

Hanging on for Dear Life

Read the Scripture: Hebrews 4:14-16

Notice: There are two instances in the NIV where the author of Hebrews gives the plural command *Let us*.

In verse 14 we are commanded, *“Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.”*

In verse 16 we are commanded, *“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence.”*

Tucked in neatly before these commands, between them, and all around them, is a crucial reason we should *hold firmly to our faith*. That reason is that Jesus, the Son of God, is now ascended and enthroned as our **Great High Priest**. God never gives us commands without giving us the ability to perform them.

Before you dig into who Jesus is and how he is a help to us, take a few minutes and list the following:

- What are the reasons Christians are walking away from the faith?
- What are the reasons non-Christians resist coming to faith?
- If you were to walk away from the faith (and we are not suggesting you should), what might be the compelling reason(s) you would do so? This question requires a good bit of honesty and transparency, perhaps even some vulnerability.

Pause and Reflect: The Scripture mentions that Jesus was *tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin* (4:15). How do you feel about the fact that Jesus was tempted to give in, give up, and stop holding on? Take a few moments to discuss the very human nature of who Jesus was, his struggles, his temptations, and the unity he shares with us as human beings.

Preach the Gospel: The 1st-century community this letter of Hebrews was written to was likely undergoing persecution. Isn’t it striking that within such a short amount of time of Jesus’ resurrection that early Christians are *falling away*?

God knows our struggles and the challenge it is to maintain our faith (see Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20ff). God does ask us to do our part in maintaining faith (*hold firmly to the faith*), but he does not give us a to-do list (i.e., imperatives) without supplying substantial resources (i.e., indicatives).

Take a few moments to notice together in the passage:

- **The GREATNESS of Jesus.** He is the GREAT High Priest, literally the very best. Not only is he the Priest, but he is also the sinless Sacrifice. *Is your vision of Jesus big enough to keep you in your grasp from falling away, even when you are at your weakest?*
- **The GRACIOUSNESS of Jesus.** We need grace because it is our human tendency to regularly fall away from God. God is inviting you to run to Heaven’s throne room for grace. Jesus is there with his crucified wounds for you, ready to receive and forgive you.
- **The GOODNESS of Jesus.** The writer says we find *mercy and grace* at the throne of God to *help us in our time of need*. Jesus is merciful toward our weakness and eager to help us in our struggles. He is not harsh toward our temptation to fall, but good and kind toward us as children.

Final Reflection: You should have CONFIDENCE in how you approach the throne. What is hindering you from taking Jesus up on his offer?