enemies, destroy those who would intimidate and terrify people. We could protect them from enemies, foreign and domestic. With great wisdom, us pastors could use insight to restore all the broken relationships, repair all the marriages, unite the hearts of children and parents and parents and children. We could reach across generational divides to bring unity and harmony and respect and esteem.

With great wisdom, we could solve all kinds of practical problems, resolve complex matters of justice, rectify injustice, injustices of society, of history. We could devise the wisest stewardship to the greatest benefit, productivity, efficiency,

fruitfulness. And as we allow our hearts to imagine what we could do with such great wealth, power, wisdom, kind of dawns on us and a little voice of rebuke whispers to us: Who do you think you are, Jesus Christ?

Why does my sympathy matter? How do the feelings of pastors and elders have any effect at all? I mean, they do have a role, to be sure, in helping us to carry out our duties sympathetically, but they really amount to very little in the actual scheme of things.

What matters, what matters is that we have present tense, present aspect, abiding, continuous, we have a great high priest who has done it all. He's passed through the heavens. He's one who knows our weaknesses, having shared them. He sympathizes. He experienced all our temptations first hand, and he experienced them to the uttermost. He outlasted every temptation, and he has the wealth of heaven. All authority and infinite power is the wealth of heaven, the authority of heaven, the power of heaven to do something about it.

So having induced us to come, what benefit do we find in coming, when we draw near in confidence, in full assurance? Well, how much confidence you say? How much confidence do I need to have? Because that's a sliding scale for me. Sometimes I have a lot of confidence and sometimes I'm just squeaking by. So is

what we received from him in proportion to the confidence in the assurance that I have? The answer is a resounding no.

Jesus said if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can command mountains to move. You can extract the deeply tangled roots of Mulberry trees and replant those trees in the sea. If you have faith as small as a mustard seed. It's not the size of the faith that matters. It's the greatness in the infinite power of the one you put faith in that matters.

The power of the one in whom we believe, that's what matters. So knowing that, even the smallest confidence can grow with repeated use. So make use of him. That's what the pastor is saying in Hebrews 4:16. Make use of him, use him to your good and godly benefit, is what he's saying.

When we, “draw near in confidence to the throne of grace,” we will. He says, we will, “receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Keep in mind, mercy and grace are not synonyms here. They're two separate words performing two separate functions.

We need mercy, because of our sins and our failures, seeking the forgiveness of our heavenly father as he looks upon the perfect atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. And when we come seeking mercy, he says we receive it. We get what we seek.

We need grace to accomplish what he's called us to do now, as his people, his slaves, his children, his citizens. We need his grace to do his will. Grace is the power to do what he's called us to do, the power to obey. So we need his grace to do his will for without his grace we can accomplish nothing of what he's called us to do.

Jesus said this in John 15:5. We need divine grace to abide in the vine and if we do that, if we remain in him, we bear much fruit. Oh yeah, but apart from him, you can do nothing. So when we come seeking his grace, we find it. When we come seeking his mercy, we receive it. We come seeking his grace. We find it.

We want to ask one more question just to get as much clarity as we can, and that's to ask this: If our Lord Jesus has infinite wealth and infinite power, and he sympathizes with us perfectly, understanding our need, he has a heart of love to care for us; he's eager to help us.

In fact, he invites us to come, bids us come. Why does he not help us way ahead of time? Why does he not remove all of our problems before we ever face them? Why not just dump all the wealth of heaven down on us in an instant and empower us with infinite might now and forever, so that we are resourced from here to eternity and back again? Because in addition to having

infinite wealth and infinite power, our great high priest has something else called infinite wisdom. He's up to something.

End of verse 16. He encourages us to come to him, specifically in time of need. In time of need, Jesus bids us to come for mercy whenever we need it. When your conscience accuses you, when you're troubled by your sin, when you're troubled by the shame that you feel, that's your time of need. Come seek his mercy, you'll receive it.

He promises that we'll receive the mercy that we seek. We'll find the grace that we seek for that hour of need. One of my favorite illustrations in this regard of our Lord's love and also his wisdom in resourcing us, not from here to eternity and back again, but for the moment of need.

It comes from a Puritan author, William Gurnall, who wrote *The Christian in Complete Armour;* 1100 pages on 11 verses, Ephesians 6:10 to 20. *The Christian incomplete Armour*, you got to get a copy. It's about that thick, but work through it in your devotional life.

Spurgeon said apart from the Bible, and I don't know if he said it exactly this way, but if he's going to be stuck on a desert island, only have one book besides the Bible, it's this book, this book. But William Gurnall writes this: He says,

"Which, think you, speaks more love and condescension, for a Prince to give a penchant to his favorite, a favorite person on which he may live by his own care, that is dump enough on him that he lives comfortably for the rest of his life or for this Prince to take the chief care upon himself. And then to come from day-to-day to this man's house and to look into his cupboard and see what provision he has and what expense he's at. And so to constantly provide for the man from time to time. Which speaks of more love and condescension of that Prince, the first or the second."

He goes on to say, "possibly some proud spirit that likes to be his own man or loves the prince's money better than his Prince would prefer the former. But one that is ambitious to have the heart and love of his Prince would be ravished with the later."

That's what God does with us, calls us to come to him that we may open up our hearts, express the concern of our souls, so that by his omniscient gaze he can open up and look into our cupboards, as we open them to him.

That's what Jesus, our King, the great high Priest, does for us. That's why he invites us to come in the time of need. When you recognize your need, go, come boldly. Gurnall says, the

great God comes and looks into their cupboard. See how they are laid in and sends in accordingly as he finds them.

Your Heavenly Father knows you have needed these things and you shall have them. He knows you need strength to pray, to hear, to suffer for him, and in the very hour it will be given. This is what the pastor wants for his people, to encourage them to practice this new and living way which exalts our high priestly King Jesus Christ.

And it is in, I called this the exaltation of the priest king. How is he exalted? He's exalted when we come to him. He's exalted when we come to him, as he calls us to do, when we seek him, his help, when we seek mercy and grace of God through his interceding help. He is glorified in that. He is exalted in that he's shown to be who he really is. How needful were the Hebrew Christians and how needful are we of this great ministry? And this way is open for us too. Let's pray.

Our Father, thank you for giving us such a high priest, one who has passed through the heavens. Jesus, the Son of God, who is perfectly competent for the task and his work is all sufficient. And he has full sympathy for us sinners. We thank you that you love us, and you sent us such a savior. And we thank you for the love of our savior and this dual role, dual function, dual office, that he is priest and king.

And according to our confession, he is prophet, priest and king, teaching us, ministering to us and overcoming all of our enemies, providing for us, protecting us. We thank you that you have given us such a one. We pray that you would help us to pray to him more faithfully, more thoughtfully, in consideration of his roles. In Jesus' name, Amen.