

The Way into Worship

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- [0 : 0 0] If you've got a Bible, you can go to the New Testament, to the book of Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 4. Did anybody feel guilty into bringing a hard copy Bible to church this Sunday after my comments last week?
- ! Or do my threats have no power at all? Hebrews chapter 4. We're going to read from verse 14 through to chapter 5, verse 10.
- Listen to these words. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence.
- Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
- Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.
- [1 : 3 5] He's able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people.
- And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest.
- But God said to him, This is the word of the Lord.
- Let's pray. Let's ask for God's help as we study. Gracious God, won't you open our hearts and open our minds to receive your word this morning?
- Won't we receive it as that very thing, the word of the creator God? This incredible privilege that we have to have access to the scriptures.
- [3 : 0 7] And so we want to understand them. We want to, as Paul says, rightly divide the word of truth. Because it is here that we find the transformative power that comes from the gospel.
- So won't you meet with us by your spirit, we pray and we ask this for Christ's sake. Amen. So we continue in our series on worship, made for worship, talking specifically about what we do when we gather on Sundays for worship.
- Trying to help you figure that out. What is it that we do when we get together on Sundays? Why do we do the things that we do? Why do we not do other things? And so far we've tried to define worship. We've seen the necessity of gathering for worship, not just kind of worshipping God in all of your life.
- We've seen that scripture must regulate what we do in worship. But before we go on and we now start to dive down into scripture and look for the different elements, the different components of what we do, there's one more thing that I want us to look at.
- And so this is probably all still sort of definitional stuff at the beginning of this series. One more thing, and that is how, according to scripture, do we actually enter into worship?
- [4 : 2 2] And what I mean by this, because you might say, well, that's a bit strange because I'm already here this morning, so why do we need to discuss this? What I mean by that is this, at a fundamental level, worship is about connection between humanity and God.

It's about us, you and me, connecting with the divine. One, which raises all sorts of really important philosophical questions, has raised these sorts of questions in people's minds through the centuries.

How can we even think that we can approach God in worship? Like what makes you assume you can approach God in worship? How can we assume that he's going to listen to our prayers? How can we assume that he's going to speak to us from his word?

I just prayed that he would speak to us from his word, but how can we assume that he's going to do that? That he's going to accept these songs of praise? Like does anything go from these praises that you're singing out to God?

Is there any sort of connection between you and God? How can we assume that we can just approach God in worship? And then even more than that, how can we assume that we're going to get some sort of a favorable response from him?

[5 : 29] Now philosophers, not just Christians, philosophers in all sorts of different environments have actually said that the answer to that question, can we approach God in worship or can we approach God in this sort of human divine connection, that the answer to that question is actually definitely no.

We can't. Aristotle famously said this, he said, if there is a great interval in respect of excellence or vice or wealth or anything else between parties, then they are no longer friends and do not even expect to be so.

And this is most manifest in the case of the gods, for they surpass us most decisively in all good things. In such cases, it is not possible to define exactly up to what point friends can remain friends, for much can be taken away and friendship remain.

But when one party is removed to a great distance, as God is, the possibility for friendship ceases, he says.

So he says that the sort of insurmountable differences between us and God, differences in nature and being, in so many different respects, they really make approach to God impossible.

[6 : 48] Like, why would we possibly think we can approach God? He's so beyond us. And so, so many branches of philosophy have struggled with this question and said, basically, I don't think we can. I don't think we can.

If we're honest about who we are and we're honest about who the divine must be, I don't think we can approach God. We can't have any confidence that he might hear us or respond to us or engage with us. Never mind be favorable towards us.

Now, most of us probably don't spend a ton of time in our minds thinking through the philosophical ins and outs of that particular question. But I do think we know this question at an experiential level.

And it's something that we actually wrestle with all the time. Can I really connect with God? When I come into this place on Sunday, when I come in and I go through the motions, and I pour out my soul to him in prayer, like maybe when we were praying for people struggling, you were one of those people saying, yes, that's me, and I'm calling out to God.

