

Our All Seeing High Priest

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into Hebrews chapter 4, focusing on the power of the Word of God to discern our thoughts and intentions, the importance of entering God's rest through faith and obedience, and the reality that nothing is hidden from God's sight. It emphasizes the need to confess our sins and hold fast to our faith in Jesus, our great High Priest who intercedes for us in the heavenly realms.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:12, Hebrews 4:13, Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "The Power of God's Word", "Entering God's Rest through Faith"

Description

This sermon delves into Hebrews chapter 4, focusing on the power of the Word of God to discern our thoughts and intentions, the importance of entering God's rest through faith and obedience, and the reality that nothing is hidden from God's sight. It emphasizes the need to confess our sins and hold fast to our faith in Jesus, our great High Priest who intercedes for us in the heavenly realms.

Transcript

Hebrews chapter 4 and we'll read 11 through 16. Hebrews chapter 4 reading from verse 11 through verse 16. Hebrews 4.11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience for the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart and there is no creature hidden from his sight but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account seeing then that 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 cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need so just very quickly we were in verse 12 last week where he speaks about the power of the Word of God now remember it's against the background that we need to hear today if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts and then he says that the Word of God is living and it is powerful and it is sharper than a two-edged sword it is a very precise instrument and it is able to deal with issues in our hearts it is able to divide between soul and spirit which is a very very difficult thing to do between joints and marrow which is not literal but it's simply speaking of the of the preciseness and the acuity of the Word of God its ability to to divide things that are very difficult to divide from a human point of view and then it divides between the or discerns between the thoughts and the intents of the heart so even before our thoughts become intentions or between at that at that very fine point where we go over from just thinking

about something to intending to do it and it's a it's a split second but the Word of God is able to discern that difference now he then says and there is no creature so he's reminding us that there is a rest that we need to enter in we do not enter in although Israel did not and we potentially do not enter that rest because of disobedience and unbelief or unbelief and disobedience the Word of God he then says is powerful and so against our disobedience and inability to hear and to believe is the power of the Word of God and then he says that there is another thing we need to bear in mind remember he's writing to a group of who are clearly considering returning to or moving away from the faith some of them back to Judaism and some of them just to forsake the faith because it has become too hard to serve the Lord and so in against that background then he says there is nothing that is hidden from his sight and I was blessed by the scripture that clay quoted this morning a little earlier that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro over the earth God is watching God is seeing and one of the attributes of God is that big fancy word he is omniscient he knows everything omniscient from the word sight knowing God knows everything there is nothing that is hidden from his sight now he says there is no creature hidden from his sight in other words there's nothing that is created and he's specifically referring to us the fact is that God knows according to the Lord Jesus even that no sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge so he even sees the sparrows that die he knows the number of hairs on our head he knows all of these details but now he is particularly focusing in on the Christian and he is saying there is nothing that is hidden from his sight now I I know that I don't need to I don't need to prove that to you I know that you know that and yet the reality is and I'm sure that the people that he was writing to they understood that they knew that one of the first things that we understand about God is that God knows everything that God sees everything that there is nothing that is hidden from him and remember against the background that his word if his word is able to discern between thoughts and intentions in other words then God is able to see the that split-second difference from when a thought becomes an intention there's nothing that he doesn't see he sees our thoughts and I think that the problem is that we we I think know that but we don't believe it there is there is nothing that we do that God doesn't see there is nothing that we don't think that God does not see there is no motive that God does not know and you know the problem of course is we say well you know I'm doing the right stuff you know everybody around me says well look at it look at look at this wonderful Christian they're doing all the right things but God sees even beyond that and of course the problem is that we we fool ourselves and I'm speaking about men or people in general because we know that crime is committed at night well partly because hopefully the police won't see you but but there's also an underlying thing in man's mind that when it's dark somehow God doesn't see and so things get done in the dark that would not be done in the light and in our culture even it's certain things are acceptable when it's dark like getting drunk in in certain certain areas certain communities when you're unsaved it's fine to get drunk after dark but it's not fine to get drunk in the morning no no what's the difference the only difference I can think of is that well maybe God doesn't see me when I get drunk at night in our area we have problems with parties all the time every Saturday night there's a party and because of where the house is we get the noise from from all around but but gratefully most of those people go to a certain kind of church and at 12 o'clock the noise stops because it's Sunday now and I'm very grateful well I I don't think that that church can save I'm very grateful that that at least they have some kind of of respect well this is the the Lord's Day and I've told you before when we renovated the building the the workmen were very careful not to not to curse inside here because well why it's God's house God will hear but he doesn't hear when you're outside and you're no there is nothing that is hidden from him he sees and he knows everything now folks here's the problem that if we really believe that as Christians we would live very different lives I'm constantly absolutely shocked by the stuff that Christians do and and the first question that comes up to me to me and I and you and I'm sure you've heard me say this before they live it's though God doesn't

