

Text: Various

Title: Lord's Table: The Man of Sorrows

Truth: Jesus knows our griefs and sorrows...and carried them to Calvary.

Date/Location: Good Friday April 7, 2023 7pm at FBC

Order of Service

Welcome to our Good Friday worship where we gather to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, to remember His substitutionary death for us, and to encourage one another to keep living for the Lord.

Hymn #286 Hallelujah! What a Savior

Hymn #34 Look Ye Saints! The Sight is Glorious

Scripture Reading

Special: "Why?" Becky Banks and Naomi Postiff

Message (below)

Lord's Table

Hymn #315 The Holy Heart

Special "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" Naomi Postiff

Introduction

As I was thinking about how to encourage our folks who have experienced a lot of loss in recent months and years, it dawned upon me that one good way might be to remind ourselves that at the same time we experience our grief, the Lord Jesus knows perfectly what we are experiencing. This is because He Himself was a man of sorrows, and well acquainted with grief. Before you jump in your mind to the passage I know you are thinking of, first think of His many experiences with grief, going all the way back to...

I. The Evil of Mankind, Genesis 6:6

After the creation and first millennium of world history, the Bible tells us that people multiplied on the earth and wickedness multiplied on the earth. "The wickedness of man was great" and "every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

This bleak picture of humanity is why the text says that God was sorry He had made people, and He was **grieved** in His heart. He went about to correct this through a purging process of judgment by means of a great flood.

The point is that Jesus, united as He is with God the Father and the Spirit in the Trinity, felt grief from the early ages of world history. His sorrows did not start at the cross of Calvary. They started, from our vantage point, thousands of years before that. When Satan and mankind fled away from God, the sorrows began.

II. The Betrayal by a King, 1 Samuel 15:11, 35

After a number of failures, King Saul ran through God's patience, so to speak. God said that He **regretted** that He had installed Saul as King because "he has turned back from following Me" and "has not performed My commandments." He had made a monument to himself (15:12), having turned from being small in his own eyes (15:17) to thinking of himself as really something. Humility had turned to arrogance and he left God behind.

We recognize that this feeling of regret or grief in God is colored by His decree, omniscience, and omnipotence. But somehow still God has a feeling that can be described as grief, regret, remorse, or being sorry. In humans, that is a thought like "I should not have done that because of how I now know it turned out." Perhaps the person had an inkling from the start that it could go bad. But we also have a sense sometimes like, "even if it is going to have a bad outcome, it must be done." So it is in God—He can be sad about the outcome, although the path He ordained up to that point was necessary for a host of other reasons.

Jesus, as part of the divine Trinity, knew sorrow and grief not only from the evil of all of creation, but from someone whom He Himself had appointed and entrusted for a leadership role over His people Israel. But those are not the only two instances of divine grief in Scripture.

III. The Rejection by a Nation, Psalm 78:40

Psalm 78:40 explains how the entire nation of Israel provoked God, put Him to the test, did not remember Him, etc. (78:36-37, 40-42a). But God was gracious to them as 78:38-39 says. 95:10 says that for 40 years God was **grieved** with that generation. Isaiah 63:10 adds that they rebelled and grieved His Spirit.

Jesus was “the rock that followed them” (1 Cor. 10:4). He was with the people of Israel in the wilderness, and what touched the Father touched Him as well. He was acquainted with this grief, One who saw what Israel was doing and had to be sorrowful over it.

IV. Other Grief Texts

Eph 4:30 teaches us that we must not to grieve the Holy Spirit. This instruction is part of a series of commands and prohibitions that are expected of a person who has been transformed into a “new man” (4:24) by becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. Conduct associated with the old man is to be put off, the mind is to be renewed, and conduct associated with the new man is enjoined. That is what true righteousness and holiness looks like. When the believer follows the pattern of his/her old self and gratifies the desires of the flesh, this brings grief to God’s Spirit. The verb *to grieve* is defined this way in BDAG: “to cause severe mental or emotional distress, vex, irritate, offend, insult.” God is not a totally dispassionate observer of the things in His universe and particularly on this earth. He is “affected” by what goes on here. Here is a thought for you: do not give the Lord “grief”!