When I do that, does he even hear me? Does he understand me? Does he know what's going on in my life? Does he know my anxieties and my loneliness, the complexity of my life? And is he going to accept me if I call out to him?

[7 : 58] Many people sitting in pews ask those sorts of questions all the time. And the reason we have that sort of experiential struggle is because God is, for lack of better description, he's just different.

He's different. He's not like your friend or your spouse where you can sort of like walk into a room, you can sit down on a couch, and you can have a conversation. And you're talking to someone who generally looks like you, is something like you, speaks like you, has a multitude of similar experiences to you, and so there's a level of commonality there.

And you're like, okay, I can engage with this person. God is so different. We can't even see God. So yes, we pray, we listen to his voice in the pages of Scripture, but we can't see him.

We don't have an audible voice coming here every single Sunday. We're all going on faith here. Faith. Trust that he's out there, that he's listening, and that he's engaging with us.

That we're not just pulling the wool over our eyes here when we get together and say and do the things that we do here. So naturally, we're going to struggle with this experience. And so what the Bible does is it comes along and it wants to reassure us.

[9 : 11] It wants to say, no, listen, you can approach God in worship. We can come and find one who understands us, who loves us, who is working for our ultimate good through his gracious provision.

Hebrews 4, verse 16 says, we can come before God's throne of grace with confidence. And the reason we can come before God's throne of grace with confidence is because there's a priest, a great high priest whose name is Jesus.

Let's come back to that passage with me. Verse 14 of chapter 4. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

See, most religions down through the ages have had priests because people have intuited what we've just been speaking about. They've intuited that, well, I just can't come to God any old way.

[10 : 27] I need some sort of mediator. Somebody who's going to stand in the gap between me and the divine. Some sort of holy man who's going to bridge that gap. In the Old Testament, you've got this developed religious system that displays that right back in the days of Moses.

So God sets up Aaron and his descendants as a priestly caste who will mediate his presence among the people, that they stand in the gap between the holy and infinite God and sinful, finite human beings.

And so humanity, across the religious experience in the centuries, we've always realized we need this. We need a priest. The Bible confirms that through the Old Testament.

But here in these passages, in Hebrews 4 and 5, what we see is we get to see exactly the kind of priest that we really need. What kind of priest do we need? Well, this is it. If we're truly to come before the throne of grace, this is the kind of priest we need.

We need Jesus, our great high priest. So that was a kind of longer introduction, but there's two things I want you to see this morning. I want you to see how Jesus, our great high priest, deals, number one, with that philosophical problem, or we might call it the problem of relatability, and then how he deals with what is actually another problem, the moral problem, our separation from God.

[11 : 49] So here's the first one, the sort of philosophical problem of worshiping God. In the first few verses of chapter 5, the author, what he does is he gives us a bit of a rundown on what priests did in the Old Testament.

So you see this in verse 1. Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

He's able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people.

So priests were supposed to be these mediators, but they weren't supposed to be cold and removed from the worshiper who's coming along to seek out God in this Old Testament system of worship.

They were supposed to deal, the text says there, deal gently with the person, displaying, I would imagine, displaying a level of vulnerability and frailty and weakness that's common to all of us, that that shared experience is common to all of us.

[12 : 52] In that sense, they were supposed to be relatable. Where you felt that this priest you're coming to, well, he knows what you're going through. He can sympathize. Because he knows something of the experience of trying to connect with God.

Now, we would always want that in any sort of situation where we're being represented by someone before another party. So we'd want that other party, whether they were a lawyer or a recruitment agent or the head of HR, we'd want that person, if they were representing us, to really understand us and understand our plight.

I've been in the U.S. on the last two trips. One of the things you will notice that is just really peculiar to me is there are billboards for lawyers everywhere. Like, just everywhere.

There's like, there are just lawyers after lawyers after lawyers advertising themselves. And one of the key things they try and sell to you is, well, I know what you're going through. I'm relatable. We want that.

If we want someone to represent us, we want that relatability. We don't have any confidence in them if they're just sort of cold and clinical. The same went for the priests in the Old Testament.

