

“Access Granted”
Hebrews 4:14-16

~INTRO~

A FEW YEARS AGO...

- Pastor Jeff, my son, and I went to a car show here in Denver...
 - We got to see the new cars that were being launched...
 - Concept cars that were super cool...
 - And the new Jeep wrangler going through an obstacle course.
- When the show was over...
 - We left the convention center -> got in the car we drove in & went home...
 - All the cool new cars stayed there.

PEOPLE HAVE A TENDENCY TO DO THE SAME THING...

- With the promises of God when they come to church.
 - They hear God’s word taught / maybe even experience God’s presence.
- But then they leave the same way they came...
 - And forget that the promises that are taught are ment to be lived...
 - Not just sit in the garage but to take the keys and make them effective.

TODAY...

- We’re going to be unpacking a powerful promise & truth for the believer...
 - Which changes our everyday life.

PASTOR JEFF HAS BEEN TEACHING US THROUGH...

- Romans on the weekend...
 - Where we’ve just walked through the practical application of doctrine...
- Proverbs on Mid-Week...
 - Where we’re learning about practical wisdom for everyday life...

THIS PROMISE IN HEBREWS...

- Shows us where the power comes from to live a transformed life...
 - And where we can go for help when we don’t live life wisely.

I’VE TITLED TODAY’S MESSAGE...

- *“Access Granted”*
 - (Read 4:14-16 NKJV)

~CONTEXT~

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS WAS WRITTEN...

- To second generation Jewish believers who started well in their faith...
 - But were experiencing hardship...
 - And the longer they were following Jesus...
 - The harder life got.

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- Persecution was rising – some lost houses & jobs...
 - Others were just tired and spiritually worn out...
- In that discouragement they were tempted to drift back...
 - Into what had been comfortable - Old religious systems & old routines...
 - Instead of moving forward in the faith.

SO THE AUTHOR WRITES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST...

- By illustrating how Jesus is better than anything...
 - Better than the angels / than Moses / than the old priesthood...
 - Than anything else that could try to find to bring satisfaction.

THE BIG WARNING THROUGHOUT THE BOOK IS “DON’T GO BACKWARD”

- Don’t let pressure / pain / complacency pull you away...
 - From the life Jesus intends for you.
 - Keep moving forward because everything you need is found in Him.

IT’S SUCH A HELPFUL BOOK FOR THE BELIEVER...

- Because it’s aimed at strengthening faith in hard times...
 - By underscoring the promises of God through Christ...
 - And the weight of how they impact our everyday life.
 - So we can avoid spiritual standstill & going backwards in the faith.
 - It’s been personal for me this year.

THE WRITER GIVES 5 CAUTION POINTS...

- Almost like road signs in the walk of a believer...
 - Helping to identify moments of drift in our life.
1. **Don’t drift from what you’ve heard (2:1–4)**
 - Neglecting spiritual habits
 2. **Don’t doubt God’s Word (3:7–19)**
 - Refusing to trust God
 3. **Don’t grow dull in hearing (5:11–6:20)**
 - Maturity & fruitfulness is an intentional process
 4. **Don’t despise God’s grace & sin willfully (10:26–39)**
 - Allowing sin to settle in my life
 5. **Don’t defy His authority (12:25–29)**
 - Turning from God’s voice (turning my back to God)

~STUDY~

SO WHEN WE COME TO (CHAPTER 4)...

- The writer is expanding on that second warning – doubting God’s promises...
 - And uses Israel in the wilderness as an example...

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- Hearing of God’s promise but not believing Him to fulfill it...
 - And they missed out on God’s blessing in their life.
- The author uses the word “rest” or “rested” nine times in this chapter...
 - To emphasize a spiritual condition...
 - Of a settled confidence that comes...
 - When your heart is resting in God’s promises
 - Instead of wrestling in fear & unbelief.
 - **God wants us to rest instead of wrestle!**
 - “rest” is the kind of peace and joy that God Himself lives in...
 - It’s the perfect satisfaction and security that exists in His presence...
 - That He’s promised to share with believers.
 - (Matt. 17:4 – Transfiguration, Peter’s response)
 - You know what this looks like... (Active faith / passive faith)

SO (CHAPTER 4) CAN BE UNDERSTOOD THIS WAY...

1. **Peace promised** (vv. 1–10) — God invites us to stop striving and trust Him.
2. **Faith tested** (vv. 11–13) — God’s Word exposes where we still doubt.
3. **Access provided** (vv. 14–16) — Jesus makes it possible to live confidently in peace.

AND THAT’S WHAT THIS CHAPTER POINTS TO...

- Jesus made access to the living God possible...
 - So we can experience this “rest” He promised.

TODAY WE’LL LEARN...

- **How** this access works: Through Jesus our great High Priest
 - As God he stepped down & paid the price for our sin
 - Gaining access to heaven on our behalf...
 - Sympathizing with our weaknesses...
 - He invites us to come close into fellowship.

#1 – JESUS’ POSITION FOR US (V. 14)

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest”

THE AUTHOR STARTS BY REMINDING US OF WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE.

- Something that isn’t future or distant but it’s a present reality.
 - Right now, Jesus stands as our **connection** to the Father.
- “High Priest” can sound religious or unrelatable to us...
- Here’s a simple way to understand:
 - He’s the one who built the bridge between heaven and earth.

