

Hebrews 4:12-16 Our Sympathetic High Priest- 30 Aug 2015

As a church, we have been going through the Bible, and we arrive, now, at Hebrews chapter 4. So, turn your Bibles with me to Hebrews chapter 4, and we'll be looking at verses 12 to 16 this morning. Allow me to start with a simple story. There's this story about John. He is a Primary 1 student, and he is having his PE lesson, his sports class, when he was so excited playing that he suddenly, and accidentally, peed in his shorts; he leaked urine. There was a patch that he could see, and he was dripping. He was feeling really embarrassed (you could imagine that, isn't it), and he didn't know what to do. He knew that, if his friends were to see him peeing and having a wet spot on his shorts, he will be the butt of all their jokes for the whole day. So he, all he could do was to bow his head and pray, "Lord, please help me get out of this mess." Well, when he opened his eyes, he saw this classmate of his, Susie, walked by. Susie was holding a water bottle with orange juice within, and inexplicably, she tripped and fell, and spilled all that orange juice onto him and his shorts. Now, John pretended to be really angry with Susie, but deep in his heart, he was really glad for what she did. He heaved a sigh of relief, "Phew, thank You, God, thank You, God," he said in his heart. Now, all of a sudden, a potential embarrassment became a wonderful rallying point for all his friends. His teacher came; brought new pair of shorts. Eh, the students were all cleaning him up, mopping the floor. Everybody was taking pity and sympathy for John. But, now, Susie became the butt of all jokes; everybody was laughing at her, how clumsy she was. Well, it was time to go home at the end of the day, and John and Susie were on the same bus. And John leaned over to Susie and said, "Susie, you did that on purpose, didn't you?" Susie says, "Ya, because I also peed in my shorts once." You know, sympathy is a very powerful thing. Sympathy is the ability to feel for someone, the ability to feel like someone, and the ability to step into the misery of another person, and to meet that need. Sympathy is what, you could say, the Lord Jesus Christ had in abundance. See, the text before us tells us about our sympathetic High Priest. "Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed through the

Heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15-16 ESV)

The sermon, today, is a very straightforward one. We're going to learn of Jesus Christ, our sympathetic Priest. Now, why do we need a High Priest? What's the reason for a priest? The answer is a very obvious one when you consider the Old Testament. The High Priest is a very important figure in Jewish culture and in the nation. The High Priest had a very simple task, in a sense, conceptually. The High Priest is to represent the people of Israel, to present offerings and sacrifices unto a holy God. See, the nation of Israel is taught, and are familiar with the idea, with the understanding, that they are guilty sinners who stand before a holy God, and they will face His fierce wrath. And, therefore, you need someone to come in between you and God - you need a mediator, you need someone to plead your case, you need a priest to offer sacrifices on your behalf. So, the ministry of the priest is performed in a place called the tabernacle. This is a schematic drawing. It is subsequently replaced by, what we call, the temple. But the tabernacle, in essence, represents the dwelling place of God. It represents the special presence of God in the holy of holies. The holy of holies is a special compartment in this place called the tabernacle proper, and, this whole tabernacle speaks of barriers, isn't it, of obstacles, that man cannot freely come to God. There are barriers, there are obstacles, there are veils. And the High Priest is responsible to offer sacrifices in order for him to be able to stand before God. So, animals are slain, blood is spilled, and all that is necessary because man is sinful. And High Priest does not go there for himself; the High Priest goes there on behalf of the nation of Israel. How do we know that? God has, very skillfully, cleverly in a sense, put that all in pictorial form for us. It's so graphic, that, on the breastplate of the priest will be 12 precious stones; on the shoulder pads will be another six stones on each side, representing the 12 tribes of Israel, representing the whole nation.

