

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

PART I

STUDY NUMBER SEVEN - Hebrews 4:11-16

There are 3 THINGS that we need to know about the book of Hebrews before we can jump into chapter 4:

1. The folks who are receiving this letter are of Jewish nationality. That means that when you see the priesthood, when you see the sacrifice, when you see the lambs, when you see the angels, when you see the law, when you see Aaron, you think from a Jewish perspective because this people are people who have literally come out of Judaism and they have accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah and so they are believers.
2. They are really believers. These people are genuine Christians and the fact that they are creates some of the problems that are in the text.
3. These people can't stand the heat, so they want to get out of the kitchen. Because they have become Christians, their Jewish families have all rejected them and they are not willing to accept them. They are persecuting them, they have lost their jobs; they have been disowned.

It has been a very serious time and so these Christians are standing right on the verge of saying, hey I'm throwing it in. I'm going to go back to this more comfortable position where I don't have to accept all this persecution and all this difficulty and that is tough and the writer is coming along and he says, listen, if you give up on the person of Jesus Christ, you missed the greatest thing in the whole world and he wants you to have a good relationship with Christ just like these people.

Now what is his argument?

Well, his argument is Jesus Christ is God's last word to man. His argument is Jesus Christ is better than angels. His argument is Jesus Christ is superior to Moses and the law and you are going to learn in this particular study Jesus Christ is superior to Aaron and the Aaronic Priesthood and so a lot of those things are going to come out in the text but the verses are so special.

Now every once and a while the writer loves the people so much that he gives them a warning. You know that when you love somebody so much you tell them, you talk to your kids, you talk to your grandkids and you say, "don't go out in the streets." You love them, you restrain them and this writer just so many times, he'll just come out with a warning. He will say, "look quit drifting, you are like a rudderless ship going with the tide, do you realize that you will never escape

neglecting so great salvation which is yours” and these people are drifting away and then he will say, “take heed lest there be in you an evil heart of unbelief and the parting from the living God.” And then he will say, “man, today if you hear his voice don’t go on hardening your hearts, respond to what He has to say.”

Do you remember back when you were taking Sunday School and they told you the story about the children of Israel and they were in bondage in Egypt and then Moses came to take them out of Egypt. Remember that? Then they went through the Red Sea and they came up to Mount Sinai. When they got to Mount Sinai, Moses went up the mountain, got the Law, got the architectural plans for the Tabernacle; came down and built the Tabernacle and then what did Moses say? God says that we are to go from point A to point B; what’s point B? Point B is the land of Canaan, the promise land that God had promised in the Abraham Covenant, so that is any easy trip isn’t it? God just says, “well you follow the cloud by day and if it is night we are traveling, you follow the fire. All you do is follow the cloud and follow the fire and I’m going to give you manna from heaven to feed you and we are going to go to the land. Ok, what happens when they get to Kadesh-Barnea? Instead of going on in and believing in God they formed a committee. Get twelve guys go and look at the land, the twelve guys came back and said, “hey the land is great, there is everything you would ever want in the land, it’s fabulous.”

But then they started the whine of the loser, they said, “but there are giants in the land, we should have died in Egypt, let’s organize a committee and go back to Egypt.” In other words lets go back to slavery, we don’t want to go in. Only 2 guys said let’s go in. Joshua and Caleb. Now what did God Say? God said, “Let’s just stay here Kadesh-Barnea for a little longer while you change your mind and then finally when you get warmed up and you change your mind then we will all go in together,” is that what God said?

Now listen this is serious business. God said, that’s it, you aren’t going in and I’ll tell you something else, you are never going in.

Only Joshua and Caleb, 40 years later, were the only two, that actually got to experience what was there.

The writer calls going into the land, ENTERING IN TO HIS REST. In other words experiencing the REST of what ever happens in your life, you can trust the sovereign God to be adequate to handle those circumstances so you are like a river of peace today. I want to look at REST just briefly in 3 tenses:

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE tense. This is the biblical definition of REST and let me just use 2 verses that Jesus spoke.

