

Sufficient for Our Confidence

In this series of articles on Hebrews 4:14-16 we've seen that Jesus is the Source of Our Confession. Jesus also has Sympathy for Our Condition. Today we conclude this series by acknowledging that Jesus is:

—Sufficient for Our Confidence

Because Jesus is all sufficient we can confidently take our prayers and concerns to God. "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace..." (4:16). Christians are encouraged to, all our lives, bring our prayers to God. We need to acknowledge that we're totally dependent on God for everything! The word translated "confidence" informs us that we don't have to fear—not because we are worthy for God to answer our prayers—but because of the perfection of Jesus Christ. Our "confidence" is in Jesus—his perfect life and sacrificial atoning death. It's always because of *Jesus!* And because it's always Jesus, we can have genuine confidence and never fear!

We must never imagine that we can go before God in prayer because of our own righteousness or our own merits. They fall completely short of the perfection that God requires (Matt. 5:48). We may go to God, *only* because of the righteousness and the merits of Jesus Christ. *Jesus* is our confidence. That's why it's wrong-headed to think that, because we've obeyed in some way—we've had our devotional time, we've been honest in our dealings with others, we've been faithful in our giving or our serving—that God is bound to hear and answer our prayers. Those things are all good and right, but those things, in and of themselves, are never the reason that God is willing to hear and answer our prayers. It's always because of *Jesus!*

Notice that the text says that we approach the 'throne of grace' i.e., God's place of rule on his throne is characterized by grace. We approach the "throne of grace" in order that we may "receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." The words mercy and grace are frequently used but what do they really mean? It's been said that *mercy* is when "God does NOT give us what we deserve" and *grace* is when "God gives us what we DO NOT deserve." Christians receive God's *mercy* (compassion or pity) and God's *grace* (undeserved favor) in abundance—not because of anything that we have to offer God—but rather, it's because we're "in Christ." We receive God's mercy and grace "In time of need" which is to say, the help comes to us at just the *right time* that it's needed according to God's perfect plan for the lives of his children.

As we conclude this series I want to note how these verses address the three elements that are needed in order that we can know for sure that we have a saving faith. Because, *if* we know that our faith is genuine, *then* we can have the confidence to go to the throne of grace for our needs.

—**Knowledge:** In verse 14 the 'confession' that we're to 'hold fast' to is our confession of faith. That is to say that we have knowledge of what the scriptures teach about Christ. He is the Son

of God; he came from heaven to earth, took on human flesh, lived a perfect life and sacrificially atoned for the sins of his people (Matt. 1:21; Ephesians 1:4).

—**Assent:** Not only do we have knowledge of what the Bible teaches about Jesus, we *assent* to that knowledge, i.e., *we believe it*. We're seeking to 'hold fast' to what we believe. These are no longer just facts about someone named Jesus. We believe that this is true.

—**Trust:** Jesus Christ has changed our lives. Implied in verse 15 is that the weaknesses and temptations being spoken of here are the difficulties and trials that we encounter as we're seeking to live out our Christian faith in a broken and sinful world. We know this because the comparison is to Jesus who was tempted as we are "yet without sin." The temptations that we face are the *temptations to sin*; the temptation not to *trust* God for our needs, whether physical needs, job pressures, finances, family troubles and many other things that arise in our lives. When we're tempted we want to respond by seeking to trust him in all things. As God's children in Christ, we know that when we go before the throne of grace, he hears and answers our prayers (vs. 16).

I pray that this series has been a great encouragement to you. Because of Jesus, God delights to hear and answer the prayers of his people. We can go to him with great confidence, not because we deserve his mercy and grace, but because of Jesus.

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