see as though God doesn't know what they're doing God knows God sees and and of course this is the scary thing is that God sees even our thoughts and and and of course that's where a lot of sin goes on remember he's just spoken about the thoughts and the intentions that's where where there's a lot of problems where it all begins remember Jesus if you're angry with your brother without a cause you've committed murder why because that thought becomes an intention and the intention becomes an action if you looked upon a woman to lust after her you've done it because the thought becomes an intention the intention becomes an action and the only thing that prevents you from killing your brother or from taking your your your friend's wife is opportunity or the potential of being caught that's really the only but but just think about that so you would do it if you weren't going to get caught but what about God doesn't matter if your spouse or her spouse his spouse or the community don't catch you God's caught you so this must impact on the way we live our lives look it must impact on what we think about it must impact what we where our minds go and and don't tell me you don't have a problem because I have a problem all of our minds go in places where they should not go in all sorts of different directions I will nobody nobody knows what's going on in my mind what God knows now these these guys were are seriously thinking about going back to their former faith which cannot save and obviously for them particularly in order to go back to Judaism they have to turn their back on Christ that's the the problem and obviously for for us as as Gentiles our temptation is not necessarily to go back to Judaism but to go back to the world and it comes to the same thing you can't go back to the world without forsaking and without denying the Lord Jesus Christ without turning your back upon him and I believe what the writer is saying is don't you understand that God is understanding God knows God knows what you're thinking about God knows he says to these Hebrews that you're considering turning your back on Christ he knows it and so he's appealing to them and saying don't go there and so all things are naked and that that is a good translation that's literally what the Greek says there is no place to hide none of us like to be naked outside of our own bathrooms because if you are everything is exposed and everything is exposed before God God sees us that exactly the way we are and they are open to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account so not only are they naked but they are open now this is a this is a difficult word and and I suppose open is maybe the best word we can get in English they the scholars struggle with this word because the it seems that the the word is a specific word which was used for a man who was sentenced to death and on his death walk they would stick a sword or a dagger under his chin to keep his head up so that he could not hide his face from the shame now that's a terrible picture but that's the literal word he's using you can't hide your shame from God in fact we have a and and I do I think if I tell you the story you may you may remember this but it's something that really stuck in my mind if you remember a few years ago they captured El Chapo the big Mexican kingpin and I don't remember exactly where it was I think it was when they were walking him from the plane to the to the the armored car or whatever they were going to transport him on the the officers and I don't remember if they were Mexican federalists or whether they were they they had him at the back of his neck and they forced him to look at the cameras anyone remember that we know what a man in that situation does he's going to hide we've seen people put their coats over their heads we've seen people put their put their heads down but they grabbed his neck and they forced him to look into the cameras and exposed his shame that's the exact word that is used here and and I think that it tells us a little bit about what the writer is saying what the spirit is saying and he's saying we think we can hide our shame but God makes us look into the camera of his spirit who looks right down into our souls and sees the stuff and of course that in its own is bad news but there is good news which will come to in a moment but they are we are naked and we are open to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account now God obviously does not have eyes I just need to deal with that because there is a a wrong teaching in some areas that God has eyes ears hands and things like that because the Bible says he has eyes God is not a does not have a