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

- 1. When I use the term REST in the PAST TENSE, that is the experience that you and I had the moment you came to know Christ the Savior. Maybe it was a Billy Graham Crusade, maybe it was a bible class like this, maybe it was a church service, maybe it was out by the lake, maybe it was in camp, I don't know but you know as you think back and you took the DVD in reverse, you can go back to a time in your life when you invited Christ into your life and what happened to you when you did that? You had peace for the first time why? Because you had been reconciled to a Holy God and having made peace through the blood of His cross. Therefore being made right with God Romans 5:1 says, "We have peace with Him." You were at REST weren't you? And it just felt so wonderful to have that peace and contentment that came from knowing Him, that's PAST TENSE.**
- 2. Now there is a PRESENT experience of REST and that's the experience that you have today if you are trusting in the total adequacy of Jesus Christ to handle your life and His has got plenty of grace and**

plenty of mercy to cover all the bases. He is totally available, He is all and in all and He will meet your every need and that is the REST that we are talking about in the study. We are focusing on the PRESENT.

3. There is a FUTURE REST, what's that? The bible says when you cease from your labors, you go and enter in to your ETERNAL REST. You go home to be with your heavenly Father, that's the FUTURE REST.

So you have a PAST, PRESENT, and you have a FUTURE.

Now having said all that; I'm ready to get into the text. I hope you are!

This is going to be good.

v.11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall in the same example of disobedience.

We have a command and then a warning. The command is: "Let us therefore be diligent."

To be "diligent", you have to do something don't you?

You can't just, sit around and listen to the bible to be taught.

You can't just, play at this thing and
go to church and take up space.

To be diligent involves an effort on your part.
Some people never understand that.
Peter believed that, listen to this.

2 Peter 1:10

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent
to make certain about His calling and choosing you;
for as long as you practice these things,
you will never stumble;

What does "diligent" say to you?
Diligent says, that you did something today,
you did something yesterday and
you are going to do something tomorrow
because you have a goal and objective.

The goal and objective is to be
available for God, to use you.

As you enter into the REST and you let God
begin to take over, you get so excited
about what HE is doing, you can't stand it.

Sure you may get physically tired but you have a
REST and you know it is all ok.
God is proving Himself faithful in your behalf.

"LET US THEREFORE BE DILIGENT."

"TO ENTER INTO THAT REST", you have to do something about it, in order to be there.

Here is the command:

"LET US THEREFORE BE DILIGENT TO ENTER INTO THAT REST."

What's the warning?

"LEST ANYONE FALL IN THE SAME EXAMPLE OF DISOBEDIENCE."

Are you resting in His adequacy today?

Did you come here all stressed out?

Can I ask you a question, about the level of your stress?

How important is what you're stressed out about today, going to be next year at this time?

How significant is that which is eating your lunch today, going to be, when you face Him in eternity?

How important, is what you brought

into this room, that is just tearing you up inside?

Because you don't have enough time,
and the hurrier you go, the behinder
you get.

You are just running from place to place and
you don't have any REST.

What difference is that going to make,
next year?

What difference is that going to make,
in view of eternity?

Now do you remember what happened
to the children of Israel?

As soon as they refused to go in,
what did God say?

He said, "You aren't going in
and you never will."

Listen to Jeremiah 6:16

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

v.12 For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Tony Evans in his book Our God Is Awesome quotes Charles Spurgeon:

Charles Spurgeon said it best.

"Bibles that are falling apart usually belong to people who aren't." If you want a life that's held together, you need to wear your Bible out.

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5 THINGS ARE SAID ABOUT THE BIBLE here in this 12th verse.

- 1. "LIVING"**
- 2. "EFFECTIVE"**
- 3. "SHARPER"**
- 4. "PIERCING"**
- 5. "ABLE TO JUDGE"**

God uses those 5 things to prune our lives.

Let's look at them again.
"For (Reason) the word of God is LIVING".

John 6:63

"It is the Spirit who gives life;
the flesh profits nothing;
the words that I have spoken to you
are spirit and are life.

Second, it's "EFFECTIVE," it will do
what it says it will.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

And for this reason we also constantly thank God
that when you received from us the word of God's
message, you accepted it not as the word of men,
but for what it really is, the word of God, which
also performs its work in you who believe.

It's working in your life right now,
if you are receiving it.

Third, it's "SHARPER" "than any double-edged sword."

God has a great big bag of tools and
He does surgery regularly.

He uses the word of God as His

number one scalpel.