05:50

So, why do we need a priest? Because, just like Israel, we are sinful, and we need someone to plead our case, and to offer sacrifices unto a holy God. So, we need a High

Priest today, because, we too, one day, would stand before God and give an account. There will be a judgment. All the things that are going on in your life, all the thoughts and intentions of your heart - they will be brought up for judgment. You thought that your sins will be forgotten; nobody knows, nobody remembers. But there will come a day, where everything will be laid clear, everything will be judged, everything unnaked and exposed. The word "expose" is a very interesting word. It, it

may refer to someone being grabbed on the throat; he can't run. Or, it can be used of a flaying of animals - everything is stripped bare. Or, it may refer to something that is like a dagger, placed below the chin of the guilty, and he has no way but to face his accuser. The Scripture is very clear; one day all of us will be laid exposed and naked before God, who would judge us for all that we have done. And, you must see, this is not just about what you do on the outside, but He's going to judge you for what is going on on the inside - your heart. Some of us, you see, we, we think we can fool people, and, somehow, we can fool God. But no. All the thoughts and intentions of the heart will be naked, exposed, and brought into account. Now, this is particularly powerful in the context we are reading in Hebrews 4. Remember, it's, the author is drawing illustration from the people of Israel during Moses' time. They looked like the real deal. I mean, they crossed the Red Sea, they ate from manna, they ate manna, they had a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. They look like God's people; they had all the outward trappings of being the people of God. But God saw to the depths of their heart, that they were unbelieving, they were hardened, they were evil, they were wicked, they were disobedient and rebellious. And, so, when you look at a story like that, you, you say, "Will I be able to escape if I hide behind my religiosity? Will I be able to escape if I just come to church every Sunday? Will God just somehow forget that I'm a sinner? Will God somehow overlook the fact that I have, I've sinned against Him by my charitable good deeds?" Well, the answer is obvious. There is no hiding, running or escaping from God. It's crystal clear before Him.

08:57

And, before that day of judgment (where everything is going to be clear and obvious, nothing is going to be hidden), right now, He gives us a wonderful tool to allow us to see ourselves, so that we don't deceive ourselves, so that you are not deceived today, walking out of Church, thinking, "I came to Church, I clocked a, a kind of a merit point, and, surely, God will accept me in heaven. No, no, no, the Bible, today, is given to us to help us discern our intents, to help us see ourselves for, really, who we are. The Word of God is like a two-edged sword. The sword, here, is a specific sword in the Greek. It's a short sword, not a long saber; short one, that is used for carving and cutting off meats. That's exactly what is used. The Word of God, properly studied, read, will allow us to discern what is false and what is true. We'll cut away the false pretenses and hypocrisies, and allow us to see our wicked hearts for what it really is. I remember, when I was working in the surgical department, there was a great. I think,

wonderfully skilled, surgeon. His name is V. T. Joseph. He's, he was 70 plus years old, I think, when he was operating then (that's 10 plus years ago). He is very slow, I mean, 70 plus, you can't expect him to be very quick, right? But he was very precise in his movements. I, I've assisted younger surgeons. They're very fast, but "chee chor law gyeo la" [a Hokkien phrase which means awkward in movement or action; without skill or grace], a lot of blood everywhere, eek. You won't want to see the, the field of surgery after it. Mr. V. T. Joseph is very slow; it's like, tai chi quan [an [internal Chinese martial art](#) practiced for both its defense training and its [health](#) benefits], heh, very slow movement, but absolutely precise. He gets to exactly where he should be, he parts the scissors, and the tissues separate beautifully. Everything is exposed with a skillful blade. Everything will be exposed, if we allow the Word of God to work through us. The Word of God is like a giant x-ray machine, extremely powerful one. I guess, if the writer lives in today's day and age, he might use the illustration of an x-ray, or CT scan, scans your body. Or maybe, today, even more modern ones, PET scan, go through your body and there's a hot spot, can't run. It's green; it's obvious on the scan. And the Word of God exposes us. The Word of God gives us no excuse, you realise that? Many people have taken Hebrews 4:12 to talk about the power of God's Word to change lives, that it is living and active, it's powerful. Now, we certainly believe that the Word of God is powerful, that is true, but that is not the truth of the text. The point, here, is saying, the Word of God is powerful to help us discern, so that we cannot hide, so that we cannot cover ourselves behind false pretenses and hypocrisies. The whole purpose of this giant x-ray of the Bible is to drive us to humility, and to bring us to the High Priest. You see, if you don't see that you have sinned, if you don't see that you're guilty before the holy God, you won't want a priest. But the reason why we need a High Priest is because we are sinful. We need Him to plead our case, we need a sacrifice, and the Word of God causes us to be driven to desperation.

