

10.3.22 pm

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Date: 10 April 2022

Preacher: Donald M Macleod

- [0 : 0 0] Good evening everyone and welcome to our evening service. We welcome Donald MacLeod to the pulpit once again and pray for God's blessing upon his ministry.
- The intimations as this morning, prayer meeting will be in person and on Zoom here on Wednesday. No Friday clubs, no little fishes this week.
- The minister, God willing, will be taking the services next Sunday. And just a reminder, the opportunity there to serve with Stornoway Street Pastors if you're interested in that ministry.
- And also a couple of ladies' events coming up in May. A ladies' night here on the 6th of May with speakers from 20 Schemes. And also a Women for Mission event in the Camberfay Hotel in Stornoway on Friday the 20th.
- And there's leaflets regarding that on the table at the door. These are all the intimations and we pray for God's blessing upon Donald as he leads us in worship.
- [1 : 0 9] It's a joy to worship and to join us once more this evening. Let's carry on a worship of praise of God by singing to his praise from Gaelic in Psalm 1-2-2. In Gaelic in Psalm 1-2-2.
- We can sing verses 1 down to verse 4. Psalm 1-2-2, verse 1-4.
- To God's praise. Pha-e-ya-sa-ra-tra-vo.
- Pha-e-ya-sa-ra-vo.
- Pha-e-ya-sa-ra-vo.
- [2 : 5 2] Pha-e-ya-sa-ra-vo.
- SONG CONTINUES SONG CONTINUES SONG CONTINUES
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- SONG CONTINUES SONG CONTINUES SONG CONTINUES SONG CONTINUES
- SONG CONTINUES SONG CONTINUES Once again sing to God's praise, this time singing from Scottish Psalter.
- Scottish Psalter on Psalm 67. It's got a psalter on Psalm 67. Psalm of course of praise, a psalm of the Christian here can sing with a heart full of understanding.
- [7 : 3 2] Lord bless and praise, let's stand together and sing to God's praise. Lord bless and praise and praise, let's stand together and sing to God's praise.
- Let us shine on us with thy peace. Let the earth, let's stand together and sing to God's praise.
- Let the earth, thy way and nations all may know thy saving grace. Let people praise thee, Lord.
- Let people all be blessed. O let the nations be glad in songs their voices raised.
- Thou chastly people judged. On earth through nations all.
- [8 : 5 3] Let people praise thee, Lord. Let them praise thee, both great and small.

The earth, thy fruit shall yield. Our God shall blessings send.

God shall us bless, men shall live here. Unto earth's utmost end.

Let's now turn to reading God's word. Hebrews chapter 4. Hebrews chapter 4. We read the whole chapter together.

Let's hear the word of God. He ■■■■, Amen.

[10 : 04] Breathe, guide him, Ji.

enter that rest. As he said, As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest, though his works were finished from the foundation of the world.

For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way, and God rested on the seventh day from all his works. And again in the passage he said, They shall not enter my rest, since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter, because of disobedience.

Again he appoints a certain day, today, saying through David so long afterwards, and the words already quoted, Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would have spoken another day later on. So then there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God. For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works, as God did from his.

[11 : 15] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

No creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, that does hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. It is then with confidence drawn near to the throne of grace.

We may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Let's join together in a word of prayer.

Let's pray. Lord God, we find ourselves again gathered together this evening around your word. Lord, we give you praise for it. Give you praise for the circumstances we find ourselves in.

[12 : 35] Gather this evening as brothers and sisters. Gather this evening as sons and daughters, as those whom you have called your own. Lifting up our voices in praise, knowing that you are the God who hears the prayers of your people.

The God who delights, as your word tells us in the praise of your people. Your word tells us that you command us to lift up our voices. You command us even to, as it were, show you our faces as we gather together to worship you.

I pray for this gathering here this evening, Lord. You know every one of us. You know where we stand before you this evening. You know what it is to find ourselves gathered here. You know our own specific family situations, our own personal situations.

Lord, you know where we stand in terms of our care, our lack of care for the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray again for those here this evening who know Jesus and who love Jesus.

Those of us who care for him as our saviour, who love him as our Lord, who worship him and serve him as our king. Lord, help us this short time again this evening around your word to be careful and concise and to be willing listeners to it.

[13 : 52] Help all that we hear this evening. All that we hear from your word, Lord, help it to not just rest in our minds but also to settle in our hearts. We ask that all that we hear this evening that we be not just hearers but to be doers.

that this new week you would give us the wisdom and indeed we ask you give us the opportunity to put into practice the great truths we will hear this evening from your word. The great hope it gives us.

We do pray, Lord, as we come around your word that you would help us in our hearts and our minds to focus clearly on it. We confess that we bring this evening to this place each one of us various anxieties concerns worries perhaps even burdens outside these walls this evening responsibilities that lay heavy on us.

