

Jesus, our Sympathetic High Priest

Colossians 2:11-15 NLT

When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

All-In: Jesus, our Sympathetic High Priest

Hebrews 2:10 NLT

God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.

Hebrews 2:11-12 NLT

So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters. For he said to God, “I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among your assembled people.”

Psalms 22:1,6-8,16-22 NLT

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help? [...] But I am a worm and not a man. I am scorned and despised by all! Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, “Is this the one who relies on the Lord? Then let the Lord save him!” [...] My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones. My enemies stare at me and gloat. They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing. O Lord, do not stay far away! You are my strength; come quickly to my aid! Save me from the sword; spare my precious life from these dogs. Snatch me from the lion’s jaws and from the horns of these wild oxen. I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among your assembled people.

Hebrews 2:13-15 NLT

[Jesus] also said, “I will put my trust in him,” that is, “I and the children God has given me.” Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

- The Son became flesh and blood because we are flesh and blood.

- The Son came to earth to be made like us. Why? So he could die!
- He had to die so he could come back to life, breaking the power of the devil!
- Setting free all who lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying!

Hebrews 2:16-18 NLT

We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came to help the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

Jesus is our Sympathetic High Priest. He comes not as a judgmental God but as a merciful brother who knows what it's like to be tempted.

Hebrews 4:14-16 NLT

So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Because Jesus understands our weaknesses, we can come boldly to the throne of our gracious God.

Five Keys to Embracing the Grace of God:

1) Boldly run to the Throne of Grace.

John 3:16-17 NLT

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

2) Don't play with temptation.

The Six Stages of Temptation

- Step 1: Suggestion
- Step 2: Desire (James 1:14-15 NLT)
- Step 3: Deception
- Step 4: Decision
- Step 5: Sin
- Step 6: Consequence

At every step we are invited to run to the Throne of Grace!

3) Confess our sin to God and, where appropriate, to one another.

James 5:16 NLT

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

4) Get a plan of action.

True repentance involves a change of direction. It is a turning away from sin and a turning towards God.

5) Remember, you're not called to do this alone.

Small Group Guide: Jesus Our Sympathetic High Priest

Opening Question

Who is someone you've been able to be completely honest with—even about your failures or weaknesses? What made them feel safe to talk to?

Jesus Knows What It Is Like

Hebrews introduces Jesus with a title that would have carried enormous significance for its first audience: **High Priest**. Under the old covenant, the High Priest stood between God and humanity. Once each year, on the Day of Atonement, he entered God's presence to offer sacrifices for sin—first for himself, then for the people. He represented the people before God and God before the people. It was a gracious system, but it also revealed the reality that sin created distance between humanity and a holy God.

When Jesus comes, everything changes. Hebrews tells us He became fully human—not merely appearing like us, but sharing our flesh and blood. He willingly entered our world so He could suffer, die, defeat death, and break the power of the devil. In doing so, He accomplished what no earthly high priest ever could: He Himself became the once-for-all sacrifice for sin and the perfect mediator between God and humanity. Through Him, we now share the same Father.

But the story doesn't end there. One of Hebrew's most encouraging truths is that Jesus is an *empathetic* High Priest. He endured suffering, testing, and every form of temptation common to humanity, yet without sin. Jesus doesn't meet us in our temptation with condemnation but with mercy, understanding, and grace.

That is why Hebrews gives such a surprising invitation: **come boldly** to the throne of grace. Not after you've cleaned yourself up. Not once you've earned your way back. Not when you've had a "good week." The very moment we most need mercy is the moment we're invited to run toward God instead of away from Him. Shame tells us to hide, but grace calls us to draw near. The same grace that forgives us is also the grace that empowers us to overcome sin's power in our lives.

The sermon concluded with five practical responses to God's grace: run boldly to Jesus instead of hiding, refuse to entertain temptation, confess sin and struggles to God and trusted believers (when appropriate), make intentional plans that support repentance, and remember that following Jesus was never meant to be a solitary pursuit. Grace is not passive permission to stay the same; it is God's active power to transform us into people who increasingly reflect Christ.

For Discussion

1. The sermon describes Jesus as both our Great High Priest and our "big brother." Which of those pictures is more meaningful to you right now?
 2. The message emphasized that a key facet of repentance is having a tangible plan of action, not just good intentions. What practical boundaries or habits have helped you grow spiritually?
 3. The message distinguished between hiding in shame and running toward God's grace. Have you ever experienced the difference? What helped you move from one to the other?
 4. One of the sermon's key points was that confession is not about *earning* forgiveness but about finding healing, freedom, and accountability to changing a habit pattern. How has a commitment to honesty and accountability – or how could it help – you grow in your walk with Christ?
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Prayer

Father, thank You that You did not leave us to bridge the gap between ourselves and You. Thank You for sending Jesus to become our perfect High Priest, our Savior, and our brother. Thank You that He understands our weaknesses, our struggles, and our temptations, yet never turns us away. Teach us to run boldly to Your throne instead of hiding in shame. Fill us with Your grace—not only to forgive our sins but to transform our hearts. Give us the humility to confess our struggles, the wisdom to make wise choices, and the courage to walk alongside one another in honesty and love. May we remember this week that we never face temptation or suffering alone because Jesus is with us and intercedes for us. In His name we pray, Amen.