12:47

Now, Jesus comes to be our High Priest because we are guilty sinners. But there's so many priests in this world. How do you know Jesus is the right one? How do you know He's the only one (I mean, even in Israel, they have thousands of priests, maybe), how do you know Jesus is the right one? Well, the Bible gives us a very good reason why. Let's look at how He's a suitable, compatible, appropriate, High Priest. He says, "Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." (Hebrews 4:14 ESV)

This is significant - no other priest passed through heaven. Heh. None of them. None of them, after they've offered a sacrifice, is able to rise up to heaven, victorious. Because all of them will have to repeat this tomorrow, or, the great High Priest will repeat this next year. It's never ending. But our great High Priest Jesus Christ, He passes through the heavens. He's no more dead and buried; He's risen, He's alive, He's conquered sin and death. There's this little girl, who was in the car with his mummy, with her mummy, and she saw a beautiful rainbow in the sky and asked mummy, "Mummy, isn't that a beautiful rainbow?" Mummy says, "Ya. God drew it in the sky." "Wow, mummy, God is amazing, He can draw, draw such a nice, beautiful, rainbow with His left hand." What? "Ya, mummy, He, He drew the rainbow with His left hand." "Why do you say left hand?" "Well, because our teacher told us, Jesus is sitting on the right hand." "After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," (Hebrews 1:3 ESV) Well, she remembered the verse, but maybe, the wrong idea. Not that Jesus sat on the hand of God, but Jesus is sitting at the place of prominence, of majesty, of glory, of sovereignty. That's what it means. Jesus has absolutely made purification for sins. He has finished it all; He is successful in all that He does. That's why He can be our High Priest. See, the Jewish economy is one of never-ending work. Year after year, day after day, animals are being killed, blood is being spilled, but they never wash away a single sin. You say, "Then, why do you have all this rituals?" God intends for it not to take away sin, but God intends for them to be reminded of their sins. So, millions of litres, of gallons, of blood, is spilled. Thousands of animals are killed. The priest has to walk in and out the same ritual, day after day, but it could never settle the sin problem. In fact, there is no chair for him to sit down, because he never could finish his work. But our great High Priest, He came, He did not minister here, but He ministered on the cross for all of us. Our great High Priest offered a perfect sacrifice, not of goats and lambs, but of Himself. And by His stripes, today, we are healed; the Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world. It is finished. So, why is Jesus the only High Priest for us? Because, He's the only one who's successful. There is no religion who could tell you their founder has conquered sin for you. Every religion tells you, "Go conquer your sin. Pay for your sin. Work for your sin." But our High Priest paid it all, and now, sits at the right hand of the throne of God. So, I follow Jesus, because He is successful.

16:53

But not only is He successful, He's sympathetic. This is so important, because you may think, "Oh, Jesus is so great, so powerful, but He's so far, He's so majestic, I'm

not even sure He cares for me, I'm not even sure He bothers about me." That's why, in this text, we are told, not only is He successful in that He passed through the heavens, He's absolutely for us. "For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15 ESV) Well, Singapore is going to enter elections in about two weeks' time. September 11, 911, you can't forget that date. And I just read about the PAP manifesto: "For us, with us, for Singapore." or "For you, with you, for Singapore". Well, that's the PAP manifesto, but I don't think it's that inappropriate to say, Jesus is for you, with you, for God. He is. He's for you, and He's with you. He was born into this world as man to be telling you this message, "I'm not far away, I'm not aloof, but I'm for you, and not only am I for you, I'm now with you. I'm one of you. I will feel for you, I will feel like you. I will step into your misery, to help you in your need." That's sympathy. That's our Lord Jesus Christ.

