

Jesus' Present Ministry: Implications for Our Praying

Hebrews 4:14-16

In this study, we are continuing our Lenten series on *Jesus' Present Ministry*. Last week the sermon focused on the truth that Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God. After His death and resurrection Jesus was elevated to this place of power and authority. Jesus now reigns at God's right hand providing everything that is associated with God's right hand in the Old Testament - blessing, protection, rescue, pleasure, and so on. And so, Jesus isn't just sitting idle until the day that He returns. He is active and powerfully working in this world! This truth should have significant implications for our praying!

Opening Question: What is going well, and what is not going well in your prayer life these days?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16

1. What does this passage teach us about Jesus?
2. How does the designation, "high priest" (v. 14) help us understand Jesus' present ministry?
3. In the old covenant, the high priest would pass through the veil into the earthly holy of holies one time a year to offer sacrifice (Heb. 9:6-7). In contrast to earthy priests, where has Jesus passed through to (Heb. 4:14; also 8:1-2)? What does this mean for the kind of access to God that Jesus as our high priest makes possible?
4. What does the writer of Hebrews urge us to do in verse 16? How do the truths of 4:14-15 help us do this with confidence?

Steve said:

We should cling to these truths about Jesus providing full, unfettered access to God the Father and that Jesus is the very Son of God who is for us . . . Think about how this reality informs our praying. The tendency is to view Jesus as our high priest at the right hand of God as good information but something secondary when it comes to prayer. What really matters - what is primary - is how I feel about myself: if I feel good about myself and my walk with God right now, I'll pray; if I don't feel good about myself I'll probably stay away from God. Noticing the condition of our souls and paying attention to our obedience is obviously important. But this passage screams, "Take your eyes off of yourself. Fix your eyes on Jesus. He is our great high priest seated at the right hand of God. Because He is there, you are free to go there also!"

5. Do you relate to this experience of praying only when you feel good about yourself, but staying away from God when you don't?

Steve said:

God helps us in our weakness as we draw near with confidence to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ our great high priest. Think again about your weaknesses and the associated temptations. You might have weaknesses associated with your past, your body, your flesh, your circumstances. Your temptations might involve anger, anxiety, cynicism, grumbling, sensuality or some other type of indulgence. The fact of the matter is that this week you and I are going to need grace in relation to our weaknesses; we will need God to give us what we don't have. This passage assures us that when we approach the throne of grace we will be given what we need because Jesus fully understands what we're experiencing.

6. As you look at tomorrow and the days ahead, where do you sense your need for God's grace?
7. What might it look like this week to fix your eyes on Jesus and draw near to the throne of grace for this need?