We ask for a short time for a short time around your word you would help us to pass and to lay these things on our shoulders to lay these things at a place we've just read about at a place where your word is telling us to lay them at the foot of the throne of grace to lay our burdens and our concerns to lay all our worries and anxieties to lay the truth of who and what we are at that place where we find as we read mercy where we find grace where we find that help in time of need to help us to find that help even this evening we pray again for those perhaps even here or those maybe even listening online now or in future Lord who as of yet cannot say truthfully cannot say holy that they know Jesus that they love Jesus that he is there that he is their Lord we thank you for them we thank you that they are gathered here this evening we thank you that they find themselves again under your word we do ask that as they find themselves this evening hearing again the gospel you would apply it to their hearts in a saving sense that they understand that this is real that it's serious that time and the days are not guaranteed to them but again as we have read in your word that your people of old as your people in the desert as Israel as you warned

Lord that today is a day of salvation we ask that be the same message this evening for those gathered here that today tonight that just now would it be the day of salvation for them too they wouldn't harden their hearts instead they would come and cry out and know know for certain the Lord hears those that cry out to him in spirit and truth those that cry out asking for that salvation those that cry out knowing and confessing their sins those that cry out knowing that there's no hope for them but in and through Jesus Lord we ask that those that cry out even this evening even this new week that you would hear them you would save them you would bring them to yourself help Lord we ask those who cannot be here this evening remember those who are at home those perhaps in hospital those in places of care and places of rest those who long to be here those whose hearts and spirits are here those who pray with us just now and those who worship alongside us but through age or through illness or for other various reasons cannot gather as often as they wish cannot join in with their family here in this congregation we remember them this evening we give you praise that your presence indeed your working power is not constrained to a building made by human hands your presence is with your people wherever they find themselves this evening it's here

[17 : 42] Lord we know but it's also at home of those at home it's in hospital of those in hospital with those who are going through situations and trials that perhaps only they and you know about Lord that we bring them also to the throne of grace we pray again Lord the pastor of this congregation pray for him and pray for his family we thank you for them we ask you bless them be with them at this time of rest Lord we ask you give them rest we ask they come back from their holiday refreshed we ask you bless them as a family bless them as they seek to live life as a family we also ask you bless them in all the ministry Lord they find themselves engaged in pray for David Lord especially just now we thank you for him and the work he does in this place we pray for the public work of your servant the public work he does week after week the preaching and the praying the leading and the organising we also pray for the private quiet work the tears shed the hours spent in prayer the hours spent visiting the hours spent perhaps wrestling with your word the hours spent praying over and thinking about this congregation this place we do ask

Lord this prayer knowing it's beyond our ability we leave it with you the one who can bring any to yourself we do pray for this place we do pray Lord for this part of your creation we pray for these villages ones represented here Lord we pray Lord for this time we do pray for all outside these walls this evening up and down these roads Lord in homes just now who have no care and no knowledge and no understanding as to the danger they are currently in we pray even this week through your people Lord through your word through whatever means that you may choose to use you begin Lord to bring them to yourself we ask that we indeed see days of renewal amongst your people here first and foremost but then also we ask for days of renewal and days of revival across this island across this town across this area for again we pray that knowing it's beyond our ability we can save none we ask you the Lord who has saved every one of your people everyone here this evening who knows you and who loves you that we stand as witnesses of that that you are able to save any and all who come to you those who the world sees as beyond help those perhaps that we to our shame see as beyond saving

Lord that it's not a challenge to you indeed through the finished work of our saviour to his perfect righteousness through his perfect obedience through his love for his people through all his finished work we know and we can know for certain this evening that all and any who come this evening and cry out for that salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ is there we ask that it would be the case this week we ask we would again see gospel blessing in this place hear the good news and hear the glorious sound of your people joining and singing across this island all for your glory all for your name's sake also you be praised more and more by those who as of yet don't praise you I pray for your people here now we pray for those here who as we heard this morning perhaps are feeling far from you Lord we ask you bring them back to yourself pray for those here this evening struggling with various life situations

Lord again you perhaps only you and they know we ask you comfort them and be close to them pray Lord for our island as a whole this evening as we gather together just now in worship alongside brothers and sisters up and down our island brothers and sisters who are seeking to worship you and spirit and truth across the denominations and across or even various languages this evening we'll give you praise that you have your people here we pray the same for across our world across our nation we're gathering together with our brothers and sisters worshipping you knowing that across cultures language barriers none of these things are a barrier to the gospel none of these things stop your perfect plan again do pray Lord for those who worship as we worship and who love you as we love you but again who are meeting this very moment in secret behind closed doors and locked doors those who cannot openly and freely proclaim the gospel Lord again you know their names and you know the exact situations we pray for those who we know by name the many who we pray for the many who we remember in parts of this world states and countries which are hostile to the gospel

