

## "SYMPATHETIC HELP"

**Hebrews 4:14,16** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession ... Let us then *with confidence* draw near to the throne ...

### WHAT WE MUST HOLD FAST

+ Imagine a person needing help: very specific help for a very big problem.

**What if that person hears of someone who is able to help?** *Able:* wise, rich, powerful.  
Get an appointment. Show up. Wait to be called ...  
And then, *risking everything*, walk through the door.

**What if that person knew only two things about that someone?** **"MERCIFUL" & "FAITHFUL"**  
**What does knowing those two things change?** An appointment. Show up. Wait to be called ...?

**What if while waiting, that person gets thinking ...** *Able.* But willing? **MERCIFUL? ... FAITHFUL ? ...**  
*Will he understand me?*  
*What I'm feeling? How hard this is for me?*

**Q: What other character trait would make us less nervous to walk through that door?**

**Hebrews 4:14,15** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses...**

**Q: What other character trait ?**

<b>sympathy</b> (Greek):	<b>sym</b>	"sybiotic"	+	<b>pathos</b> "pathetic" =	<b>to suffer with</b>
<b>compassion</b> (Latin):	<b>co(m)</b>	"communion", 'commiserate'	+	<b>passion</b> =	<b>to suffer with</b>

Along with the *mercy* of and the *faithfulness* of *Christ* is "*sympathy*".

### WHAT WE MUST HOLD FAST

1. We must believe that Jesus is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

**Hebrews 4:15** (Specifically our "weaknesses" related to our *relationship with God*)

**Now:** NOTICE SOMETHING about **this sympathy of Jesus**, the Son of God. **Notice a detail.** A "*small something*."

Q. "*Why trouble ourselves with details?*")

A. It is **ALWAYS WORTHWHILE** to trouble ourselves with **small Bible details**. [Psalm 12:6]

**"Small detail #116" →** This important additional character trait is mentioned as a double negative.

**Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses...

It is **TRUE**: a double negative = a positive. "*I can't do nothin' about it*" means we **CAN** do something!

Q. **But why is THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST stated as a double negative?**

WHY NOT: "We **HAVE** a high priest who **CAN** sympathize with our weaknesses"?

A. BECAUSE OF ANOTHER "SMALL DETAIL"

**Hebrews 4:15** 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...

???→ Jesus, the Son of God has been tempted "*in every respect*" --- "*as we are*" ????

**REALLY?** As someone who has plunged deep into pornography?  
As someone who has developed a severe drug addiction?  
As someone with a severe anger management issue?  
As someone with a severe inferiority complex?  
As someone damaged by a deep root of bitterness?

→ THAT would be **MORE** than we **MIGHT** hope for! THAT would "seem to" offer us more comfort than is available.

→ It is **MORE** than we **SHOULD** hope for.

**Why?** Because our problem is with God.

## WHAT WE MUST HOLD FAST

**2.** We must understand that Jesus is not completely like us in our weaknesses.

**Hebrews 4:15** TWO OTHER SMALL DETAILS 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.

- a) It doesn't say: *"without sinning."* It says: *"without sin"*  
[Both are true but the 2<sup>nd</sup> is what it says.]
- b) The Greek original doesn't say *"yet without sin"*. It says: *"apart from sin"*  
[Both are true but the 2<sup>nd</sup> is what it says.]

**John 14:30-31** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, [i.e. he was nothing in me] but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father...

→ **Because our problem is WITH GOD.** We need A MEDIATOR, but we also need A SACRIFICE.

→ If Christ's temptations, trials, testings **WERE** absolutely like ours, so that he was absolutely sympathetic, **he would NOT be an acceptable sacrifice for sin.**

Like every other high priest, **he** would NEED a perfect sacrifice for all of his own sins. (Compare **5:1,2**)

**WE NEED** a sympathetic mediator (high priest.) But do **WE WANT** sympathy more than help?  
Do we want sympathy **MORE** than a solution?  
(**DO WE LOVE OURSELVES MORE THAN WE LOVE GOD?**)

## WHAT WE MUST HOLD FAST

**3.** We must believe in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Hebrews 4:16** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Mercy** = undeserved kindness to help a person in need.

**Grace** = undeserved kindness to a person who deserves the opposite: punishment.

NO NEED TO WORRY! **The confidence** we gain from the sympathy of Christ is **enough confidence** to draw near to God. GOD is sitting on a throne of grace --- and Jesus, the Son of God, is seated AT HIS RIGHT HAND.

**2 Corinthians 8:9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Jesus, the Son of God, our great high priest, is **MERCIFUL AND SYMPATHETIC.**

→ He does **NOT KNOW** BY EXPERIENCE what it is like to deserve punishment for our weaknesses.

→ But he **DOES KNOW** what the punishment feels like.

+ SO WHAT ABOUT THOSE WEAKNESSES OF OURS WE NEED HELP WITH?

WHAT IF OUR WEAKNESSES INCLUDE	~ a pornography habit?	~ a drug dependency?
	~ a violent temper?	~ years of bitterness?
	~ moral weaknesses?	~ many failures?

**We are the people needing help? We know of someone with the help we need?**

**What if we know a few things about him?** ~ **MERCIFUL. FAITHFUL. "NOT UNABLE" TO SYMPATHIZE.**

**Hebrews 4:16** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**And how much more:** if the help we need is not a result of our careless living, or our deliberate wrong-doing, but rather a result of our careful living, and our intentional right-doing? → **VIDEO TESTIMONY**

NEXT SUNDAY: **"Perfect Help"** **Hebrews 5:5-10** (Jude St.John)

West London Alliance Church, [www.wlchurch.org](http://www.wlchurch.org)

Scripture references: HOLY BIBLE, **English Standard Version**, © 2001, CROSSWAY PUBLICATIONS

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

### **THE SYMPATHY (or COMPASSION) of the Lord**

Take some time to consider (and to make notes about) the history of the Lord's sympathy towards his people:

**Deuteronomy 1:29-33**

**Psalms 103:8-14**

**Matthew 11:25-30**