

Bible e-Study on the book of Hebrews (4)

Rest

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:16

NUGGET – In reading through this 4th chapter of Hebrews, it seems to start in one place and end up somewhere totally different – almost unrelated. It starts by continuing to talk from chapter three, of the rest that God promised the Israelites, which they choose to not enter into due to lack of faith in God's promises. Though that promised rest was theirs, they turned away from it. And we're told in this chapter that that promise continues, *8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.*

And then, the end of today's chapter seems to be a return to talking of Jesus as our great high priest that was spoken of also in chapter three. In going over and over this chapter, trying to reconcile these 'bookends', does it not seem that the writer is making the point that Jesus, our high priest, is *also* the rest that is promised to all who will confess Jesus as that priest?

The last verse of this chapter, our nugget verse, leads us to understand this when it says, *16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Jesus is who is on the throne of grace and He is the living Word. Jesus Christ, is the one who is active and He knows the thoughts and hearts of all people. He is the word of God that is the sword. He is that Word that divides, or cleaves down to the division of joint and marrow, as a sword does, taking life away. But now the sword of the Lord is what grants life, not taking it. That's because, only the word of God, the living word, Jesus Christ, sees the hearts of all people. Nothing is hidden from Him.

Knowing that, we can go to Him in our time of need, from our nugget verse, because He understands our needs. He meets our needs. He supplies all we need to enter into His rest, which comes to us only by His promise.

As we said last week, *“Jesus as our high priest has offered the correct and proper sacrifice needed to win for us the ‘heavenly calling’ that we are given to share in. That sacrifice, of course, is His own body and blood, sacrificed on the tree of the cross. Jesus is the priest and the sacrifice.”*

He is our high priest who has sacrificed and become the sacrifice that allows us to enter into His rest. That is because He has faced all the temptations we have and successfully overcome them. Therefore He has sympathy with our weaknesses. Of His mercy He grants us the help we need, the faith we need, the grace we need in every time of need. Our time of need is now, or *today* as the writer says back in vs 7.

We can be confident of the rest that is ours, *by* His grace. We know nothing in us is hidden from Him, so we have no illusions that we earn our rest. Rather, by the sacrifice of our great High Priest Jesus, we are given that rest and mercy at His throne of grace.

APPLICATION -

1. We don't have royalty in our country so for us, a king's throne is seen as something foreign. Perhaps a fair comparison for us is the judge in courtroom. The judge decides your guilt or innocence, your punishment or clemency. So also did kings when they sat on their thrones. That throne is literally, for those standing (or more likely kneeling) before the king, that throne is the seat of all power over life and death. When the writer of Hebrews urges us to boldly go before the throne of mercy, that is almost an oxymoron. No one in their right mind would *boldly* go to a king's throne. But that is the point; we have a king who is merciful because He knows our weaknesses. Perhaps one time in the next few days, when you say your prayers, get down on your knees and picture yourself before a throne and allow yourself a moment to ponder that Jesus holds your fate in His hands (which in fact He does!) and then remember these words from Hebrews *come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*

PRAY – Dear Jesus, our great High Priest and King, You have decreed that we should receive mercy and paid for that mercy with Your sacrifice on the cross. Grant to us also the hands and hearts willing to serve You through acts of kindness and mercy to those around us in need, that they too may know that Your mercy is for them. In Your name, amen.