[14 : 11] The original readers of the book of Hebrews are Christians from a Jewish, religious, and cultural background who are being put under enormous pressure by the community around them to return back to those roots and abandon their newfound faith in Jesus Christ.

and stop doing the practices they found in Jesus, start doing some of the practices that they used to do in the past. Now, there is enormous pressure on them from the culture. All the indications that we have as you read the letter and you see the little, like you're trying to read between the lines and reconstruct the situation of what they're experiencing, but all the indications we have is that they were undergoing some significant suffering for their faith in Christ.

Now, when you're in that moment, you want to know that God's got your back. You want to know that He understands your struggle, that He understands your weakness, that He understands how much you've been tempted to give up on Him and go back to these old ways.

You want Him to somehow have that priestly gentleness and sympathy. And so the author writes here in chapter 4, verse 15, So He says, because Jesus is our high priest, He knows.

He knows. He knows what it's like to be a frail, weak human. He knows the struggle. He knows the temptation.

[15 : 48] He knows. See, friends, because God came into our world in the person of our great high priest, our Lord Jesus, we can't ever say that God up there in His infinite glory couldn't possibly relate to little old you and me.

And Jesus has a very real sense in which God puts on the infinite creator God of the universe. He puts on the limitations that you and I have. He walks and He lives in our shoes.

He knows the experience. He gets down in the dirt. And so we have a high priest who is able to empathize and to sympathize with His people like good priests are supposed to.

But Jesus, well, He's actually even better than a good priest because even the best priest, well, He still has His own sin, His own baggage that can kind of get in the way.

Verse 3 of chapter 5, says He had to offer sacrifices for His own sins, not just for the sins of the people. So as relatable as a good priest might be, well, He's still a sinner.

[17 : 09] Jesus, on the other hand, He not only experiences our weakness and our frailty, He undergoes the temptations we undergo, but He does it all without ever sinning, Hebrews says.

So He's sinless. Now, I've got to be honest with you and say that for a long time, that thought did not actually comfort me. Think about it.

The Bible says He faced every temptation, but He never sinned. He never gave in. Which makes me and my thinking, this is just the kind of devil's advocate in my thinking and it's how my brain works, but I'm going, well then, does He really understand my struggle?

Because I'm not without sin. I give in to temptation. Shock and horror, I know you all like. But I give in to temptation. He doesn't understand that.

He doesn't understand what it's like to repeatedly fail, to lose that battle against temptation. So I used to think that. I used to, well, at least think about that.

[18 : 15] Christ, in some ways, since we're on the subject of relatability, in some ways, Christ's sinlessness made Him more alien, less relatable. He's like Superman. He doesn't do anything wrong.

Like, I do stuff wrong all the time, so how is He relatable to me? But I've been really, really helped by C.S. Lewis on this, the great Christian writer. Lewis evidently faced the same complaint from people that if Jesus never sinned, then He doesn't know what temptation's really like.

He lived a kind of sheltered life. He's out of touch with the strong temptation that we all face. Now, at a surface level, it sounds like a fairly robust complaint, but here's what C.S. Lewis wrote in Mere Christianity.

He said, No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good. 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.

[19 : 22] You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives into 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. 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. Jesus knows the power of temptation in a way that you and I will never, ever know it.

He knew the temptation of being offered the entire world if He would just renounce His Father before the devil. He knew the temptation to lie, to speak falsehood to save His life in front of Pontius Pilate.

He knew the temptation to take out revenge on the people who mocked Him and spat on Him. He knew the temptation of giving up on you and on me in order to avoid a bloody, gruesome death.

[20 : 43] And not once did He give in on those temptations. And we're just touching the surface on the sorts of temptations He faced. So friends, let us never, ever say that because Jesus was without sin, He doesn't really understand our struggle against temptation because when we look at it, it's really a ridiculous thing to say.

So maybe you're sitting here and you've come into worship this morning and you're sitting there and you're stewing in toxic resentment against somebody who betrayed you and you think there's no way that Jesus understands me.