Lord we ask you'd guide them be with them we pray also for their families those who are waiting to hear news of loved ones in prison give them comfort Lord we ask and be with them we do pray for our own leadership our own government those over us locally in the council those over us in Holyrood and in Westminster those who set aside to to lead and to guide or we ask for wisdom for them we ask that you would enable them to follow and to create rules and laws which would honour you we pray especially just now for those in government who are yours locally and nationally those who know you and who love you who are seeking to do a job that is difficult for them who are seeking to proclaim your name and to serve you well and to make the most of the gifts you've given them whilst facing opposition great opposition we ask you be with them encourage them know that we are praying for them as they seek to to influence rules and to influence law in a way that will benefit this nation but also in a way that will glorify you

[23 : 54] Lord give them wisdom in all these things we ask that same wisdom for ourselves in our daily lives help us in all we say and all we do to proclaim the risen saviour help our conduct to show that we are those who are known by and who are loved by and also those who know and who love our saviour help us day to day in our own homes places of work places of study perhaps as we go about our daily lives help us to reflect the reality that we are those who have been called out of darkness into light those called out of death to life those who have been given these new spiritual eyes we confess that we often fall so far short of that great and glorious calling in our conduct in our words in our thoughts we have sinned against you our holy God even this day may bring that before you just now confessing our sins that we have no right in of ourselves to stand here no right in of ourselves to call upon your name we give you praise as we are reminded this morning from your holy word that because of the finished work of our saviour we can stand here each one of us those of us who know Jesus can stand and know that when you look on us you look on us in love we ask as we look again to your word you'd help us to realise that more and more that the wrath has been turned away from us the wrath that we deserve was placed onto your son who bore that wrath on his shoulder and he cried out it is finished it is on him we are alive this evening let's go all these things in and through and for his precious name sake amen let's again sing to God's praise last time singing against God's altar psalm 118 psalm 118 we can sing verses 17 down to verse 25 I shall I shall not die but live and shall the works of God discover the Lord hath made just eyes sore but not death given over psalm 118 verses 17 to 25 to God's praise I shall I shall not die but live and shall the Lord use the Lord's sword the Lord hath made chastise its sword but not to death give nowhere

O send ye open unto me the gates of righteousness, then will I enter into them, and I the Lord will bless.

This is the gate of God by it, the just shall enter in.

Thee will thy praise, for thou be heard, and hast my safety been.

That stone is made, that cornerstone, which builders did despise.

[27 : 58] This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.

This is the day God made, and haste will try triumphantly.

Send thou, I hate thee, Lord, I pray. Send thou prosperity.

Let's turn back to a chapter we had, Hebrews chapter 4.

I think of Hebrews chapter 4. Looking this evening at the glorious reminder we have in verse 14 to the end of the chapter.

[29 : 05] We take for our text, verse 16. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace. We may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

This morning we said that the evening service should hopefully in some ways connect to what we have and what we heard about this morning.

The reality of a struggling Christian, the reality of a pained Christian, the reality of a downcast soul. Here this evening, in these beautiful few verses, we see the ultimate comfort, don't we, of a Christian?

The ultimate reminder of why we should be encouraged as Christians. Of why even when we're at our most down spiritually, perhaps physically or mentally, when life is at its hardest, the reality of these few verses, these final few verses of chapter 4, still remain true.

And that is our encouragement this evening. For a short time, let's look at these verses and see what it is to know and to have Jesus as our High Priest.

[30 : 18] What that means for us. What encouragement that should give us. And why that's important for us, not just to understand it theologically, but also to understand it personally. Again, some faces I know, many faces I don't know, and perhaps those online, for any of this evening who as of yet don't know Jesus for yourself.

As we go through these verses, just briefly this evening, looking at just a summary, just the headlines of what it is to have Jesus as High Priest. Listen carefully and see what it is to know Jesus, to love him, to be loved by him, to be known by him.

This is the reality for every Christian, the new Christians, the old Christians, those who are weak in our faith, those who feel strong in our faith. And the reality is, this could be for you too.

If only you would come and believe for yourself and have Jesus as your High Priest, know him as your Saviour. Just very briefly and very simply following the verses we have, we can look at it under three simple headings.

First of all, we see the access we have through Jesus, our High Priest, in verse 14. The access we have. Then in verse 15, we see the awareness of our Saviour.

[31 : 39] The awareness of our Saviour. And finally, in verse 16, we see the approach we get through him. The access he grants us, the access he gives us, the awareness he has for his people.

And finally, the approach we have towards him. First of all, looking in verse 14, we see the access we have through Jesus.

We read the chapter and we read from verse 11 down to verse 13. We saw the reality of what it was to worship, what it is to worship and to know a holy God.

