

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

You've heard the expression "walk a mile in someone else's shoes" before. Sometimes we use it to encourage empathy – put yourself into someone else's situation to relate to them. Other times we use it to remind ourselves not to be too quick to judge others – because unless we've been there, we can't truly know what it's like.

And so this is also something we look for in people who help us. When we're struggling with something, and we need help, don't we want someone who's walked a mile in our shoes – someone who's been there? Then they won't look down on us – they're able to sympathize us. And because they've been there, they'll know what kind of help we actually need.

This is what we have in our High Priest. When it comes to our daily struggle against temptation, Jesus has been there – walked a mile in our shoes. **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are.**

The Hebrew Christians reading this letter needed to hear it. They were struggling. In their day, Christianity was declared illegal by Rome. Some of these Hebrew Christians were being arrested, losing their homes, their livelihoods. And so the temptation they struggled with was letting go of their faith in Jesus to avoid all that.

You might think you've never really been in their shoes. Not all that tempted to give up your Savior! But the truth is, if you're a Christian, you *are* in their shoes. You're locked in a daily struggle against temptation. The temptations vary, but the stakes are just as high, because the devil's end goal is the same: To get you to give up your Savior. To get you to fall into sin more and more until, over time, you get used to it... you're enslaved by it...you've lost Jesus.

So what temptations do you struggle with most? What weaknesses is the devil good at using to get you to fall? Anger – lose temper, hold a grudge? Worry – loved ones future? Sexual desires – look and have impure thoughts? Gossip? Selfishness?

I don't know what it is for you – I haven't lived a day in your shoes. But you and I both know all the times we've struggled and failed. Even worse, we can think of times we've failed to really struggle.

But we have a Great High Priest. And he's done more than just walk a mile in our shoes. He was **tempted in every way, just as we are.** All of Jesus' earthly life, the devil was busy trying to get Jesus to sin in all the ways he's tried to get us to sin. Whatever you're struggling with,

Jesus has been there. And it was a struggle for him! After his 40 days with the devil, he was so weak that angels came to strengthen him. Weak...but the winner. **Tempted...yet without sin.**

His victory is yours. See, Jesus wasn't just walking a mile in your shoes here. He was living his life in your place. The High Priest represented Israel before God – stood in their place. He even wore a gold breastplate with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel on it to show: What he did, counted for all Israel.

What Jesus did, counts for you. Your name was on his heart as he lived perfectly – that's credited to you through faith. Your name was on his heart as he died paying for your failures – that's credited to you, too. You might look at yourself and see the ways you've failed to struggle, or struggled to fail, but God looks at you, and know what he sees? Jesus. He sees Jesus' holiness, people who are fit for heaven.

But until we get there, we need help. The struggle against temptation is real, stakes eternal, and we are far too weak to win on our own. We need daily help from our High Priest.

So let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Jesus won't look down on you or send you away. No matter the struggle, he'll have perfect compassion on you. Because he's been in your shoes. And because he has, he also knows just the help you need, and he'll never fail to give it.

Let's approach him every day to find it. In the morning, ask God to guard you from temptation. When it comes, run to his throne in prayer for a way out and the strength to take it. At night, again to confess failures and let Jesus' blood cover them, too. Approach it in his word, as in a daily devotion Jesus puts his armor on you to protect you. Here, at church, where the Jesus who's been in our shoes to save us gives us just the forgiveness and strength that we need to keep on walking with him. Amen.