If He knew how hurt I was, if He knew what this person did to me and the things they said and what has gone on in my life, if He knew that then, if He knew the level of betrayal, He would know that I am justified in the resentment that I'm harboring in my heart right now.

And I would want to say to you, before you finish that thought in your head, think of a name. Think of the name Judas. In fact, think of the name Peter.

Think of all twelve of the disciples. Jesus knows. He knows. He knows the gut-wrenching pain of betrayal and yet it didn't create resentment in his heart.

[22 : 03] Friends, because Jesus is our great high priest, He understands your struggles, He understands your weakness, He understands your frailty, the temptations you face and better than anyone, He is able to gently, compassionately and lovingly represent you before God as you worship.

There is no more sympathetic mediator in the entire universe than Jesus Christ. And so when you do come into worship then, because of the mediating work of Jesus Christ, you come in knowing that He understands, believing that He understands, believing that He sees your weaknesses, your fears and anxieties, your stresses, your strains.

He looks on your shame, He looks on your guilt that you carry this morning, your ignorance, your waywitness, and He deals with you oh so very tenderly and gently. When you come into worship, you can say to your heart, my Lord knows, my Lord knows.

It's incredibly important as we approach Him. Then there's the moral problem of worship. worship. So look down at chapter 5 verse 1.

The writer says, every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin. sin. So the priests offer up these different sacrifices and these gifts for sin.

[23 : 43] They're the Old Testament worship leaders. Cesar is very grateful he didn't have to kill an animal on stage this morning, he just had to sing and play guitar. Things have changed since then. They're the Old Testament worship leaders.

In fact, the high priest in the Old Testament law, he played a very specific role in regard to this. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, he washes, dresses in this elaborate garb.

He takes three animals. He takes a bull for his own sin and then two goats for the sins of the people. He kills the bull. He takes the blood. He goes behind the curtain into the Holy of Holies.

He places the bull on the atonement cover of the Ark of the Covenant as a sacrifice for his own sins. Then he does the same thing basically with the goat for the sins of the people and then he takes the third animal, the second goat, comes out of the Holy of Holies and he places his hands and confesses the sins of the people on that goat and they're almost as if to symbolize this transfer of guilt from the people to the goat.

That goat, commonly called the scapegoat, then is sent out in the wilderness to symbolize that their sin has been taken away from them, never to be seen again. It's a very elaborate worship service, offering up of gifts and sacrifices for sin and a very graphic and visual reminder of our standing before God.

[25 : 10] Only one guy gets to, after doing a ton of stuff for himself, gets to go into that inner holy of holies. It's a very, very graphic depiction of our standing before God because you see friends, our distance from God is not just the fact that we're finite and he's infinite, the sort of philosophical problem, or that we're creatures and he's the creator and we're trying to wonder how can we overcome that philosophical gap and come to know him.

Our distance is also there because he's pure and holy and we are defiled and sinful. So there is a moral chasm between us.

Now a lot of contemporary critics of Christianity would say, hang on, that is a pretty traditional and backwards and archaic way of thinking about things.

I mean, sure, back in the day when people believed in God more commonly and in judgment, final judgment, they felt a much more tangible sense of guilt. But I mean, we're this progressive modern society today, we don't believe that people should feel guilty before some sort of make-believe deity in the sky.

In fact, it's probably psychologically damaging. That's why so many people have to go to therapy is because you were telling them about this God in the sky and this evil judgment coming at the end. It's probably psychologically damaging to teach this guilt stuff, to perpetuate this guilt complex through religion.

[26 : 43] And so in today's society, we will tend to talk about brokenness rather than guilt. And yet it's funny, because even, maybe not so funny, sad, because even in our most progressive societies, those feelings of shame and guilt haven't gone away.

We've dived sort of headlong into moral relativism, that is we don't dare tell people how to live their lives and prescribe this is a good way, this is a right way of living and that's a bad way of living. And yet, we've steered away from that, said you can do what you want as long as it makes you happy and you don't hurt somebody else.