Verses 11 down to verse 13. Of course, our context is here, talking about the Israelites of old who, through various disobediences and various issues, of course, failed to enter the promised rest, who were disobedient against God and disobeyed God and went astray, of course, again and again.

And we all know the disaster in many ways of the Israelites in their time in the desert. But also, throughout that disaster, humanly speaking, we see, of course, the glory of a covenant-keeping God who's here this morning.

[32 : 45] A God who didn't let his people go. But a God who's pointing to more to come. Pointing to the final, greater rest of his people.

That's the context we have here. Then we hit verse 11 down to verse 13 of the chapter. And we see this quite almost graphic, this clear, precise illustration of what it is to know and to follow and to be known by the holy God.

In verse 12 and verse 13, we see the reality. The word of God is living and active, sharp than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of the soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And the striking reality of verse 13, And no creature is hidden from his sight. All are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

To be honest, a quite frightening, isn't it? A frightening description as to the holiness, the perfection of God. That before him all is known.

[33 : 54] Before him all is seen. Before him every one of us are exposed completely. For all the pretense and bluster we might put on to the world and even to ourselves at times.

Before God, he sees us, he knows us. As however, there's nothing to hide from him and no way to hide from him. We could end the chapter at the end of verse 13 and leave this place saying, Well, that's true.

God is holy. And because he is holy, we know for certain that he cannot see sin. And because he is holy and all-powerful, we know for certain that God sees all that we are. He knows all that we are.

We leave here this evening saying, Yes, that's true. We leave here, of course, with little to no hope for ourselves. Yes, knowing and being reminded that God is holy, that God sees and knows all things is good for us.

But it gives us little hope. As we see ourselves, we're reminded very quickly. If God sees all things and knows all things, we feel in ourselves, don't we, just now the reality of it. That means he sees all that I am.

[34 : 57] He knows all that I am. That's not a good thing. Even for us as Christians, it causes us pain as we remember that God sees all and knows all. But that leads us then.

The writer doesn't end there. The writer uses that reminder to lead us to one who is holy, who is perfect. One who does represent us. That takes us to verse 14.

Yes, God sees all things. He knows all things. But in verse 14, And since then, since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens.

A great high priest who has passed through the heavens. Of course, Israel had many high priests. Many of whom, I'm sure, served faithfully. Were good in their jobs, we could say.

Were good servants, did the job well. But of course, eventually, every high priest passed away. We're even told that in Hebrews 7.

[36 : 01] Quite simply, Hebrews 7.23 reminds us, The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office.

Speaking about Jesus. But he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Dear friends, we have a high priest who has continual access.

A high priest who is continually representing you and I, dear Christian, before the throne. And we see in verse 14, we see three evidences, three distinct features of our high priest that proves to us, that shows to us this evening, that through him we have access to the Father.

What's the first evidence we have that through him we have access to the Father? Well, first of all, we can see the name given to Jesus in verse 14. Since then, we have a great high priest.

Not just our high priest, but our great high priest. Professor John Angus in the college always reminded us, quite simply, there's no wasted words in Scripture.

[37 : 13] Not a single wasted word. If it's there, it's there for God's glory and for us to look into. We have a great high priest. This separates Jesus from all the high priests who went before him.

All the other fully human high priests who worked hard, yes, who did their best, yes, but at their core were simply just that, just human. They were sinful men trying their hardest to serve God, to please God.

Faithful in many ways, yes, but only Jesus, only Jesus has ever called the great high priest. He's superior to all who came before him.

Other ways they fail to serve the people, Jesus does not and will never fail to represent his people to God. Other ways they have fallen by sin by not following the rules properly.

Jesus fulfilled, of course, every single letter of the law. We'll see that more as we go on in these verses. Because he alone is the great high priest, because he alone is, you see, highly exalted, because he's greater than all the previous high priests who went before him, we can know for certain and for sure.

[38 : 32] Then Jesus, dear brother, dear sister, in Jesus, your great high priest, you have access. Access to the Father in heaven.

He has done what no other high priest could ever do. He's accomplished what they can never accomplish. And because that's true, he is the great high priest. We have access through our great high priest.

It's one evidence, one feature of who our saviour is. Then we see the next one, straight after that. A great high priest, who what?

Who has passed through the heavens. Passed through the heavens. This strange phrase gives us our next assurance that we have access to the Father through our great high priest.

Of course, as we know, this letter was written to those of a Jewish background, very much a Jewish background. And we know culturally, but also we know from history, but also, of course, we know from scripture that the culture of the day was to speak at times of heaven in plural.

[39 : 45] There's various beliefs of different levels of heaven, not scriptural beliefs, but cultural beliefs. Of course, same as ourselves today. We have many beliefs, don't we, today that are cultural and not particularly scripture at times.

Same for those living at the time of this letter. There's a cultural belief of layers, of levels, you could say, of heaven. And here, the writer is so clear, using the language of the day, using the language of people who would have understood images of people who would have understood, the writer is clear, that our great high priest, he has passed through the heavens.