18:36

This is a mind-blowing concept, if you understand the background in those days. In those days, they, the Greeks dominate the philosophy and thinking. And the Greeks do not believe that God will meddle with the affairs of men. There're two major schools of thought in Greek philosophy. There are the Stoics and the Epicureans. Wah, you say, "Where do they come from?" You can actually find them in Acts 17 (it's in the Bible). The Stoics do not believe God would deal with men. Why? Because, they believe, God possesses "apatheia". Apatheia sounds like apathy, or being apathetic about something, in other words, bo chap [a Hokkien phrase which means can't be bothered], can't be bothered. They argue that gods must be apathetic. Why? Because, if a god's joy and sorrow is influenced by someone else, then, for the very moment, at least for a short time, that someone else is greater than the god, because he's influenced by someone else. So, the logic is, if God is God, He cannot be influenced by men; therefore, He is possessing apatheia. The Epicureans' - the opposite, well, generally, they, they don't say that God has apatheia; the Epicureans say God is detached, in that, they are happy and joyful and having all the fun in the world, but they will not meddle with man's affairs. They, they are just living attached lives. In fact, one of the Greek philosophers even say, "It will be blasphemous for us to consider that gods could meddle, or, be involved, in the affairs of humanity." So, in such a culture of apatheia, in such a culture of detachment, the biblical revelation of who God is, and who Jesus is, is astounding. He does not stay away; He comes to be with us, to sympathize with us.

20:43

The Bible tells us, "... one [he] who in every respect has been tempted as we are..." (Hebrews 4:15 ESV) He knows the depths, the pains, the struggles, of temptation. Now, some of you who are sharp will look at this verse and say, "Ah, that cannot be true, how can it be true? Has Jesus ever had an abortion or miscarriage in my life? He can't, God cannot say He has experienced all my sufferings, my temptations. Has God gone through 10 rounds of chemotherapy, like I have? Has God been, has Jesus been paralyzed neck down and lost all his limb functions? How can you say, Jesus was in every respect tempted as we are?" But you've got to understand, there is something called the external aspect of temptation, and then there is the internal core of temptation. The externals will be different, for different people. But the core of temptation remains the same. The fear of rejection, abandonment, frustration, isolation; these are the temptations all of us deal with. Now, it may be different kinds of triggers, but the core remains the same. In fact, if you push the logic a little bit further, nobody can really know what you feel all the time, anytime, actually, because, your temptation is unique to you. It's unique in the context, it's unique in the triggers, it's unique in the magnitude. Everybody's temptations, everybody's struggles, are unique. It's as unique as a snowflake; it's different for everyone. But the core remains the same. The temptations we face remain the same. And Jesus, actually, has been tempted in every way, to a degree none of us have ever been tempted before. Because, way before the full force of temptation comes, we've already given up; we've already fallen into sin. That's who we are. But Jesus resisted the temptation unto the very end. He never sinned, so He experienced the full force of temptation, you see. And, now, He is our suitable, sympathetic, High Priest.

23:18

There's this boy who walked by a shop, and saw this sign "Puppies for sale." He got in, and there were many little puppies who came his way. He saw all them. He says, "Sir, how much do they cost?" "Well, they will cost you 25 bucks, son." And then, as he was speaking, one little puppy was extremely slow, hobbled and limped his way to the little boy. The little boy says, "How much would that puppy be? Could he be cheaper?" The storeowner says, "Well, son, you don't understand, you won't want that puppy. He is crippled. He is born with a congenital hip problem, and he, he

doesn't walk good. He is not going to be able to run, and he certainly won't be able to walk fast at all. Maybe you can choose another one." This, the boy says, "No, I want that one." He pulled out his pants and he says, "Sir, don't you see, I don't walk good either. I'm a cripple, and I understand that a lot of love and care is needed for this puppy. Could you sell it to me at a cheaper price? I don't have much." The man, then, said to him, "Son, you can have this puppy, because I know you will take care of him well." It takes a cripple to understand a cripple; it takes man to fully understand men. And, therefore, our great High Priest, who is God-man, fully God and fully man, is our suitable High Priest. If He was only God, we may wonder if He sympathises with us. If He was only man, we wonder if His sacrifice is good enough. But here, in Jesus Christ, the mystery of godliness - God became man to be your High Priest. That's what we have today. And the Scripture says, hang on to Jesus; hold on to your confession, because there is none like Him.