Ron Mehl in his book God Works the Night Shift says:

The Lord's medical bag is full of options, and one of those options is surgery. He knows when to use a scalpel. He knows when surgery is the only method that will bring healing. He knows when simple day surgery will do the job, and He knows when He must cut deeply.

The word of God is what?

1. "LIVING"
2. "EFFECTIVE"
3. "SHARPER THAN ANY DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD"

And "PIERCING as far as the division of soul and spirit"

What does that mean?

It gets clear down to where we live.
It gets down inside the heart and it exposes us.

1. "LIVING"
2. "EFFECTIVE"
3. "SHARPER THAN ANY DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD"

4. "PIERCING AS FAR AS THE DIVISION OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, OF BOTH JOINTS AND MARROW"

Look at number 5,
 it's "ABLE TO JUDGE the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Notice the word "JUDGE"?

That's the word for winnowing;
 it's the word for sifting the flour, so it is pure.

It's taking out the foreign elements.
 It's like throwing the grain up so the grain
 will fall down, and the chaff will blow away.

It's taking the stuff that is not necessary
 out of your lives.

v.13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight,
 but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of
 Him with whom we have to give account.

Romans 14:12

**So then each one of us will give account,
of himself to God.**

**If you're a Christian, from the day
you became a Christian until the day you die,
you're going to get a computer printout
at the judgment seat of Christ.**

**That's going to be the basis for your
examination at the judgment seat of Christ.
That's the Bottom line!**

**His surveillance system doesn't miss a thing.
We're on His radar screen.**

**Trying to hide something from God,
is like trying to hide morning from the rooster.
He knows it's here, and he is going to
announce it, and God does the same.**

**"AND THERE IS NO CREATURE HIDDEN FROM
HIS SIGHT"**

It is TOTAL EXPOSURE.

Tony Evans in his book Awesome God says:

**Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit"
(1 Corinthians 6:19).**

Wherever you go, God goes; whatever you do, God does; you can go no place where He is not. That's why He can provide a way of escape. He knows what door you need to run through. He's with you when you are being tempted.

But this is also a call to holiness because it means that God stays with you when you fail, when you sin. In the context of the verse I just quoted, Paul is talking about the sin of sexual immorality. He says that when you engage in a sexual relationship outside of marriage, you have engaged God in the affair. It's not a private matter done in a secret room, in other words. Why? Because "you are not your own" (v. 19).

Now you haven't contaminated God, anymore than the sun can be contaminated by shining on cow dung. But His presence is associated with us when we sin. We've got to understand that when we sin, it's as if we were doing it in God's throne room. He watches us do what we're doing, think what we're thinking, say what we're saying, act like we're acting. He asks us, "How could you do that with me standing here?"

He says further:

It's obvious to anyone who goes outside that God's presence is everywhere. Just as light and air fill a room, God fills the universe and more. He is omnipresent. We can trick ourselves into thinking otherwise by becoming spiritual ostriches. Ostriches are said to put their heads in the ground when danger approaches, and they actually think that because they

can't see you, you can't see them. That's the way a lot of people live. They put their heads in the spiritual sand and say, "We can't see God, so God can't see us."

Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Back to verse 13.

“AND THERE IS NO CREATURE HIDDEN FROM HIS SIGHT, " BUT [by contrast] ALL THINGS ARE”:

1. "OPEN"

"OPEN" is the first word;
It means BUCK NAKED.
Striped down, skin, that's all that's showing.

There is nothing to be hidden;
it's all NAKED before Him.

Now notice the next word.
This is a different word, and this is hard.

2. "LAID BARE TO THE EYES OF HIM WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO GIVE ACCOUNT"

That word only occurs in a criminal context.
Let me put it this way.

When a guy is guilty of a crime, this word
was used to describe what happens
to the criminal, when he goes before the judge
and what happens as he goes to execution.

You have watched on TV when some guy
is guilty, and he has been arrested.
What does he do?

He avoids the camera doesn't he?
He always has his head down and he will not
look into the face of anybody, he doesn't
want to look, why? Because he's guilty!

Let me tell you how they solved that?
They took a dagger and stuck it
right at the throat.

His throat was "LAID BARE"
to look into the eyes and he had
as he received his sentence. of the judge,

He had no choice as he walked, down the street,
to the execution.

And he looked into the eyes, of all the people
he had offended, he had no choice.

