

During every Christian's life, there are days of pain and suffering, and we can be tempted to feel that Jesus is removed from our suffering, that he doesn't understand what we are going through. There is the temptation to think of Jesus as less approachable today than he was when he walked the earth 2000 years ago.

Our Great High Priest (v. 14)

Hebrews 4:14 tells us that Jesus is our Great High Priest. A priest is a mediator between God and man; Jesus took on flesh to be that mediator (see 1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus is uniquely fully God and fully man. Only he can identify with us and present us before God the Father.

In the Old Testament, the High Priest could only enter into the Holy of Holies once a year to make atonement for the sins of the people. The High priest had to undergo extensive preparation. This once-a-year opportunity to atone for the sins of the people was done by a frail human being and had to be repeated every year. But when Jesus ascended, he did something that has never been done before; Jesus, in his resurrected and eternal body, passed from this earthly habitation through the heavens and into the throne room of God (see Hebrews 4:14).

Jesus is the first and only human to do this. He is our Great High Priest who ministers in the very presence of the Almighty God. And here is the best news: the apostle Paul writes that because of our position in Christ, we, being in Christ, are seated with Christ in the throne room with unlimited access through a perfect sinless mediator – Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 2:4-7).

Our Unwavering Confession (v. 14)

Because we have this great, eternal, and superior High Priest, we must not give up our confession. The people receiving this letter were tempted to give up their faith in Jesus. The world around them was drawing them back to the familiar ways of the law and the temple system, slowly turning them away from Jesus.

Today we have a similar challenge: the world is loud, angry, and godless. It may be easy to simply be silent and keep our faith in Jesus to ourselves. But there is no appeasing Satan and his demons; they want to destroy your life.

Our Sinless Sympathizer (v. 15)

Sympathy is a poor translation of the original Greek word. Sympathy in our English understanding means to feel pity or sorrow for someone else's misfortune. It is recognizing suffering from a distance (e.g., "I feel bad for you"). But the Greek word is a much deeper

word that means “fellow feeling” in which an individual is fully acquainted with the suffering of the other person and fully feels the seriousness of the situation. That is what our High Priest—Jesus—is saying to all of us: “I really know what you are feeling”.

Pain is a physical manifestation of sin. Pain originated as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden; there was no pain before that (see Genesis 3:16-17). God never intended for us to feel pain; it was not His original design. When sin entered the world, so did pain.

We experience pain for multiple reasons: we feel pain because of the harm or sin done to us by other people, and we feel pain because of our own sinful or stupid choices. But most often we experience pain because we live in a world diseased by sin, with temporary bodies and unjust systems and dysfunctional relationships and decaying creation. Pain is a part of the journey through life on this broken earth. Some people experience more pain than others, but that does not mean they are any less near to God.

So, we ask the question: does Jesus feel our pain?

When Jesus suffered on the cross, he not only felt the pain of the nails and the beatings and the crown of thorns, but he also felt a more excruciating pain. When Jesus hung on the cross, he bore the weight of the sins of every person who would place their faith and trust in him. As he took on the wrath of God the Father for our sins, he felt the immense pain associated with that sin.

Can Jesus sympathize with our pain? Absolutely. He knows your pain; emotional, psychological, and physical.

Jesus sympathizes with us in our weakest and most painful moments, not with a detached sympathy of someone who doesn't understand our pain but as a co-sufferer, one who suffers with us.

Our Confident Approach (v. 16)

Everyone who has given their lives to the Lordship of Jesus has an outrageous invitation. Jesus invites us to come boldly before the throne of God. We are invited to come to the throne room of the Almighty God, whose holiness would consume us if it wasn't for the High Priestly presence of Jesus. We get invited, but even more scandalously, we are invited to come *boldly, confidently*. We can come confidently because our Great High Priest is ministering there for us and to us.

Today, because of what Jesus has done, we have a standing invitation to the throne room of God when we are tempted and when we are suffering. In that throne room, we have a high priest and advocate who knows our temptations. We can ask for help, and Jesus promises us to give us help in our time of need.

There is no temptation, no trial, no painful struggle that Jesus is not co-suffering with you.

This is not the promise of a quick ending to suffering or instant healing and wealth—that is not what the Bible teaches. Rather, this is the promise of the nearness and intimate presence of Jesus when you are suffering.

Do you know Jesus as he one who co-suffers with you?

Do you know what it means to come boldly before his presence?