He occupies, as it were, the highest of places. Nothing stopped him. Nothing stood in his way. He ascended, as it were, to the highest of possible places.

He is, right now, at the right hand of the Father. If you have time this evening, read this chapter again, but also read this chapter along with Psalm 110.

There's no time, just now you can go into it in depth, but that beautiful psalm, which tells us so clearly that we have a high priest who is at the right hand of the Father, who is there, who rose, completing all his work on earth, who ascended.

[41 : 05] Nothing stopped him. The plan is complete. He has accomplished his perfect plan on his time on earth. But also, we have a high priest at the right hand of the Father.

So we're not just resting there with respect, but again, Psalm 110, many other places, remind us that Christ is still fully involved and still fully active in the life of his people.

The great high priest doesn't just rest when his work is complete. It's ongoing work. We worship the fully risen, highly exalted high priest at the right hand of the Father, who cares for his people, who is still fully involved in the lives of his people, who accomplished perfectly all that needs to be done for the salvation of his people.

All this so we can know for certain we have access to the Father. Philippians 2, verses 9 to 11, those encouraging verses, speaking of course of Jesus, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that's above every other name.

What does that give him? Verse 10, so that of the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Every tongue confess what?

[42 : 33] That Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. We can have assurance of access through and to the Father because the great high priest has passed through the heavens who reigns and who rules of a right hand of the Father.

And finally, in verse 14, we have full assurance of the access we have to the Father because we're reminded of who our great high priest is.

It's passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus, Mary's boy, a trained, they say, carpenter, one who lived his life who felt as we feel, who experienced emotion and pain and hunger and laughter and everything else in between, who had the full range of all human experience, who was like us, of course, in all ways but sin.

Jesus, who lived his life in fullness and full humanity, who lived the perfect life we could never live, it's that Jesus who represents us this very moment to a Christian, to a brother, to a sister, who represents you this very moment at the right hand of the Father.

As we said this morning, Jesus, who can come alongside you in your misery, in your pain, in your daily life, who lived his life just as you and I, our high priest, fully human.

[44 : 12] because with that in this verse we see with that full humanity we also see his full divinity. Jesus, yes, fully human, the Son of God, the eternal Son of God, we're reminded we have a high priest who is God, yes, who is man, yes, fully God, fully man.

We haven't the time this evening and I don't have the ability this evening to go into the mechanics of that. Not one of us can. The mechanics, what it is to worship to a Saviour who is fully God and yet fully man.

We give praise to God for those who have gone before us who can help us. Of course, our confession, a confession of faith gives us some help there. A confession of faith, chapter 8 in the second section, speaking about Jesus.

It says about him, so that two, so that two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person without conversion, composition, or confusion.

Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man. Brothers and sisters, for him to be our high priest, he needed to be fully human.

[45 : 32] The high priest needs to know what it is to be with his people, to live alongside his people. That's how he intercedes for them perfectly. As we said this morning, Jesus felt in his existence, in his life, he suffered all the temptations that we suffer, all the pains and miseries we face.

Because he did that perfectly. And because he did that perfectly, we can know that he knows what it is to go through whatever it is we might go through in life, to face whatever it is we might face in life.

we need a high priest who is fully human. But a high priest who is fully human, yes, is good for us and can come alongside us, but if he's just fully human, then there's no much else use in him.

But our saviour is fully human, but also we said, of course, fully God. For him to be high priest, he must be like us, but also he must be able to perform his duties perfectly.

Only our saviour, fully God, can perform duties perfectly. The very name, the very title of our saviour in verse 14, it reassures us, it assures us that we have access to God through his finished work.

[46 : 52] With a great high priest, the final high priest, one who has passed through the heavens at the highest place of the right hand of God, and through his very name, his very title, we're told, fully man, fully God.

Able to come alongside us, able to be with us in our misery, but at the same time able to perfectly and eternally represent us before God the Father. We have access through him.

Dear Christian, you can this evening with confidence. Dear brother, dear sister, with confidence you can come to this saviour knowing he knows what it is to live a life.

Knowing that he cares for you as you approach the throne. How often we lack spiritual confidence, don't we? How often we lack that assurance that even this one verse gives us so much of.

You have access to the Father through the work of his Son. That access has been bought for you by the precious blood of your saviour. You have access. Dear friends, let's make the most of it, brothers and sisters.

[48 : 02] This is not just useful, good theological knowledge for us. Because of the finished work of your saviour, you can with confidence draw near to him. That brings us to verse 15 where we see the awareness of our saviour.

Okay, so yes, it's good for us to be reminded that through this finished work we have access. It's good for us to be reminded that he now reigns and rules the right hand of the Father. We know that, we love that, we give him praise for that.

