



Sunday, July 11, 2021

Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Hebrews 4:12-16

I was once told that when a passage has a memorable verse (or in this case, several memorable verses) that it has become memorable for a reason. Sometimes, the significance can be drowned out with poor interpretation (as with a verse like Jeremiah 29:11 or Philippians 4:13). But this passage is memorable, and its significance cannot be understated.

Like the gospel itself, this passage begins with some bad news. God's word is living, active, sharper than any sword. This is very different than a word that is dead, dormant, and dull (though some people unfortunately treat God's word as though it is those things). But for His word to be what it really is means there is nowhere to hide in our sins. We cannot pretend like God does not actually know the evil in our hearts and minds. He knows all, and He is the judge of all.

But mercifully, Jesus has come as our great high priest. The existence of the priesthood is to mediate the relationship between man and God. The priest is the "go between." Jesus is better than any other priest because not only is He a human being who mediates between us and God, but He is unlike us in that He has no sin of His own. Therefore, He is able not only to empathize with us, but also to bestow mercy and grace from the throne of heaven. May we avail ourselves of His great, merciful work as our high priest!

Context

Immediately before this passage, the author was speaking about the rest that is only found in God. That rest was something that even Joshua could not provide for people (or Moses or David or anyone else). But Jesus, as our great high priest, leads us to the ultimate heavenly rest, having atoned for our sins and now being seated at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3).

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Hebrews 4:12-16

“It’s Alive!”

*We rest on Thee our Shield and our Defender
Thine is the battle, Thine shall be the praise;
When passing through the gates of pearly splendor,
Victors, we rest with Thee through endless days*

- Edith Cherry, 1895

Judge with His Sword (v. 12-13)

- Living
- Active
- Sharper
- Penetrates
- Nothing Hidden

High Priest with His Throne (v. 14-16)

- Great
- Heaven
- Son of God
- Empathy – Human
- No Sin – Holy

Therefore

- Let us hold fast to our profession
- Let us come boldly to His throne
 - o Confident
 - o Receive mercy
 - o Find grace

What God says in His word

What God sees in our hearts

What God gives from His throne

Omnus una manet nox: “The same night awaits us all”

Discuss

- 1) How is it possible for someone to read the Bible and not experience any kind of personal conviction or edification? How does that happen? Has it ever happened to you?

- 2) What are some ways the Word has convicted you recently?

- 3) What do you think life would be like if we only had verses 12-13 and not verses 14-16?

- 4) How do verses 14-16 change the way we think about verses 12-13?

- 5) What difference does it make that Jesus not only sympathizes with us but has experienced the same temptations we have?