And yet that hasn't made the sense of guilt go away. we've gotten rid of God, we've radically revised traditional morality, removed all the parts that we perceive as restricting or oppressive, and yet we still feel wholly inadequate in ourselves.

We still feel like we're falling short of something. We still feel like we need to make atonement. In 2017, the New York Times opinion piece writer David Brooks wrote this, he said, religion may be in retreat, but guilt seems as powerfully present as ever.

We're still driven by an inextinguishable need to feel morally justified, and yet we have no clear framework or set of rituals to guide us in our quest for goodness. Worse, people have a sense of guilt and sin, but no longer a sense that they live in a loving universe marked by divine mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

[28 : 21] There is sin, but no formula for redemption. It's a sad state of affairs. And so our modern culture might scoff at the idea of religion and priests and atoning sacrifices, but that inner sense of guilt hasn't gone away.

That inner sense of inadequacy hasn't gone away. If anything, it's gotten worse. But Christianity has a solution to that. Christianity has something very concrete to say, because first of all, it tells us that that gut, that gut instinct of moral culpability that you feel in yourself, well, that's actually spot on.

It's not just the result of a bad childhood or bad parenting or a bad religious experience somewhere along the line. It is spot on. It is actually true. There is moral culpability that lies inside of you.

We are guilty. We are guilty of not living the way that our creator God set out for us to live. We fall short of his standards. That's the word that's in the New Testament that's often translated as sin means to fall short.

And so the Bible is really helpful in that it diagnoses the condition, the human condition, in a way that even our best psychology and sociology will never be able to do. But more than diagnosing the problem, well, it goes to work to fix the problem.

[29 : 44] And you say, well, how does it do that? And the answer to that is, well, there's a priest. There is a priest. We have always sensed that we needed a priest.

We needed somebody to stand in the gap. The Bible says, well, there is somebody. There is a priest who can stand in the gap. There is one who can offer gifts and sacrifices for sin. Our sympathetic high priest, Jesus Christ.

Not only does he intimately identify with our struggles against sin, he is able to destroy sin once and for all. He is not like the priests of old, who had to repeatedly offer sacrifices for their own sins before they could offer sacrifices then for the sins of all the people.

He's not like them. He's not like Aaron who had to sacrifice a bull before he could go into the holy of holies. He was without sin, Jesus. He need make no sacrifice for himself.

And yet, if you know the story, he does make a sacrifice. Jesus makes a sacrifice. He bears no personal guilt, but after living in our shoes for so long, he's now deeply acquainted with the guilt that we bear.

[31 : 02] He has no inner sense of moral culpability because he's never done anything wrong before his heavenly father, but now, because he has walked in our shoes, he knows about the moral culpability that you and I bear, that inner sense of guilt and inadequacy.

He sees our struggle, sees our shame, sees our failure, sees how it haunts us, sees how it breaks us down, he watches it playing out in real time around him, he sees how it destroys our lives and he sees most of all how it breaks our communion with God and so then he willingly makes a sacrifice, a great sacrifice, the sacrifice of himself.

The last few verses of the passage we read this morning give more detail to this, but they are admittedly quite tricky verses to understand, but have a look, we'll have a go at them, have a look at verse seven.

The writer goes on and says, during the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

Son, though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

[32 : 33] Let's try and make this less complicated. For our purposes, you can ignore that reference to the very mysterious Old Testament figure, Melchizedek. The author actually goes on in the next chapter to explain why he mentions this character and the connection between Jesus and this character.

But even without our friend Mel, there are some tricky things in the verses that we just read. What most commentators agree here is that these verses seem to be talking about an experience something like the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus on his knees, drenched in sorrow, praying to his father, pleading with him in prayer about his impending crucifixion.

You can imagine the scene, familiar scene, seems like those verses are referring to that. And there he prayed. In that moment he prayed, my father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me, yet not as I will, but as you will.

Now, Hebrews tells us that God heard his prayer. The God who could save him from death heard his prayer.

[33 : 47] And yet Jesus was not saved from death. But remember what he ultimately prayed. He prayed, not my will, but yours be done.