25:34

We've seen the reason, because we are guilty sinners. We've seen the absolute relevance of Jesus; no one else could fill His shoes. So, what is the result of it all, if you hold on to your great High Priest? The author tells you, you can draw near. This is revolutionary. You can draw near to the throne of grace. The idea, here, this is priesthood language. The ability to draw near to God is very limited, limited to the High Priest, and to the very presence of God only once a year, and even then, he has to kill an animal, he has to have a blood sacrifice. It's very difficult to draw near to God. But with the finished work of Jesus Christ, because He is your High Priest, we can now draw near to God, we can now approach God. No more barriers, the veil of the temple was torn when Jesus died. Why did God do that? Message - you can draw near. God is no more far away, and aloof, and unapproachable; because of Jesus, we approach the throne; we approach the throne of grace. This is where He dispenses His help, His mercies, His grace, to those who are in need. Now, why, why would I be able to approach God? Just in case you still don't get it - we approach God not because of who we are, or what we have done, but we approach God because of who Jesus is, and what we, He has done. So, now, "... in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him." (Ephesians 3:11-12 ESV) You see, such strong words, such assured words - confidence, and boldness, and access, because of faith in Him.

27:37

I come back to our text, where it says, "you have confidence". In King James, it's translated "boldness". The ESV is "confidence". If you look at the original meaning, it fits, but there is also a meaning, whereby, it says, this is about "open speaking", "frank speaking", "unrestrained speech". You see, when you approach a dignitary (someone who is greater than you), and you are not sure whether you are on the right terms, you speak very little, and you want to hide, you don't want to say too much. But when you know, when you know that He is for you, when you know that there is nothing between your soul and your God, you can come pouring your heart, you can come speaking openly before Him. That is what prayer looks like, when you understand, you stand in grace. You pour out your heart, and this is where you receive mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation, cleansing. This is you get grace, help, and strength, when you are weak, when you're going through tough times. This is where you, you know you have the grace to hang up on. And all that is possible because of Jesus. You know, today, you don't have to go to a priest to pray for you. You don't have to go to your pastor to pray for you. He can pray for you, with you, that's fine. But you don't have to be limited by him. You have confidence, you, you have, you have this access. You can draw near, you can open your mouth wide, you can pour out your heart, and He will give you mercy and grace in a time of need. See, the whole passage here is this - the Jews are so tempted to give up on their faith. They are persecuted, they are ostracised, they are isolated. They say, "Maybe I should leave Jesus and go back to Judaism. I should go back to the Law of Moses. I should go back to legalism. It's hard." But the author says, "How can you turn back? How can you turn back? There is only one way you may be saved - Jesus Christ." But I'm having struggles; I'm having a tough time being a follower of Jesus. Well, let me tell you something - come to the throne of grace, come, and open your mouth wide. Come and pray. Ask God to help you. And, and that, my folks, is the link between the perseverance of a saint and the prayer life of a saint. There is, you can't divorce these two. So, only as we come to the throne, that mercy and grace is dispensed, that we can keep on believing and holding on.

30:37

I say to you, those who are here with us, new, first time, you're not a Christian; you wouldn't even think about that as yet - do you have a better plan? Maybe you've been thinking to yourself, "Hey, at least I'm coming to church. At least I'm flipping the

Bible. Surely, that will count for something?" Well, on the Day of Judgment, the Word of God, the x-ray of the soul, would highlight and point out all the sins and filth in our heart. All that you thought was able to cover it will be taken away; everything will be naked and exposed. What's your plea on that day, as you stand before the judge? I know my plea. My plea before God is, "God, I am guilty as charged. I'm absolutely sinful, and I deserve the wrath of God. You are holy, I'm sinful. But my plea, O God, is that Your son went to the cross and paid the price for all my sins. He died on the cross, He is risen, He is now in a place of glory. I stand in Christ alone, and in Christ, God, I've confidence, You have forgiven me. That is my strong plea, not in what I've done, but in what Jesus has done." Would you think about your plea on the Day of Judgment? It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the Judgment. How will you do on that day? The Bible tells us, "Repent and believe, and you will be saved."