Acts 9:4 tells us of the Jesus’s inquiry of Paul: “Why are you persecuting Me?” Jesus felt at that time, and still feels today, all the attacks on His body. If we may carry the analogy or metaphor a little bit, it is His *body* and we are all members of it.

1 Chron 4:9 Jabez was born in pain. Pain and sorrow were multiplied in childbirth according to Genesis 3:16. And death brings great sorrow. But Ezekiel 24:17 tells Ezekiel not to mourn for his dead wife. Life is full of griefs and sorrow and pains. The Lord knows it all and is well acquainted, as our main text tells us.

V. Isaiah 53:3

The title of my message comes from Isaiah 53. There, the third verse tells us that the Servant was a man despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Given what we looked at just now in all the other portions of the Bible, there can be no doubt this is the case. He knows sorrow and grief over thousands of years. And being omniscient, He knows a whole lot more of it than we do.

I have been uplifted by that notion this week as I thought of how the atoning work of Christ naturally extends into his caring knowledge of our griefs and sorrows. Let me explain what I mean: Jesus is not a person or mere religious ideal designed to make us feel better on our way to a blank eternity. Our temporal concerns are *not* the main concern, and eternity is not empty. He died *in our place for our sins* on the cross in the spring of AD 30. God has arranged things such that Jesus's ethical payment for *our* sins satisfies *God's* holiness. Provided that you appeal to Him to apply the benefits of His death and resurrection to you, He will do so and then change your very nature and desires. He will outfit you for an eternal future of goodness, and put you on a path to begin implementing that goodness now in your life.

God the Father also arranged that Jesus would be tempted in all points like we are, but without sin. The result is that He is a sympathetic high priest (Heb. 4:15), one who understands our weakness, knows our griefs, sees our sorrows, experiences them with us in some way. He does not *have* our weakness, but He knows them and is able to help (Heb. 2:17-18). He experienced the death of loved ones—Lazarus, His earthly father Joseph, and many others throughout His earthly life.

He had the unique experience that He had the ability to raise people from the dead, but if it were not the Father's will, He had to stand aside and let death persist. Actually God does that all the time, for His own good reasons. We tend to think that is bad—why when you have the power to stop death would you *not* do so? But evidently it is a good in God's sight for Him not immediately to raise all people out of the dead. Besides having all wisdom on this

matter, He knows that He will do so in the future anyway, so the only issue really is one of timing. On a few occasions Jesus stepped in and raised someone from the dead in order to glorify God and authenticate His own ministry (John 11:42, 20:30-31). All this to say that He had to endure grief and sorrow *with* the added knowledge that He could fix it in the short-run, but then again He could not do so because there were many other factors involved.

He knows our sorrows so well because he has *borne* our griefs and *carried* our sorrows. What does this mean? It does not mean that He simply takes away those things that trouble us. Rather, He knows them intimately, as His own, and He took the ultimate cause of them—human sin—onto Himself. It is the falling short of God’s glory, the missing the mark of God’s holy standard, which put humanity into a situation where grief and sorrow became normal. In his cross-work, He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and thus the root cause from which springs forth all sorrow and grief.

Conclusion

Any time you distance yourself from God will certainly cause grief, either in the short term or long term, or both. But it *will* cause you grief, and probably it will cause others grief as well. It also causes Jesus grief. The Lord can ultimately deliver you from that sin and grief. Hopefully you will experience that very soon.

And if you are in the midst of grief and sorrow because of loss or other situations beyond your control, be assured that the Lord Jesus knows all about it. He is very intimately acquainted with all of your sorrows. He knows by omniscience. He knows by experience. He knows by carrying those things upon Himself. He knows YOU. I pray He knows you savingly, and you also know Him.

"Little did they dream, as they bound the fatal wood upon His shoulder, by whose power that tree was made to grow, and from whom the beings who bore Him to the death drew their existence. So completely was Jesus bent upon saving sinners by the sacrifice of Himself, He created the tree upon which He was to die, and nurtured from infancy the men who were to nail Him to the

accursed wood. Oh the depth of Jesus's love to sinners!" – Octavius Winslow

MAP

Other Hymn Ideas

296 At the Cross

299 It Is Finished

328 It's Friday, but Sunday's Comin' (the choir sang this last Easter)