

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL FEBRUARY 27, 2015

Written by the Rev. Dr. Titus Presler, adjunct faculty in missiology, and brought to you by the **World Mission Initiative** at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

SCRIPTURE

HEBREWS 4:11-16

11 Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs. 12 Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account. 14 Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

DEVOTIONAL

Probably collating stories of Jesus being tempted—the wilderness, a talk with Peter, anguish in Gethsemane—the writer to the Hebrews insists that Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, so our “great high priest” can sympathize with our weaknesses.

Temptation to sin is not temptation unless the tempted one can succumb to temptation. If Jesus could not have sinned, he would not be human and his incarnation would not save us humans. But, as Paul writes to the Philippians, Christ was emptied of divine prerogatives in becoming human. So, the very nature of God hung in the balance of Jesus’ response to temptation.

Jesus did not sin—not because he could not, but because he remained faithful. So, truly God in Christ is our companion, our empathetic priest, our savior.

PRAYER

Friend Jesus, as you were tempted, come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find your might to save. Amen.

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