

I. Introduction and review: Admonition is followed by encouragement.

II. Because Jesus is our Great High Priest we can persevere in faith. v. 14

A. Jesus is a Priest of the highest possible order! v. 14a

1. He is OUR High Priest. 8:1
2. He is not just a High Priest, he is a GREAT High Priest, surpassing all others.
 - a. The High Priest was preeminent under the Old Covenant. Ex. 31:10 Le. 4:3 Num. 35:25f Josh. 20:6
 - b. The next six chapters will expound how Jesus is greater than all other priests. 4:15 7:26, 23-24 9:24-28
3. He has passed through the heavens. 8:1 9:11,24
 - a. The Aaronic priesthood symbolically entered God's presence once a year when they passed through the veil into the Holy of Holies in the temple.
 - b. After offering Himself as a sacrifice for our sin, Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into the very presence of God. 9:24 1:3 Acts 1:9f
4. He is the perfect Mediator (Priest) because he stands in the closest possible relationship to both parties.

B. Hold fast to your confession of faith in Jesus, the Son of God. v. 14b

1. There is hope for us when we struggle in the wilderness of temptation.
2. Our author speaks to those who have confessed faith in Jesus. 3:1 Have you? Rom. 10:8-10 Mt. 28:18f Acts 2:38
3. Keep on confessing Christ.

C. Don't go backwards to another priesthood.

1. The original readers of Hebrews were tempted to go back to Judaism.
2. Many still desire an earthly priesthood. 9:24-28 I Pe. 2:5,9 Mt. 23:9 I Tim. 2:5 John 4:21-24
3. Don't give the honor and trust which belongs to Jesus to mere men.

III. Our Great High Priest fully sympathizes with our weaknesses. v. 15

A. Even though He is great, He is also has compassion on us. v. 15a

B. Jesus has been tempted in all things. 2:18

1. This does not mean that He has actually been tempted in every possible situation.
2. He fully shares our humanity, including its weaknesses. 2:17 5:7-8 Rom. 8:3
3. He endured the same kinds of temptations we face. 5:8 I Cor. 10:13
4. He has faced temptation to the greatest possible degree. Mt. 4:1f

C. He passed through temptation without sinning. 3:2 7:26 9:14 II Co. 5:21 I Pe. 1:19

1. It is not a sin to be tempted. Js. 1:14-15
2. How would you answer someone who says that because it was not possible for the Son of God to sin, His temptation wasn't real? 5:7 Luke 22:42-44
3. How would you answer those who say that one has to have sinned to be able to fully sympathize with the temptations sinners face?
4. If Jesus had sinned, He would have been unfit to represent us. 7:26-27
5. Because He has been faithful, He has entered into God's rest, and has made a way for us to join Him.

- D. Jesus is sympathetic to the greatest possible degree.
 1. He fully understands your suffering and your weakness.
 2. Jesus' sympathy includes not only an understanding of how we feel, but a commitment to help. 10:34 Isa. 53:4 Mt. 8:17

IV. Through Jesus, draw near to God for help. v. 16

- A. In what sense do we *draw near* to God?
 1. *Draw near* is used of a priest approaching God with a sacrifice. Le. 9:7 22:2
 2. We are sinners, who are, by nature, unfit for God's presence. 10:31 Rom. 3:23
 3. We draw near to God through Jesus our High Priest, Who has cleansed us. 2:17b
 4. You cannot approach God in any other way. John 14:6

- B. Draw near to God with boldness. 7:25 10:19,22 12:18,22 Eph. 3:12
 1. Draw near with confidence, not in yourself, but in Christ.
 2. Draw near because Jesus is a sympathetic High Priest. v. 15
 3. Draw near because you need God's help.
 4. Draw near because you approach a throne of grace.

- C. Draw near to receive what you most need.
 1. You will receive mercy. Ps. 103:10,8,13-14 145:9
 2. You will find grace. II Cor. 9:8 12:9
 3. You will get timely help. 2:18 I Cor. 10:13 Isa. 49:8

- D. Why do some not receive God's help?
 1. Some turn to men when they should turn to Christ. Jer. 17:5-8
 2. Many do not have because they do not ask God for help. Js. 4:2
 3. Some ask for the wrong things or with the wrong motives. Js. 4:3
 4. Some don't want the help God offers.

V. Concluding applications.

Discussion questions

1. The author of Hebrews alternates between admonition and encouragement.
How can we imitate his example in teaching and leading others?
2. How is Jesus greater than the Jewish High Priests?
3. How does Jesus' being our Great High Priest help you to hold firm to your faith?
4. In what ways are people tempted to go backwards to an inferior priesthood?
5. How does the fact that Jesus has been thoroughly tempted help us?
6. How would you answer someone who says that because Jesus was the Son of God, His temptation was not real?
7. How would you answer the objection that one has to have experienced sin to know the full power of temptation?
8. How does Jesus enable us to draw near to God?
9. Why can we draw near to God with full confidence?
10. What should we seek and expect from God when we approach Him for help?