So what? So what? What does that do for us as Christians? What does that mean for us? How do we apply that in reality to our daily lives? We see that at the end of verse 14 the reminder of who Jesus is and the access he gives us, it gives us that strength to hold fast onto our confession as it were.

It gives us strength to hold onto all we know and love about him. We can sit here this evening and say and we can say of our hearts and we can confess of our hearts that yes, we believe and we know that the whole wrath of the Father was placed onto Jesus.

Its fullness was there, yes, we can say with our understanding that the high priest is the final sacrifice and the final high priest we can say that, we agree with that. We could stop there or we could go home just now and be satisfied perhaps with having been reminded that we have a high priest, we have a saviour who's done all that needs to be done for salvation.

[49 : 33] That's a good thing of course for us to be reminded of this evening but there's more going on in these verses. There's even more given to us in these few short verses. So through Fizz brothers and sisters we can affirm all these things.

We can affirm all we've just said in verse 14 but it's not too far to say or to guess is it to be honest if we're being very honest with ourselves and to be open if we're being very open with ourselves that all we've just said and all we've looked at at times feels so far away from us.

As we said this morning it's okay having the theology it's okay having the frameworks but at times life is difficult. At times life quite simply feels impossible but at times our journey is so hard and so easy for us perhaps especially if I'm being honest easily for us as the Lord's people to put a thin veneer of happiness over situations.

We look the part we sound the part we act the part but the truth of who Jesus is to us is at times so far away from us as we heard from his word this morning.

We find it hard don't we to be honest about our weakness to be honest about our frailty to be honest that there are times we feel so far away from him. We give praise to God as we see in verse 15 we give praise to God that where we are reluctant and find it difficult to be open and to be weak with each other as brothers and sisters our saviour was willing was willing to become weak for his people.

[51 : 20] The high priest as he's described in verse 14 exalted and glorious yes the high priest of verse 14 is reigning at the right hand of the father in all his power and all his glory but the high priest as we see him in verse 15 he's right back down beside us isn't he?

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.

See for all our bluff and all our bluster our saviour knew the people he was coming to save. He knew what it was like to be like us. He lived alongside his created creatures.

He saw the reality of what it is to live in this world this fallen world. And our saviour knew that to save us as our high priest he had to be like us in all ways to face all the weaknesses we face to face we see here all the temptations that we face.

Brothers and sisters your high priest knows what it is to live a life on earth to experience emotion to feel that pain to feel the hunger the worry and so on and so on.

[52 : 37] As we approach verse 15 we begin to see the wonderful assurance it gives us as we journey on that we have a saviour who is aware of his people who can come alongside us fully in all that we are in all our pain and our suffering who understands and sympathizes with us fully.

We can break down verse 15 quite literally to say we have a saviour who suffers along with us. suffers along with us.

He doesn't stand at a distance looking on with respect to shaking his head and saying what a shame these poor souls must go through a hard time in life. No your saviour and my saviour is there alongside you.

He's gone before you. Our eternal high priest knows exactly the suffering his beloved people go through because he's been there before us.

He's been there he's journeyed there before us. Our confidence to hold fast in our confession is not based on our ability to hold tightly.

[53 : 48] It's not based even on our situation we find ourselves in. It's based on the reality of verse 15 that we have a high priest who has come down who has lived a life alongside his people who is fully human fully God who knows your situation dear Christian like no one else can or ever will.

So in verse 15 we see of course hope for the suffering Christian we saw that this morning. There's even more in verse 15 isn't there? Yes Christ is alongside us in our weakness in our misery in our feebleness but also he's alongside us we see here in our temptations.

In every respect he's been tempted as we are yet without sin. Hope for the weak Christian yes but also hope for the tempted Christian. Of course we have to pause for a second and say that we're quite happy aren't we at times to confess and to lay hold on the full divinity of our saviour.

Yes he's fully God. We can see that we love that we hold on to that but then we are reminded are we not in verses like verse 15 that also he lived as fully man.

Our high priest he did not sin we know that we believe that he did not sin he was perfect he was the spotless lamb he was the only true undefiled sacrifice there ever was.

[55 : 23] We see here in verse 15 our great high priest he was tempted in every respect as we are. Every respect.

Our glorious high priest tempted in every respect and the word being used there that word every it's as broad if not broader in the Greek as it is we have here it's a broad term.