**This is a very sobering word but there is
a day coming when we are going to
have to look into the eyes of Jesus Christ,
and face him and be accountable for the way
we lived our lives and our unwillingness
to trust His adequacy and enter
into His rest.**

**“ALL THINGS ARE NAKED AND LAID BARE TO
THE EYES OF HIM WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO
GIVE ACCOUNT”**

Now these last three verses go together.

**v.14 Since then we are having a great high priest who
has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of
God, let us be holding fast our confession.**

**The writer is saying, “Look everything has been
provided for, don’t run away.”**

**Don’t leave your confession and go back
under Judaism, come rather to
“the high priest”, the GREAT ONE.**

**Job said, “If I just had an advocate that would help me
get right with God and explain what’s going on
in my life.”**

**That’s human nature; you have to have somebody
represent you in court.**

Psalm 34:22

“The Lord redeems His servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in Him.

Christ is a PROPHET, a HIGH PRIEST and a KING all wrapped up in one!

He has, “Passed through the Heavens,” he has already accomplished all that is necessary, for us to be made right with God.

We have had two PRESENT TENSE IMPERATIVES.

COMMAND #1 back in verse 11:

"LET US THEREFORE BE DILIGENT"

COMMAND #2 now here in verse 14 is:

"LET US KEEP ON HOLDING FAST OUR CONFESSION"

v.15 For we are not having a high priest who (negative) is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but (in contrast positive) one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

We have a positive and a negative.

Wilbur M. Smith in his book Have You Considered Him? points out:

“Fifteen million minutes of life on this earth in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation, every thought, every deed, every purpose, every word, privately and publicly, from the time he opened his baby eyes until he expired on the cross were all approved of God.”

C.S. Lewis said:

A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means—the only complete realist.

COMMAND #3, the final one is here in verse 16.

v.16 Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Look at this THREE POINT PROGRAM for every day.

1. Command #1 is back in verse 11:

"Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest"

2. Command #2 is in verse 14:

"Let us be holding fast our confession"

3. Command #3 is here in verse 16:

"LET US THEREFORE BE DRAWING NEAR WITH CONFIDENCE TO THE THRONE OF GRACE"

It is not a throne of judgment right now; it's "GRACE."

That's all you need there, to get you through this mess.

Why are you going to come to the

"THRONE OF GRACE," 2 reasons:

"IN ORDER THAT WE MAY":

1. "RECEIVE MERCY"

2. "FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED"

For our sin, we are going to need "MERCY".

**Listen to Psalm 20:6 from Eugene Peterson's
The Message:**

**That clinches it--help's coming,
an answer's on the way,
everything's going to work out.**

**That's right and that is what the writer is saying.
That clinches it, Christ is going to solve
the problem; help is on the way!
Everything is going to work out.**

John MacArthur gives us an interesting illustration:

Booth Tucker was conducting evangelistic meetings in the great Salvation Army Citadel in Chicago. One night, after he had preached on the sympathy of Jesus, a man came forward and asked Mr. Tucker how he could talk about a loving, understanding, sympathetic God. "If your wife had just died, like mine has," the man said, "and your babies were crying for their mother who would never come back, you wouldn't be saying what you're saying."

A few days later Mr. Tucker's wife was killed in a train wreck. Her body was brought to Chicago and carried to the Citadel for the funeral. After the service the bereaved preacher looked down into the silent face of his wife and then turned to those who were attending. "The other day when I was here," he said, "a man told me that, if my wife had just died and my children were crying for their mother, I would not be able to say that Christ was understanding and sympathetic, or that He was sufficient for every need. If that man is here, I want to tell him that Christ is sufficient. My heart is broken, it is crushed, but it has a song, and Christ put it here. I want to tell that man that Jesus Christ speaks comfort to me today." The man was there, and he came and knelt beside the casket while Booth Tucker introduced him to Jesus Christ.

(The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein)

Once there was a tree . . .
and she loved a little boy.
And every day the boy would come
and he would gather her leaves
and make them into crowns and play king of the forest.
He would climb up her trunk
and swing from her branches
and eat apples.
And they would play hide-and-go-seek.

And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade.
And the boy loved the tree . . .
very much.

And the tree was happy.

But time went by.
And the boy grew older.
And the tree was often alone.