body God is a spirit he is not like us but the scripture uses what we call anthropomorphic anthropomorphisms things that relate to human beings anthro man and applies it to God so that we can understand so so God doesn't have eyes God just knows and of course that's why we no man can we can't see him because he is spirit God is in a different level God is in a different dimension to what we are but he knows he sees everything is open before him and it's not just that they are open before him now the scripture that clay quoted is a positive one that the Lord's eyes are on was it on those who seek him and that's a good thing God is watching us that he might sucker us that he might help us that he might strengthen us that he might protect us so there's a aspect of God watching us that is positive but there's an aspect of God watching us that is negative and this is it here because they are open to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account so this is not him watching to help us but this is him watching to judge us and obviously we understand that we are forgiven by the blood that those things that are confessed to him he is righteous and just to forgive us to cleanse us of all unrighteousness and the problem is that because we think no one saw we hide our sin you remember the the very first problem with Cain and Abel Cain kills his brother looks around doesn't see anyone and he buries him but God saw and God says but his blood is crying out to heaven for vengeance remember Moses did the same thing he killed an Egyptian thought nobody saw it but in fact not only had God seen it but the other Jewish people had seen it and so we must give an account we can't bury our mistakes we can't hide our failure we must face up to it that's the only way we can deal with it and as we face up to it as we confess our sin he is faithful and just to forgive us that's it I received an email from someone this last week that had done me much harm few years ago had maligned me on the internet made false accusations his email is not was not the first one his email to me was you must forgive and he quoted various scriptures and my response was the same responses before I have forgiven you but you need to repent but he will not repent he will not say I'm sorry so I've forgiven him I really have but there's no basis for a relationship because he won't face up to his sin and that's the problem that happens with every one of us as long as we think we can hide our issues those issues remain there Abel's body was in the ground but it was there and God could see it and God could hear and obviously this is not literal but God could hear the blood of Abel crying out for justice for vengeance and so as long as we hide our sin we think nobody knows we think God doesn't know it's going to remain a problem better dig those those bodies up and say here Lord I did it please forgive me and he forgives focus that easy it's not difficult but our pride and the deception of our own hearts to say nobody knows the example I quoted earlier all he has to say is brother I'm sorry I lied about you that's all I'm not asking for blood and I know that's a weak example because I'm talking about me as a man but how much more with God God's not looking to rub our noses in it I trust you know the the way we train dogs I don't know if it works but God doesn't rub our noses in it he's just waiting for us to come clean so Lord yeah I messed up and there's forgiveness instant God doesn't say well yeah I'll let you stew for a while you know a couple of years and I'll beat you up and then you know I'll think about it no if we confess our sins he is faithful and just and he forgives instantly immediately if we don't what happens is that we will give an account now again maybe just to clarify how the process works it doesn't mean that you're gonna lose your salvation it could lead to that but that's not necessary because all of us have skeletons in our closets but as long as we don't bring those skeletons to the light as long as we don't dig those bodies up they're gonna be there and on the day of judgment we're gonna give an account for that now as I said that does not necessarily mean we'll lose our salvation as a result of that but there would be rebuke there would be a loss of reward but just the disappointment in the eyes of him who sees everything I was saying you you never came clean with me so we must give an account and folk we must keep a short account again maybe you don't maybe that's part of my language but in the old days in South Africa before long before computers they had a book in which the ledger in which they would write down the debt so you would go

to the general store and you would buy bread and milk and whatever and they would write it in the book and it was part of our language we would say just put it on the book please and they would write it down and at the end of the month you would go back and they would add it up and you pay the money and they would draw a line through it or whatever and say and you start all over again but if you don't go every month to pay the account the account gets longer and longer and longer and longer now let's not let their account get longer because the problem is that we begin to forget the stuff that was way back there that is undealt with it's still there the fact that we've forgotten conveniently doesn't mean it's not been dealt that it's not there it's still there and God knows it's still on the book so keep a short account come to God regularly say Lord let me help me examine my heart where what are the issues that I'm not dealing with help me to deal with them I bring them to you I bring them to the light so that they can be dealt with so they can be forgiven so I can be cleansed I can move on and of course the same applies to relationships husbands and wives don't deal with stuff either because it's too embarrassing or it's too inconvenient or it's too whatever and what happens it adds up and adds up and adds up until eventually something breaks the camel's back don't do it deal with it that's why the book of Ephesians says don't let the Sun set on your wrath deal with it get it clean start with a fresh slate every day if possible I know sometimes things are hard sometimes it takes a few days to sort things out but unfortunately sometimes in our relationships we go months and years without dealing with stuff between us and our brother and between us and our spouse and we think it'll go away it doesn't go away and so let's deal with these things because God sees and he keeps an account that's why he uses the word and we need to give an account the books will be opened remember this is not the books of the book of it of life there's two judgments the judgment of the unbelievers if their names are not in the book of life that they're cast into the lake of fire but then there's also the book of the deeds of the Saints the good stuff and the bad stuff that we do those books will be opened on that day and there's no reason why there should be anything on the debit side if I remember my bookkeeping there's no reason there should be anything on the negative side of our page when we stand before the Lord because he's made provision for the that that record may be expunged and that it may be and I pray that for each one of us there would be a lot on the positive side on the credit side of the things that we have done that that he will reward us for the good stuff we have done it's no good saying well I'm hoping that somehow it'll balance out I mean that's the way the world thinks we shouldn't be thinking that way there's no need for us to think that way we have the privilege of being able to keep nothing on the negative side and everything on the on the positive side all right let me deal with one more verse we running late this evening so this 14 seeing then so here's now now remember what he's just said he says there's nothing hidden we're gonna have to give an account seeing then that we have a great high priest so we have a solution and an answer to the hidden things of our hearts we have an answer and the answer is in the high priest in the Lord Jesus Christ so this is this is not the this is not the way the world works the world says well you've done all these bad things it's going to be on your record and that's the that's the way it is no he gives us a high priest that is able to deal with the things that ought not to be in our lives and so he's now going to introduce the idea this is the third time he already that he's used and uses the word high priest and in chapter 4 the next verse and then in chapter 5 he's going to get into detail about the work of the high priest and then in chapter 7 and 8 he's going to come back to that so this is a very big part of the of the book of Hebrews so we have a great high priest not just a high priest because he's going to contrast human high priests the sons of Aaron with Jesus the great high priest and so we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens Jesus the Son of God let us hold fast our confession so our high priest he says has passed through the heavens so what does he mean well first of all we need to go back to the Old Testament picture that he is or analogy that he is drawing from remember that the high priest in the Old Testament once a year on the Day of Atonement would go Yom