32:37

Some of you, here, have been coming to church for eons, years. You've always been able to fool your parents, your friends, that you are religious, that you are faithful in coming, that you are very much identified with the body life of this church, you are part of the church. But deep in your heart, you know you are not the real deal. Subtly, but strangely, you have accepted these hypocrisies, and coverings, and pretenses, almost like an ostrich who buries his head in the ground, and you assume that things will go by, and on the Day of Judgment, it will all not be seen, and you will, somehow, be accepted into the eternal habitation with God. You can't run, you can't escape, it'll be all lay open and exposed. My friends, I speak this to you, not out of meanness, not because I enjoy saying these things, but it is necessary for your soul to get this absolutely right - that you've repented and believed in Jesus Christ as your Saviour. That's your only plea. So, don't play the game in church, because you can't play the game before God. Make sure, today, won't you? We have a great High Priest who is both successful and sympathetic. For those of you who are thinking of giving up, I'm glad you came this morning, but life has been tough. You've been hit by one trial after another, and you say, "I want to give up on my faith." Hey, come to the throne of grace, where you find mercy and grace in time of need. Keep on believing.

34:47

I think, this sermon should end with a song, because I find the words appropriate for it. The song goes, "Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea". Do you know that the plea of Christ is strong and perfect? He finished it all. It is finished. It is perfect work. God will not refuse the finished work of Jesus Christ. Your work is prophetic and weak; my work, horrendous and totally unacceptable. Today, let's stand before the throne, because of this strong and perfect plea. "A great High Priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on His hands, My name is written on His heart, I know that while in heaven He stands, No tongue can bid me thence depart. When Satan tempts me to despair, And tells me of the guilt within, Upward I look and see Him there, Who made an end of all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died, My sinful soul is counted free, For God the Just is satisfied, To look on Him and pardon me. Behold Him there, the risen Lamb, My perfect, spotless Righteousness, The great unchangeable I AM, The King of glory and of grace. One with Himself, I cannot die, My soul is purchased by His blood, My life is hid with Christ on high, With Christ my Savior and my God, With Christ my Savior and my God." Christ is my Saviour and my God. Is He yours as well? Let's bow for a word of prayer together.

36:53

With Christ my Saviour and my God. The key word - "my". He's not just "a" Saviour, because, really, there is none like Him. Neither should we say that He is only "the" Saviour, as if He's detached from us. But how sweet and wonderful, today, for me to be able to say, "He is my Saviour." Would you say that today, for yourself? Do you have a strong and perfect plea? If you're going to court soon, you'll get a good lawyer, you'll prepare your case, you'll gather the evidence. But so many people, in this world today, are absolutely careless about the most important Judgment Day of all - the judgment when we stand before God. They sloppily think, and assume, and presume, that their good works would count for something. They casually presume that doing religious things in church is going to count for something. The Word of God is just going to peel everything away, and to show us our sinful hearts. No pretense, no hiding, no escape. And, when our raw, wicked, hardened, hearts are exposed right before the all-seeing eye of God, only those who say, "Jesus paid it all" would stand at the throne of grace. I wonder, what would happen to your heart on that day? My friends, would you come to Jesus this morning, whether you have been in church for a long time or not, that's not the key. The key is, have you come to Jesus? Have you repented of your sin? Have you believed in him as your Saviour? That's the question

you need to answer. Do you have a priest? Do you have a priest who has paid it all, who cares for you, who pleads for you? Do you have Him? I have one. And I want to ask you to follow me in following Jesus. He tells you today, "Come to me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rest from the fear of judgment. Rest from trying to be good enough for God. You can rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Would you come to God today, right here, right now, in your soul, acknowledging you're a sinner, you need to repent of your sinful ways, and believe in Jesus. I want to speak to you, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ. You're going through hardships, and pains, and difficulties. Come to the throne, come to the throne. Maybe you've, you've blown it, you've sinned against God again and again. Come to the throne, because there is mercy, and because there is grace. Whatever the Lord is saying to you this morning, I just like to give you some time, not just to hear His Word, but to respond to Him. Let this be true worship, worship from the heart that has been touched by the grace of God in His word.

41:02

Father, we thank You this morning. Amazing grace, how astounding, that, while we were yet sinners, You would give Your Son to be born as man, to be like unto us, that He may die for us. We praise You for this great High Priest. We praise You for this sacrifice, this Lamb of God that was slain before the foundation of the world. You thought of us before anything else. We praise You. And we ask, today, we will worship You in faith, in repentance, in obedience. So, dear God, draw each one of us near to You. This is Your desire for Your creation. And, so, be glorified through this time, as men and women turn their hearts to Jesus Christ. We thank You, and we pray, all this, now, in Jesus' Name, Amen.