So essentially he prayed this. Essentially he prayed, Father, let me be obedient right to the very end. That's what he prayed. Let me be without sin right to the very end. Let me resist temptation right to the very end.

And Hebrews tells us the father heard that prayer. The father heard that prayer. And it is because Jesus was obedient to the very end. And I think that's what it means there that he was perfected or completed.

Verse 9. Because of his resolute obedience right on to death, his sacrifice became the source of eternal salvation for you and for me. So Jesus out of deep priestly sympathetic love looks at your guilt and he looks at your shame and he looks at your failure and with tears in his eyes, sweating drops of blood, he pleads with the father and he asks, Father, let me be obedient.

Let me be obedient. Let me be perfect. right on to the very end. Let me resist the temptation to avoid this terrifying gruesome death that awaits me.

[35 : 07] Let me be obedient right to the point of crucifixion and let me present you with the perfect sacrifice so that you might save these guilty people from their sin.

That's what he's praying. friends, as you sit and worship this morning, maybe you are overcome with your guilt. Maybe you're overcome with shame.

A sense of inadequacy maybe is debilitating in your life right now. Maybe you look at your life, you look at who you are, you look at what you have done, you look at what you have failed to do or achieve and you think, God doesn't want me.

He couldn't possibly want me. How could I possibly think that I can come in here and worship? I am fooling myself, I'm fooling these other people who are clearly much more sincere in their faith than I am.

How could I possibly think that he would welcome my worship, that he would receive the praise that comes off of these lips when he knows what I've done? There's no way that I can access his grace.

[36 : 19] I'm too far gone. And so to you this morning, the author of Hebrews would say this, we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet he did not sin.

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. And so friends, because of Jesus, our great high priest, as long as there is breath in our lungs, there is no closed door with God.

Do you believe that? Do you know that this morning? The door to worship is open. it's open to come in.

If you will repent of your sin and trust in Christ, then even the foulest sin cannot disqualify you from access to the very throne of God.

Do you see that? Do you know that? Is that in your heart this morning? Are you using that to fight back against the lies in your heart?

[37 : 39] That say you are inadequate and you shouldn't be here this morning praising God. Because of Jesus, our great high priest this morning, you can sing the first verse of Charity Bancroft's famous 19th century hymn.

You can sing these words, and we're going to sing them just now, but you can sing them with conviction and with confidence. Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea.

A great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart. I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me thence depart.

No tongue can bid me thence depart. Friends, in the coming weeks we're going to get into the nitty-gritty of what we do in worship, why we sing, why we preach, why we read, why we go to the Lord's supper, but don't in the course of looking at all of that detail, don't miss the reason that you're here in the first place.

Don't miss the reason that you're able to be here in the first place. And that is because of the wonderful mediating work of our sympathetic high priest, our Lord Jesus Christ.

[39 : 02] Praise God for his work in our lives. Let's pray together. Lord, we come to you this morning with lots of different things going on in our heads and our hearts.

Some of us are weak and struggling with life. Some of us are struggling with an overwhelming sense of our own guilt. And so this good news about our high priest is, is a balm for our soul.

It heals, restores, it reconciles, it forgives. It's the fountain of mercy that we get to dip into and receive. Teach us to worship you in light of this, Lord.

Teach us to rest in these gospel truths and to have them drive and motivate us to expel the lies that the devil will say to us that we don't deserve to come to you, that we shouldn't have access to the throne of God.

Put these truths in our hearts, Lord, we pray. And I pray for any person who's sitting here this morning who's saying, I don't know if the high priest has stood in the gap for me. I still feel like I'm looking in from the outside.

[40 : 20] I still don't know if I've repented of my sin and trusted in that great high priest. Then I would ask, Lord, that this morning by your spirit you would regenerate their hearts so that they might trust in Jesus and they might know that that high priest is their high priest.

Bring them to faith this morning, Lord. Help us all in this, Lord, to approach knowing what Christ has done. We ask the soul for Christ's sake and his glory.

Amen.