Kippur he would go into the holiest of all and make atonement for the sins of the people and this is what he is referencing so he's making reference obliquely to the atonement that Jesus has made for us but in order for the high priest to go into the holiest of all he would have to go through three gates three doors three veils literally he need to go into the outer court from outside and there was a gate made of fabric that he would have to go through with the blood animal having been killed outside remember we saw was it on Sunday Jesus killed outside of the great of the gate outside of the city so the animal is killed he brings the blood he goes through the first gate into the outer court he goes through the second veil into the holy place and then he finally goes through the third veil into the holiest of all only the high priest could go in there and only once a year he could not just go in there whenever he chose to go when the high priest did that there was to be no one else in the holy place where the priest would normally be or in the outer court where the priest would also function and so they would all be outside and he alone would go through the outer court the holy place into the holiest of all so this is the reference this is what he's referring to so the high priest passes through these areas to get into the place where the atonement is made now he says he's passed through the heavens and if you analyze and we don't have the time and I didn't bring all the references but you can do an entire study use your your app or your Bible concordance or Bible program and look up the word how the word heaven or heavens is used particularly in the New Testament and what you'll find is that there are three heavens not the seventh heaven like we have in our language there's three there's three heavens the first heaven is the sky where the birds and the airplanes and things fly the atmosphere if you will the second heaven is the is space where the Sun and the moon and the planets are and even beyond that everything that we can see through our telescopes is part of the second heaven and then beyond that is the third heaven where God is and of course that boggles the mind because how big is this universe how big is that are the galaxies now how can there be something beyond that well there is something beyond that because we're no longer in time and space we're in the spirit if you will where God so God does not dwell in a physical place the like the way we do he does not even inhabit the universe while he's present in the universe he does not inhabit the universe he is outside of time he's outside of three dimensions in a different a different place a different idea totally so that's where God is remember Paul speaks about the fact that he was caught up into the third heaven and he saw things that could not be uttered and so what he is saying then is the same way as the high priest goes from the outer court through the holy place into the holiest of all Jesus has gone through the heavens into the very presence of God now obviously it's it's not that important you know what route did he go did he go via the Sun and then via you know no that's that's not the point the point is simply that he like the high priest would go from the people into the presence of God a place where no one else could go Jesus goes right into the presence of God when no one else can go in order to make atonement for us and remember he does two important things there and we're going to see this as we go along he makes atonement and he intercedes and we so we'll see this as we as we go along so he has passed through the heavens Jesus the Son of God let us hold fast our confession so they did not enter because of unbelief and disobedience his word is sharp and powerful and is able to deal with the issues in our lives we need to understand that everything is open before him and so let him cut you know I've come across some people who've had serious medical problems that an operation would have fixed but they're afraid of the knife rightly or wrongly and they suffer because they don't want the pain of an operation for God needs to operate on our hearts with the sword of the Spirit of with his word because the purpose is not to hurt us the purpose is to cut out the malignancy the cancer the stuff that is that is polluting our whole body and soul and spirit and he's not a blind operator I think we would all have a problem if you had an appointment with a surgeon who's going to do some delicate operation and he comes in with a white stick God can see exactly what he is doing and he's he's he's when he cuts it's precise it deals with the issue I'm amazed by doctors who