Every way you or I could be tempted our saviour faced that temptation his time on earth he was tempted in every respect. Dear Christian your saviour was willing he was willing to leave that place of eternal glory to step down as it were into creation to take on himself the full likeness of man to humble himself to appear as one of his own to become one of his own created creature to have as we heard in the confession that human body that real human body all his glory all the power all the glory and majesty he once saw around him he now was walking day by day on earth he stepped down in his creation to be tempted to sin the second person of the Trinity the great glorious saviour was tempted to sin he put himself in that position in that place tempted to commit acts against his own eternal glorious nature because of his love and care for his people we wonder does he really care for me does he really love me does he understand what I'm going through he does we sin and we find ourselves tempted to sin if we're honest because we put ourselves often in situations where we will sin our saviour stepped into his creation stepped into his own world allowed himself to be tempted such is the love of the high priest for his people and just as our saviour can come alongside the suffering and the weak

Christian he's also able to come alongside those of us and if we're honest it's all of us isn't it brothers and sisters all of us who are tempted Christians in our temptations toward sin we fight we rail against it at times we perhaps do quite well fighting our sins in our own minds but then and then again and then again we all fail don't we again and again we fail our saviour for his whole life on earth resisted all temptation to sin the writer Richard Lawrence he gives us an illustration here to bring to mind for us the full reality of what our saviour went through at least an attempt to give us that Richard Lawrence says who understands suffering better the person who when tortured gives in and tells his captors everything the person who resists despite the fact his torture continues we who give in to temptation so easily cannot even begin to guess how strong temptation can be

Jesus who never gave in he knows dear brothers and sisters in all our temptations and all our wanderings away in our temptations to sin against our glorious saviour in your continued fight against sin and dear friends in our shame and in our misery again and again for sinning you can take that to your saviour indeed we must and you must take that to your saviour because he alone knows what it is to be tempted but not to sin tempted in every way but didn't sin he alone knows your weakness he alone knows what it is to fight sin he alone through his completed work has shown you his precious precious beloved one he has shown you by coming to his own creation all we just said he has shown you his love and his care for you in Jesus alone we find a high priest who was tempted yet did not sin in him alone in him alone we find the forgiveness of our sins our sinless high priest who is the friend of sinners in him we have access in him we have one who is aware of his people and very briefly through him we have our approach verse 16 that's a glorious reminder for us let us then with confidence we're all near to the throne of grace we may receive mercy and thank grace to help in time of need let us then that start short phrase at the start that small phrase let us then because all we've just said in verse 14 and verse 15 because all that is true and still ringing in our ears because he reigns forever because he is the second person of trinity because he is highly exalted of the right hand of the god of all power and all glory because he cares enough for you dear christian to come down to live to suffer because all that is true what happens what does that give you what does that mean for you let us then because that's true let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace can approach the throne with confidence of course the image here of the throne of grace just that the image the wording used to tell of that place where

[61 : 31] God is to go near God's presence it's drawing back on the temple language of course writing here to Christians who are being tempted back to the old ways of worship being tempted back to the temple so the writer uses often in Hebrews the language of the temple he's here bringing to mind the mercy seat the place where God's presence was around in the temple where God's presence hovered as we were above in the holy of holies in the temple all this to say the command here is clear this verse is a command for us throw near with confidence if we do word for word it's with confidence draw near the confidence comes so early on in the sentence with confidence draw near to the throne of grace the question has to be asked Christian do you at this moment in time do you feel that confidence in yourself do you feel able just now say well yes

I can do this I feel able I feel ready I can approach God's presence of confidence just now you may well be saying well do you know what week I've had do you know the year I've had how much sin I've seen and all it's happened to me and how far I've wandered and how cold I feel and so on and so on and so on all that might be true but it doesn't change the truth of God's word in this verse brother and sister if you hold to Christ as being your high priest this evening if he is your final sacrifice in verse 16 comes in it tells us yet again we must we must draw near with confidence to the throne of grace it's that those times isn't it when you feel coldest you feel furthest away as we heard this morning those times of spiritual dryness and of spiritual pain and so on it's those times especially isn't it when it's the hardest thing in the world to pick up your bible and to read it it's the hardest thing in the world to send a single prayer out to the

Lord we know these times ourselves it's at those times especially we must as Christians throw near to the throne of grace what's the advice we give to Christians who are wondering what's the advice we give to Christians who are new what's the advice we give to Christians who are strong and who are old in their faith it's not the same advice come to Christ go to him go to the one who knows you who loves you who has saved you they're all near to the place where he is of course naturally we think don't we perhaps it's maybe even part of our culture if we analyse it and that's not our job this evening but naturally we find ourselves saying well I can't I've sinned I've sinned and I've had a long week and a bad week I've had a week where I've just sinned again and again and again and I've had a day where I've just been so far away from God I haven't prayed and so on and so on we think well once

I get myself better then then I'll come back to the throne of grace once I try to improve my prayer life first improve my reading more and feel closer to God then I'll come back then I'll follow the command of verse 16 why does verse 16 tell us to do it with confidence because the writer knows and our Lord working through the writer knows his people we lack confidence at times rightfully so perhaps humanly speaking but truth is where is our confidence based is it based on how well we're serving is it based on how close we feel and so on no of course it's not it's based on verses 14 and verse 15 it's based on who he is and what he has done to a Christian the reality is the opposite of what we just said it's those times when you feel as if you shouldn't go near him you must be there at the throne why because it's there we see it's there alone as we see from these verses that we receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need mercy and grace one of puritans and I can't remember which one just know the life of me one of the puritans often remind his readers when

