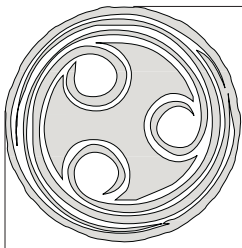


**"I can't save you, I can't save myself!"
Stabbing Westward**



sermonnotes

Introduction

We have been looking at the idea of God's rest, which brings the peace and joy that Jesus brings into the lives of those that trust Him. Last week we saw the importance of the word of God in that process. It is the word that truly judges us so that we will have a proper understanding of who we are, which helps us define ourselves so that we can love God and serve Him by loving others like we love ourselves (see Matthew 22:37-39). This peace come as a result of what Jesus has already done for us, and it is available to all generations who trust in Him. It's not the amount of trust, but the object of that trust that matters. We are always going to live shrouded in mystery, unsure of what tomorrow will bring, but we are not called to live in fear, or under the delusion of security. We are supposed to live in His will and be guided by His word in matters of life and godliness (see James 4:12-17). Often times that exhortation to live in His rest appears to be too harsh due to our own fears. In Numbers 14 (which is what most of 3:1-4:14 has been based on) we see that the Israelites were deluded by false summits, and false securities and feared entering into the middle of God's will for their lives. According to Numbers 14:10, they opposed entering God's rest vehemently and violently. Paradoxically they failed to find the very rest they were trying to gain by hanging on to the known in fear of the unknown. The grand paradox of Christianity is that most often God's rest is found in the eye of the storm, the very storm that that He sometimes leads us into. Our passage today acts as the nexus between what has been said, and what the author is turning his attention to in the subsequent passages.

From The Head...

"Let Us Hold Fast Our Confession" (Hebrews 4:14-15)

This verse picks up where Hebrews 3:1 left off. Jesus is our "great" (mega) high priest! We are exhorted to hang on to that confession which is three fold. First, Jesus is a great high priest. He is different from the others. The others, according to chapter five verses one through four, do their mediating duty between God and man as a weak man beset with his own sins and issues. They are men of clay feet, finite, and inferior to Christ. Some people actually see these verses as pointing to Christ's sinful nature since He had to "learn obedience" (Hebrews 5:8) and the fact that these verses are describing the empathy of the high priest. This is an unnecessary rendering of these verses, and contradictory to verse 15. Jesus can "sympathize" with us because of the pull of temptation, not the giving in of the temptation. We can empathize with others even though we have not experienced their particular sin. Secondly, this verse describes our confession as remembering Christ's entrance to and from the heavens.

While it is a fact that Christ can "feel" our pain because He became man (high priest), He is still transcendent, infinite, and heavenly rather than earthly. Lastly, Jesus is the "Son of God." He became man to be our substitution, and He was God to be righteous enough to make the payment for our sin. This verse ought to give us great hope. IN the midst of the warnings we have seen these past few weeks, we realize that we are trusting the only person who can take our sins away, forgive us for our crimes, and free us to live in His rest! The solution comes from the outside, but He is like us too. And the beauty of this situation is that Christ "sympathizes" (sumpathasai) with us. That sympathy is not a psychological sympathy, but an existential one because He has felt our pain. He GETS IT! Sin is what causes our pain, and He felt the sting of sin experientially in His life and on the cross. Every pain, hurt, and tragedy known to man was laid on His back. It is clear in this text that Christ could understand sin because of temptation, but He Himself was not tempted into sin. He felt the weight of temptation, but not the personal travesty of its result. He could experience sin's piercing assault since he experienced loss. There is a good chance His earthly dad (Joseph) died at an early age. He experienced the

mocking of men, and most likely the oppression of poverty and scorn. He was a victim of power and political gain. While he did not sin, He was sinned against and felt its power running through His own veins. He might not have been the addict, but He certainly hung out with many and most likely was the victim of some. He lived a tough life, ridiculed for being a bastard child, fatherless, and poor. He led a band of marginalized people against a corrupt system. His cause was His Father's will, and His weapon was His Father's love. He came to serve and be sacrificed for His dad's glory and our freedom. Let's hold on to that!

"Let Us Draw Near With Confidence" (Hebrews 4:16)

Because Christ can be trusted, and because He has loved us enough to become one of us and die for us, we can have confident hope of coming to God with His righteousness, not our own (see Romans 10:1-4 cf. Ephesians 3: 11-12; Hebrews 10:19). Christ has given us access to a God that was previously only accessible through human mediators (priests) because of the separation sin makes between man and God. Jesus opens up the only path to God (see John 14:6 cf. Matthew 27:51). We have access to God our Father and can call Him "Abba" (daddy). Note as we draw near, we are drawing nearer to God's grace (His perfect gift) "In order that we may receive mercy, and find grace and help in time of need." That help comes in the form of His presence and the hope we have that this painful life is not all that there is.

The Fallibility of Religion (Hebrews 5:1-4)

"For every high priest taken among men" (5:1) is in stark contrast than Jesus the High Priest "Who has passed through the heavens." Any earthly religious leader is wrought with their own issues of personal sin. While many claim to be enlightened, they did not rise from the dead and come to die for anyone's sin. These verses remind us of our futility when we try to save ourselves with our own works. They will continue to fail, because we are simply men and women of clay jars who are broken and have holes that can only be fixed in Christ. It is through Him that we have BOLD access to God, and only through Him. The rest are mere images of the truth of who God is. Religion reminds us that man is searching, and in it's sublime sort of way can reflect the diversity and beauty of mankind created in the image of God, but it will continue to fall short as it wallows in its rituals, prayers, and false hope without being rightly connected to their maker in Christ Jesus.

It is amazingly freeing to know that you are forgiven, and that you can obtain a close walk with the creator of the universe. You are cleansed and can come to God in the midst of your problems. That has to render peace and joy in the hearts of those that trust Him, shouldn't it? But of course we are not called to revel in it, but begin to use it for God's glory! Like Christ we are called to sympathize with the pain of our times, and to "weep with those that weep," and "restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness." We are called to care and be healed in Christ, so that we can in turn become healers of others. It is when we join God in the gospel that we truly reap the benefits of salvation. It is when we truly become like Him.

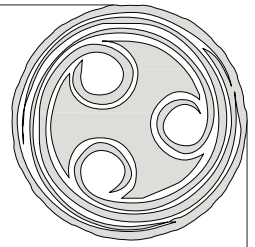
It is when we begin to understand purpose and His compassion. It is when we get outside ourselves that we begin to know a whole new world, and not wallow in the frustrations and pain that will exist in anyone's souls that continues to look inside for their answers. When are we going to learn that simple lesson?

pastors

mikegunn ::
mike@vivaharambee.com
bradsessler ::
brad@vivaharambee.com
marksteeds ::
mark@vivaharambee.com
bryanzug ::
zug@vivaharambee.com

deacons

bryannelson :: administrator
bryan@vivaharambee.com
aaronyoungren :: music
aaron@vivaharambee.com
mike&sandysmith :: prayer
prayer@vivaharambee.com
jennyrygel :: hospitality
jenny@vivaharambee.com



... To The Heart