Then one day the boy came to the tree
and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and climb
up my trunk and swing from my branches
and eat apples and play in my shade
and be happy."

"I am too big to climb and play," said the boy.

"I want to buy things and have fun.

I want some money.

Can you give me some money?"

"I'm sorry," said the tree, "But I have no money.

I have only leaves and apples.

Take my apples, Boy, and sell them
in the city. Then you will have money
and you will be happy."

And so the boy climbed up the
tree and gathered
her apples
and carried them away.
And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away
for a long time . . .

and the tree was sad.
And then one day
the boy came back
and the tree shook with joy
and she said, "Come, Boy,
climb up my trunk
and swing from my branches
and be happy."

"I am too busy to climb trees,"
said the boy.

"I want a house to keep me warm,"
he said.

"I want a wife and I want children,
and so I need a house.

Can you give me a house?"

"I have no house," said the tree.

"The forest is my house,
but you may cut off my branches
and build a house.

Then you will be happy."

And so the boy cut off
her branches
and carried them away
to build his house.
And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away
for a long time.
And when he came back,

the tree was so happy
she could hardly speak.

"Come, Boy," she whispered,
"come and play."

"I am too old and sad to play,"
said the boy.

"I want a boat that will
take me far away
from here.

Can you give me a boat?"

"Cut down my trunk
and make a boat," said the tree.

"then you can sail away . . .
and be happy."

And so the boy cut down her trunk
and made a boat and sailed away.

And the tree was happy . . .
but not really.

And after a long time
the boy came back again.

"I am sorry, Boy,"
said the tree, "but I have nothing
left to give you--

My apples are gone,"

"My teeth are too weak
for apples," said the boy.

"My branches are gone,"
said the tree. "You
cannot swing on them--"

"I am too old to swing

on branches," said the boy.
"My trunk is gone," said the tree.
"You cannot climb--"
"I am too tired to climb," said the boy.
"I am sorry," sighed the tree.
"I wish that I could
give you something . . .
but I have nothing left. I am just
an old stump. I am sorry. . . ."
"I don't need very much now,"
said the boy,
"just a quiet place to sit and rest.
I am very tired."
"Well," said the tree,
straightening herself up
as much as she could,
"well, an old stump is good
for sitting and resting.
Come, Boy, sit down.
Sit down and rest."
And the boy did.
And the tree was happy.

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

PART I

STUDY NUMBER SEVEN - Hebrews 4:11-16

v.11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall in the same example of disobedience.

v.12 For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

v.13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to give account.

v.14 Since then we are having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us be holding fast our confession.

v.15 For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

v.16 Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: There are three exhortations we must respond to:

- 1. "Let us therefore be diligent"**
- 2. "Let us be holding fast"**
- 3. "Let us therefore be drawing near"**

LESSON #2: Are you presently experiencing the rest that is yours in the adequacy of Christ?

LESSON #3: It is possible to miss the rest that is available to us in our relationship with Christ.

LESSON #4: The Word of God is described in 5 ways:

- 1."living"**
- 2."effective"**
- 3."sharper than any double-edged sword"**
- 4."piercing"**
- 5."able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart"**

LESSON #5: Because God is omnipresent He sees and knows all that goes on in our lives.

LESSON #6: The Lord is right there with us when we sin, compromise, fall and fail.

LESSON #7: We are going to be held accountable for our lives as believers at the judgment seat of Christ.

LESSON #8: We have a high priest in Jesus Christ who can sympathize with our weaknesses.

LESSON #9: The Lord's throne is the throne of grace where we may find grace to help in any time of need.

LESSON #10: We can also receive mercy when we come and face the situation that is before us.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Hebrews 4:11-16 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.
2. What are we commanded to do in verse 11?
3. How is the Word of God characterized in verse 12?
4. What is the Word of God able to do, according to verse 12?
5. How much does God know about each of us, according to verse 13?
6. What are we commanded to do, according to verse 14?
7. How is Jesus Christ, our high priest, characterized in verse 15?
8. Why should we "be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace," according to verse 16?
9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?
10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: There are three exhortations we must respond to: 1) "Let us therefore be diligent"; 2) "Let us be holding fast"; and 3) "Let us therefore be drawing near"

LESSON #2: Are you presently experiencing the rest that is yours in the adequacy of Christ?

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