
Words of Truth

Hebrews 4:15

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In last week's article we studied about Jesus being our great high priest. In continuation of that study, we shall consider the following passage in this article: *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Hebrews 4:15). This passage of Scripture lays out for us that Jesus is compassionate. He understands what we have to live through in this world as human beings.

The phrase "touched with the feeling" comes from a Greek word that means this: "to feel sympathy with, i.e. (by implication) to commiserate: — have compassion, be touched with a feeling of. To be affected with the same feeling as another, to sympathize with, to feel for, have compassion on" (Strong's # 4834). You will find that Greek term one other time in the New Testament. It is translated "compassion" (Hebrews 10:34). We can see the compassion Christ had when He was in the flesh (Matthew 14:13-21, Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 1:40-45, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 7:11-17, etc.). As Jesus taught about compassion, the subject matter was not just pertaining to things in the flesh. He tied forgiveness to compassion (Matthew 18:15-35 and Luke 15:11-32). He taught about compassion in a manner of helping one's neighbor (Luke 10:25-37). So, we can understand that when we consider the compassion of our high priest Jesus Christ, we are talking about spiritual and physical matters.

The term translated "infirmities" means: "feebleness (of mind or body); by implication, malady; morally, frailty: — disease, infirmity, sickness, weakness. Want of strength, weakness, infirmity; of the body; its native weakness and frailty, feebleness of health or sickness of the soul; want of strength and capacity requisite; to understand a thing; to do things great and glorious; to restrain corrupt desires; to bear trials and troubles" (Strong's # 769). It was prophesied and fulfilled that Jesus took infirmities and bare sicknesses miraculously (Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:14-17). He healed physical infirmities (Luke 5:15, Luke 8:1-3, Luke 13:10-17, John 5:1-18, etc.). This is a term that applies to things suffered in the flesh. So, He has compassion on the things that mankind suffers in the flesh.

Why is it that Jesus can understand and have compassion for the things mankind suffers through physically and spiritually? He can understand because He was, "tempted like as we are." The word translated "tempted" in the verse we are studying has a really long definition (Strong's # 3985). In part, it means: "endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline: —

assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt(-er), try.” So, to state it simply, we see that Jesus knows what it means to be tested in the flesh. We see this right from the beginning of His work. He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13). The same Greek word “πειράζω” (Strong’s # 3985) is used in that context. Jesus went through testing times at the hands of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, lawyers, etc. (Matthew 16:1-12, Matthew 19:1-12, Matthew 22:15-46, and John 8:1-11). The word “tempted” doesn’t always mean there is an attempt being made to cause someone to sin. Jesus asked questions to “prove” [same Greek term] His disciples (John 6:1-6). He did not do so to tempt them to sin (James 1:13). This same term is used in teaching saints to spiritually “examine” ourselves (II Corinthians 13:5).

Take some time here to ponder what we have just studied through. Jesus knows what it means to live in the flesh. He knows what it means to be tested. He knows what it means to suffer through physical ailments. Since He, unlike our Father in Heaven or the Holy Spirit, understands life in the flesh; He is the perfect high priest. He knows what it is to be both God and man (Romans 9:1-5). He can reason from both perspectives. This point will be made again as we enter into the next chapter of the Hebrew epistle (Hebrews 5:1-10).

As we proceed in our study, consider how that Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Later in this letter we will read this: *“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore”* (Hebrews 7:26-28). Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 9:28, I Peter 2:21-25, and I John 3:1-5). Jesus is able to aid those that are tempted like He was while He was the in flesh (Hebrews 2:16-18).

Don’t forget that Jesus lived in this world. He knows what sin does to people not only through His knowledge as God, but also through His experiences in the flesh. Through His compassion and ability to relate, He set forth clear instructions for those that choose to be His people to cease from sin (John 5:1-15, John 8:1-11, Romans 6:1-23, I Corinthians 15:34, II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Galatians 2:17, Ephesians 4:17-5:11, Philippians 2:14-16, II Timothy 2:19, Titus 2:2-14, I Peter 1:13-16, and II Peter 3:10-14). His instructions are not burdensome (I John 5:1-3). He is not trying to take pleasure away from us. In fact, His instructions are set forth to bring peace and well-being into our lives (Romans 8:6, Philippians 4:6-9, and Colossians 3:1-15). Sin doesn’t do good for anyone. He faced the same things that we face. To argue otherwise is to deny the inspired Scriptures that we have read. Jesus knows that carnal desires prevent a godly, productive life (Galatians 5:17). He also knows that those desires war against the soul (I Peter 2:11). He serves as the example of how to live in this world and not give in to sinful desires (I Peter 4:1-2). Be thankful for Jesus, our high priest.