God looks on his people he looks with a smile rather than a frown that sounds so simple doesn't it sounds so simple in that simple phrase is a reminder that in Jesus dear Christian you have been made new you have been made his he calls you his own cleansed perfected and because that is true because God now looks on his people in love because he looks on us of course through the work and through the person of his son because God now loves us as he loves his son and for studying that this evening perhaps we see John 17 you see the reality that Christ tells us that God loves his people as he loves his son because he loves us through the son you are loved dear Christian God looks on you not in wrath he looks on you in love because the high priest the high priest has done all the work for you so leave this place leave with a reminder of verse 16 for everyone here this evening the weak

[67 : 25] Christian the strong Christian the new Christian the old Christian every one of us somewhere in between these levels of how close we feel how far we feel let's find ourselves this evening just now in our minds even just now in verse 16 drawing with confidence to the throne of grace receive mercy and grace time of need to those here who as of yet don't know Jesus for yourself as of yet can't say that he is your high priest as of yet can't say that you know what it is to feel that closeness to him truth is dear friends God's wrath is still hanging over you when you come to God if you come to him without coming to Jesus if you come to God by anything else apart from through

Jesus what do you find what do you feel it's not mercy is it it's not grace is it no you feel that wrath hanging over you you feel that burden you feel that reality there is a God who made you and who knows you you find yourself in you back in verse 12 and verse 13 back in that reality that there is a God you know is seeing you and who knows all that you are the glorious reality is that verse 14 follows verse 13 if you come to Jesus call out to him that he would save you he'd forgive you and you have a sure sure hope in him you'll find one who will love you he'll call you his own one who allows you access to the father through his finished work and our prayer and our hope is that everyone this evening in this place and perhaps even those online that this evening we all know what it is to come near to the throne of grace to find there our hope to find there our love to find there that mercy and that grace at all times let's bow our heads now

Lord of prayer Lord God we ask you'd make your word stick in our minds help we heard this evening Lord to be real to us help us to apply it not just to our hearts but Lord to all we do day by day help us be real to us to be alive to us thank you Lord for the great privilege we have your word tells us your word tells us that you're the one who has done all this for us provided for us in Jesus that great high priest who's able fully able to forgive to cleanse to give new life to all who come to him Lord you forgive anything that was said today not in accordance to your word like if you praise Lord that the power is not in the one who stands here Lord the power is in you and in your living word that's what living word we speak to the hearts of people here this evening encourage us in that word again for any who as of yet don't know you use your word even this evening to speak to them perhaps even for the first time that you would come to see and come to understand you are

God that you reign they must one day answer to you that through the finished work of your saviour the one you have sent to save your people they have a saviour if only they would come and they would trust in him help us Lord we ask as we come to the conclusion of our worship together this day to go back to our homes spend the rest of this evening Lord in conversation and thinking about the wonder of who you are and the greatness of your love towards us as God we sing in and through and for Christ's name's Amen we can close by singing together a hymn from Ancient of Days and we can sing stand together through the nations rage kingdoms rise and fall but it is still one king reigning over all so I will not fear if it's true for me let's stand together and sing ■s■iele

Kingdom tries and falls, there is still one king reigning over all.

[72 : 17] So I will not fear, for his truth remains, that my God is the ancient of days.

None above him, none before him, all of time in his hands, for his glory shall remain and ever stand.

All the power, all the glory, I will trust in his name, for my God is the ancient of days.

Though the dread of night overwhelms my soul, he is here with me, I am not alone.

Oh, his love is sure, and he knows my name, for my God is the ancient of days.

[73 : 24] None above him, none before him, all of time in his hands, for his throne it shall remain and ever stand.

All the power, all the glory, I will trust in his name, for my God is the ancient of days.

Though I may not see what the future brings, I will watch and wait for the Saviour King.

Let my joy complete, standing face to face, in the presence of the ancient of days.

For my God is the ancient of days.

[74 : 48] Let's close in prayer. Lord, before us we ask the rest of this evening, all we heard and read and sung this day would be in our hearts.

That you would make your word alive to us at the start of this new week. Bless your people here, bless this congregation. Lord, we thank you for their kindness and thank you for the warmth of your people. Thank you for the unity that they have here, Lord.

Bless it and bless them this week. Help us and guide us. Keep us serving you in all ways, in all parts of our life. Help us at all times to remember we have this very moment and for all days a great high priest who reigns at your right hand.

Always intercessing for his people. One day would take us home to be with himself. Lord, help us to help us serve you well. Ask all these things in and through and for his precious name's sake.

Amen.