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- He stands with us before God.
- And He shares His access so we can draw on God’s help and strength ourselves.
- This verse emphasizes **assurance**
 - It’s something that’s already true, not something we earn.
 - Which leads to **perseverance**

IN ESSENCE...

- Because Jesus is in heaven right now on our behalf...
 - We can stand firm in faith no matter what’s happening around us.

HERE’S THE KEY...

- **This describes Jesus’ position on our behalf (for us)**
 - **He’s already secured your access to God...**
 - Don’t loosen your grip on what you believe when things get hard

Psalm 46:1 says, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

- That’s exactly what the Hebrews is pointing to here...
 - A Savior who’s in the perfect position to help.

#2 – JESUS’ POSTURE TOWARD US (V. 15)

“Who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses”

- *“Sympathize”* in the Greek...
 - More than just understanding...
 - It means to suffer with OR being touched with the same feeling.
- Jesus doesn’t just know about what were going through intellectually...
 - He’s felt it experientially!
 - (Hebrews. 2:18 NKJV)
 - (Isaiah 53:3 NLT)
- Jesus understands the full range of human struggle...
 - Because he walked in it without compromising.

“Tempted in every way”

- Not every single circumstance but in every category of testing...
 - Physical / emotional / spiritual
 - (c.p. *Matt. 4:1-11*) Appetite / applause / authority¹

¹ Alicia Britt Chole. *Anonymous*. Thomas Nelson, 5 Sept. 2011.

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“Yet without sin”

- This makes him the perfect representative for us...
 - Because he’s walked in our shoes...
 - Yet experienced victory to overcome.
- Jesus is in a position for us to help us...
 - But He doesn’t look down on us when we come.

THE LESSON FOR US TO UNDERSTAND IS...

- **Because this is his posture towards us**
 - We can draw near with honesty and openness.

#3 – JESUS’ INVITATION TO US (V. 16)

“Let us therefore come boldly...”

- Doesn’t mean arrogantly...
 - It means **without fear or hesitation**
 - Knowing that our acceptance is based on Christ’s righteousness
 - Not our performance!
- Because He understands our struggles and has conquered sin...
 - We can **approach God with confidence**.
 - Not tip-toe to him or feel awkward when we approach (airport)...
 - Or feel like we have to clean ourselves up before we come.
 - The only wrong way is NOT to come at all.

LET’S CONTRAST THIS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT...

(Leviticus 16:2) NKJV

“And the Lord said to Moses: ‘Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.’”

IT HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Limited access**
 - Only one person (High Priest) could enter & only one time each year
 - (on the Day of Atonement).
- **Cautious approach**
 - Even he had to come with blood and incense
 - Or he’d die in God’s presence.
- **Contrast with Christ...**

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- Now believers are invited to come *boldly* and continually...
 - Covered by Jesus’ blood, not by animal sacrifice.

“To the throne of grace...”

- In the ancient world, a throne was a symbol of power and judgment
 - But here it’s called a **throne of grace**.
 - That’s a radical concept.
- It’s the same throne of God’s authority (c.p. Rev. 8:2-8)...
 - But through Christ it has become a **place of mercy, not condemnation**.

“That we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

THIS TELLS US WHAT WE CAN ASK FOR...

- **Mercy** deals with our past...
 - God’s compassion toward our failures and sins.
 - How often do we try to hide this?
- **Grace** deals with our present and future...
 - God’s strength and supply for what lies ahead.
- “*In time of need*” means just when we need it...
 - God’s help is never late...
 - It’s available to us when we need it.

IN OTHER WORDS...

- God’s help isn’t stored somewhere out of reach...
 - It’s something we can access in a moments notice.

THIS IS A PICTURE OF PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCY...

- To receive the help when we need it...
 - **You and I are invited to ask!**

~ WHAT’S HOLDING US BACK? ~

I’VE SEEN IN MY LIFE...

- There are things that keep me from experiencing this promise...
 - Holding me back from resting & keep me wrestling in my faith.

Barriers That Keep Us from Coming Boldly to God

1. Condemnation

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

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- Always feeling guilty / feel like God is mad at us/ feel like we haven't done enough...
 - We stand outside the door instead of walking through it.

2. Fear of Rejection / Feeling Unworthy

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.” Luke 15:20 (NKJV)

- Like the prodigal we expect punishment...
 - But the Father runs to meet us.
 - All of heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents!

3. Unforgiveness

“First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” Matthew 5:24 (NKJV)

- A heart that clings to bitterness can't fully receive grace...
 - Forgiveness clears the path for fellowship with Jesus.

4. Self-Reliance

“God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.” James 4:6 (NKJV)

- Sometimes the greatest barrier isn't guilt or fear – it's pride!
 - Thinking we can handle life on our own...
 - Keeps us from receiving help that's already available.
- This isn't just true for Christians...
 - God's grace is available to anyone who would humble themselves...
 - And confess their need for Jesus as savior.

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9) NKJV

- If that's you here this morning...
 - Jesus is inviting you to receive forgiveness of sin...
 - And grace to move forward.
 - You don't have to stand outside the door...
 - When access has been already granted!

~ CALL WORSHIP TEAM (RESPONSE) ~

THE PRAYER TEAM IS HERE TO PRAY WITH YOU...

- Where do you need mercy today?

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- Where do you need grace?
 - Don't walk out and leave it here.
 - **Come to the throne. Access is granted.**