

GNITN

#851

When You Hurt, He Knows

We Complain A Lot

As people we sometimes think that no one is going through what we are experiencing. It's as if we only see the struggles we have as unique. And when we talk about it we can actually say that no one understands what we're going through. This wallowing in our own sorrows isn't a new thing, but there is a tinge of truth to it. We are individuals and there will never be another person like us from a physical and mental perspective so yes, no one knows exactly what we're living with, but to say that there aren't commonalities is not true. Others have seen the challenges and gone through the trials that we're experiencing and many have written about them and now we can actually watch videos of their ups and downs in life. We certainly don't lack information these days. Unfortunately, the phrase misery loves company is all too true now. However, as Christians we can get too self-absorbed and can even lash out at God for what life is throwing at as if He doesn't know all about it. And now it can even get worse because we can connect with others online to commiserate about it, people who in past years we've never even known let alone communicate with. My point is that we can and often do spend more time on our lot in life than we should.

Jesus Could Have Complained

There's a passage in the book of *Hebrews* that has always fascinated me and at this time of year when we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus I think it is fitting to put our sufferings in contrast to His. Here are those verses:

Now that we know what we have—Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God—let's not let it slip through our fingers. We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all—all but the sin. So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help. (Hebrews 4:15-16, MSG)

I liked how this version reads. I like how it verbalizes the way Jesus lived a very human life and overcame those frailties that all people face. That phrase "*We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality.*" stands out to me now. And I want to explore this sentiment by pointing out the many things Jesus faced that we often gripe about and He dealt with them in a way that we can learn from now. But before I do that it's a good thing to remember that He went through all of these challenges without falling into the trappings we so often do. And, of course He offers His help.

He Was Fully Human

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then

died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion. (Phil 2:7-8, MSG)

That means He felt hunger, thirst, fatigue, sorrow, stress. All of these are seen in one account from His life and that is when He was tempted by Satan:

Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, to be tempted there by Satan. ² For forty days and forty nights he ate nothing and became very hungry. ³ Then Satan tempted him to get food by changing stones into loaves of bread.

“It will prove you are the Son of God,” he said.

⁴ But Jesus told him, “No! For the Scriptures tell us that bread won’t feed men’s souls: obedience to every word of God is what we need.”

⁵ Then Satan took him to Jerusalem to the roof of the Temple. ⁶ “Jump off,” he said, “and prove you are the Son of God; for the Scriptures declare, ‘God will send his angels to keep you from harm,’ . . . they will prevent you from smashing on the rocks below.”

⁷ Jesus retorted, “It also says not to put the Lord your God to a foolish test!”

⁸ Next Satan took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him the nations of the world and all their glory. ⁹ “I’ll give it all to you,” he said, “if you will only kneel and worship me.”

¹⁰ “Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “The Scriptures say, ‘Worship only the Lord God. Obey only him.’”

¹¹ Then Satan went away, and angels came and cared for Jesus. (Matt 4:1-11, TLB)

Rarely, if ever so we have an encounter with Satan himself, but Jesus did and dealt with the accuser of the brethren using the Bible. But we must note that He was attacked when he was physically the weakest. And we should also note that angels always minister to those who reject the Devil.

Jesus Faced Real Life

He dealt with emotional pain like grief when we see Him weeping at the tomb of Lazarus (**John 11:35**). He faced loneliness when His disciples fell asleep when He asked them to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane (**Matthew 26:40**). And He experienced betrayal by a close friend when Judas turned Him with a kiss (**Luke 22:48**). He knew what it felt like to be rejected by those He grew up with (**Luke 4:28-30**). And He was abandoned by His followers as we see in **John 6:66**. He knew what it was like to face denial as Peter denied him not just once but three times as seen in **Luke 22:61-62**. And He faced mental and spiritual pressure as we see He sweat drops of blood as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (**Luke 22:44**) and felt the weight of His calling as seen in **John 12:27**. When we talk about injustices, Jesus was falsely accused (**Matt 26:59-60**), mocked and humiliated after His illegal trial and unjust sentencing (**Matthew 27:29-31, Luke 23:23-24**). He found Himself exhausted right before He witnessed to the woman at the well (**John 4:6**) which many of us in ministry can relate to at some point or another. And I could add that His family didn’t believe in Him, even said He was out of His mind and tried to control His ministry (**Mark 3:21, John 7:5, Mark 3:31-35**). He was called illegitimate because of the virgin birth, He was accused of being demon possessed, and a blasphemer (**John 8:41, John 8:48, Mark 2:7**). He was poor growing up and during His ministry He was homeless, depending on others for His support (**Matthew 8:20, Luke 8:3**). As you can see, Jesus was very relatable.

Horrific Beatings

During the passion week, Jesus faced extreme physical persecution as we read in an [article](#) from *Charisma Magazine*:

Nobody performed an autopsy on Jesus' mangled body after He was taken down from the cross. But doctors who have studied the Bible's description of His death say the pain would have been beyond excruciating. In fact, the word "excruciating" means "out of the cross."

After His arrest, Jesus was flogged so mercilessly that His skin was stripped off His back, exposing muscle and bone. After being slapped, punched, crowned with thorns and beaten with reeds, He was covered with a red robe and led to Golgotha. There, soldiers drove nails (more like seven-inch spikes) into His wrists—most likely hitting the median nerve, causing more blinding pain. They nailed another long metal spike into His feet.

Jesus had even more massive physical pain:

At that point, Jesus would have suffered dislocation of His shoulders, cramps and spasms, dehydration from severe blood loss, fluid in His lungs and eventual lung collapse and heart failure. Yet, according to Matthew 27:34, Jesus refused to take a pain-killing solution. He endured the pain for us.

If you've watched the movie *The Passion of the Christ* you can get a better understanding of the actual bodily abuse Jesus endured. I've read a physician's account of how Jesus died and it is a wonder how He even made it to the cross at all. By some accounts just the beatings would have killed a person, let alone carrying a heavy cross and being nailed to it. As the Son of God, He could have avoided all of this and even called legions of angels to stop it (**Matt 26:53**) but He didn't. As you can see, Jesus really can relate to anything we go through in this life. But therein lies even better news.

He Offers Help

Going back to those verses in **Hebrews 4** we see that not only does Jesus totally understand the trials of life, He offers us the ability to deal with them:

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16, NIV)

The disappointing thing is that people don't come to the throne as often as they should or even at all. They may feel shame or go to the other extreme and think they don't need any help. But this verse tells us that because Jesus went through exactly what we're experiencing we should not only come to Him for help but do so boldly or with confidence. Such confidence comes from seeing Jesus help others time and time again in the Gospels and helping by bringing the perfect solution. And of course it is done with mercy and grace. I heard one pastor say that we can and should come into the throne room with dirty shoes, but we shouldn't leave the same way. We are much like the prophet Isaiah who knew he was unclean in God's presence and asked to be cleansed. God obliged and took a coal off the altar to do it. So rather than wallow in your sorrows, complain about your lot in life or commiserate with others to see who has it worse, remember that Jesus faced a similar fate as you and handled it using the grace God gave Him. He wants to minister to you not after you figure things out, but during the trials and tribulations much like He did with Joseph, Daniel, and the three Hebrew boys. So cast your cares on Him because He cares for you. Trust me when I tell you, He does see, He does understand, and He will help.