work on the brain to cut out tumors and have to the most incredibly fine work because just just a fraction this way and some function of the man is destroyed but God's able to do that he doesn't destroy us he doesn't maim us we don't come out of the operation more broken than we went in we come out healed because he is a faithful high priest and so because of this he says let us hold fast our confession now this is the third time that he uses this word hold fast in chapter 3 in verse 6 and and it appears a number of times further on in the in the book as well but Christ is a son over his own house whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence firm unto the end and then this 14 of chapter 3 for we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end so you can see this is a theme and the theme is going to continue right through the book the need to hold fast and we need to hold fast he says our confession what is our confession what we believe how what what is what what what does our confession consist of well when we use the word confession we say well that has to do with a vocal testimony as we heard earlier testifying to our salvation testifying to the gospel verbally but remember that we don't just confess with our mouth remember the book of Romans says with their mouth man makes confession unto salvation but we confess with our actions with our deeds the way we live is a confession of who we are and he says we need to hold fast unto the right confession don't let it go remember this is the theme this is the message or well not the theme but this is the background to the book the theme is Jesus the background to the book is these guys are ready to let go and they say no we don't believe anymore no he says you need to hold on to that because we have a faithful high priest a great high priest who is actually in the very presence of God now I know I've told you the story before but let me close with the story because it's it really does illustrate this point when I was in the Air Force I served with a man who eventually became the chief of the South African Air Force he was captured in Korea there were South Africans along with Brits and Americans fighting in Korea South Korea against North Korea he was captured and he told me the story that on what we call Armistice Day which is Veterans Day Veterans Day 11th of November and I'm sure you know that in British States British countries they wear a little poppy and I'm not going to get into that but that's reminding them of Flanders reminding them of the war and those that have that fell the 11th of November is the day that peace was signed between with Germany surrendered and peace was signed so on the 11th of November they came the the the prisoners of war so they were prisoners of war and in a camp run by the Chinese and the Allied prisoners of war were brought up on parade as they were every morning to be counted and to be given orders and when they came on they had all made they'd spent weeks using all sorts of things to make little paper poppies and dyed them red with some of them literally with blood and within whatever they could and every man had a a red poppy and with it he was that was his confession of faith not in a spiritual sense but that was showing his allegiance and his unity with those that had fallen in previous wars and the Chinese selected one man and pulled him out and said you must take that off throw it on the ground and he refused to do that because that was just symbolic but it was an important symbol and when they moved towards him he grabbed the poppy in his hand and he clung to that poppy until they beat him to death he wasn't going to let it go because that was who he was he was one with those that had fallen in the previous wars so we have a greater confession than identity with a military force and I'm not saying that that was I'm not judging that and yet how easily don't we just let it go I don't know the man oh but you speak like him you from his area no I'll give you a few swear words to prove I don't know him just like that and we judge Peter and yet how easily do we let our testimony slip we have a great high priest he's entered into heaven let's hold fast our confession father we pray that you'd help us help us Lord understand that everything is naked and open before you to whom we must give an account help us Lord to keep a short account help us Lord to make this practical and as we go home to this evening Lord to examine our hearts and our lives Lord deal with the issues that we need to deal with in our relationship with you and our relationships with others Lord

that our that the that the the debit side the negative side might be cleared that there may be nothing between us and you that there may be nothing that we can be held to account except for that which we've done on the good side Lord I pray that you'd help us to to just cling to our confession Lord we're living in a time in which there's tremendous pressure to compromise on on our faith to compromise on our morals to compromise on what we believe help us Lord you cling to the confession of our faith because we do have a high priest and he's praying for us and he's not here on earth and such but he is in your very presence at the right hand of the majesty on high so Lord we pray that you'd help us understand help us Lord to be doers of your word and not just hearers only I pray that you'd go with us now Lord keep us and protect us bring us together again safely on Sunday we pray in Jesus name amen

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