

# He Feels our Pain

By

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## A Loving God in a Loveless Generation

John 11:32-36

<sup>32</sup> Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother [Lazarus] had not died.

<sup>33</sup> When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

<sup>34</sup> And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.

<sup>36</sup> Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him!

Sympathy is in short supply in a generation which is generally cold and unloving because godly fear is on the ebb and iniquity on the rise. There's no incentive to love back because nobody genuinely showed you love. They lied to you, they betrayed your confidence, they cheated you, they gloated over your fall, they hated your progress; they planned your downfall. Even those who seemed to love you, all their love was a pretence. It gets embedded in your subconscious, "Nobody loves me"! The shock alone is enough to evaporate any feelings of affection and sympathy you might have for others. Christ put it in classic prophetic prose in Matt. 24:12: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold".

It's a symptom of a sick, dysfunctional society in which selfishness rules, as the apostle Paul affirms in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy—<sup>1</sup> "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.<sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,<sup>3</sup> Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,<sup>4</sup> Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:1-4).

A world chock-full of lawless, loveless men is a cold loveless world! It's a lonely walk in a world of trials and temptations and betrayals, a world in which satanic activity is at an all-time high! There's no reliable shoulder to cry on; no true friends to turn to. If you will be true to yourself, there's really no help in sight—some only lent a sympathetic ear.

The only One you can trust and turn to for real help is your Maker! He is love (1 John 4:8). And He's faithful (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:24). He does not only genuinely empathize with you but demonstrates His love for you. His love is not lip-service but redemptive action.

He feels and eases our pain. In our affliction He is afflicted—the same way He loved and felt for Israel:

In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old (Isa. 63:9).

Israel did not walk alone, did not face Pharaoh alone, and did not fight their battles alone. They had a sturdy lover and companion and help in Yahweh. This God never changes. The meaning of His name is, "I will be who I will be". We do not walk alone and will not walk alone!

In Israel's affliction in Egyptian as Pharaoh's bondmen and women, Yahweh was afflicted and out of love and pity for them redeemed them. In sending Moses to Egypt both to announce and to effect the redemption, He told him:

<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

<sup>8</sup> And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

<sup>9</sup> Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

<sup>10</sup> Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 3:7-10).

In His own words, He had "seen the affliction" of His people, "heard their cry" and "knew their sorrows". The suffering Israelites were His own "people". Because He loved them, He couldn't hold back from having pity on them or His love for them would be hollow. He felt their affliction – for He pitied them out of love - and was moved to deliver them from their sorrow into bliss!

At the Red Sea entrapment where Israel, caught between Pharaoh's advancing army and the menacing sea, could only give a collective wail because destruction—nay annihilation—loomed, God was afflicted in their affliction. Out of His love and pity for them, He performed a novelty miracle—He parted the Red sea for them to walk on its dry river-bed and drowned Pharaoh and all his power (army). In their affliction from hunger, He was similarly afflicted and shared with them the bread of heaven—"angel's food" (Ps 78:25). At another time, He made them a feast with the meat of quails. In their affliction from thirst, He brought water out of the rock! And He fought their battles for them.

“The Angel of His presence saved them... He redeemed them”. This Angel causes and brings redemption out of love! He is the Rock that followed Israel, “and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4). In Old Testament times, He went by the name *Angel Yahweh* (Ex. 23:20-23; Zech. 3:1-7).

As *our Christ*, He has given us more hope to look to Him for love and redemption because He has drawn nearer to us. He is Emmanuel – God with us. He has experienced firsthand all our human sorry, plight and troubles so that He will have a better appreciation of our situation, have greater compassion for us and deliver us. His love never fails. He pities to save:

John 11:38-44

<sup>38</sup> Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave [of Lazarus]. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

<sup>40</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

<sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me.

<sup>42</sup> And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.

<sup>43</sup> And when He thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

<sup>44</sup> And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Heb. 2:16-18

<sup>16</sup> For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.

<sup>17</sup> Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

<sup>18</sup> For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

Heb. 4:15

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.

### **Our Response to His Loving Care**

Because He expresses His love and compassion (Mark 6:34) for us with acts of redemption, He Himself has invited us to “cast all our care” on Him because He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). It’s not merely an invitation to share our worries with Him. It is an invitation to offload them onto Him, to empty ourselves of them and to hand them over to Him for Him to deal with them.

His love is so deep, and His compassion so profound, to see us weighed down with problems. If we trust Him and truly know who He is, we will not hesitate to offload our cargo of worries onto Him. No problem is insurmountable before Him, and no task is too difficult or impossible for Him. He wields all power. And His promise is true. For He is faithful. It's out of character for Him to disappoint or to fail. He can't give up His core character trait of faithfulness (2 Tim. 2:13). His honour and credibility are at stake if He does! He could never go back on His word. We read in Heb. 6:12-18:

<sup>13</sup>... when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself,

<sup>14</sup> Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

<sup>15</sup> And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

<sup>16</sup> For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

<sup>17</sup> Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

<sup>18</sup> That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (Heb. 6:13-18).

A firm believer in what He does, God swore by Himself. He put all His honour, glory, power and great name on the line because He knew He could never lie or fail. The "oath" was really the icing on the cake. The "promise" in and of itself was enough—He could never bring Himself to break it. But He wanted to impress on Abraham that He could be counted on to fulfill what He had promised Him and therefore should trust Him absolutely with all His soul and being as well as assure the same of us the future heirs of the promise.

We cast our burdens on Him for Him to relieve us of those burdens and for Him to make us a blessing.

But how do we take our worries to Him?

Ah, through prayer. And we emerge from the prayer session completely rid of the worries—that is, if we truly offloaded them onto Him by faith. He shows us how:

Phil 4:6-7

<sup>6</sup> Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

"Be anxious over nothing"! Ideally, this is the state the Christian should be in everyday of his/her life, but especially after they have taken their worries to the Lord in prayer. You don't

offload your burdens and still behave as though you never did! That's why the scripture insists "in everything [that will make you worry] by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God".

The addition of "thanksgiving" is appropriate because the Lord did take away the burden and replaced it with His "peace", giving you assurance and confidence. His peace that now floods and quietens your hitherto agitated soul is the proof of the burden removed! So why worry anymore? His ineffable transcendental peace now guards your hearts from worry. It's a peace the world knoweth not, for the world knoweth peace only if the ears hear pleasant things, the eyes see beautiful things and people, the mouth tastes sweet things and the body feels pampered and 'well cared' for. The peace of the world consists in physical comforts and pleasant circumstances. The peace Jesus gives calms and assures the heart:

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27).

Yes, He did not give us a distorted view of the world, making us view the world through rose-tinted spectacles that nothing will ever hurt. He did make it clear to us, "in Me ye ... have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). In the Greek, it's "take courage".

His overriding concern is about the condition of our hearts. Let not fear and worry overwhelm you. *Take heart, be of good cheer, be encouraged* that I'm with you and I have overcome the world of troubles! His peace—assurance—in our hearts stems from "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost". His peace is not the absence of trials but the assurance that He's with us through them all (Ps 91:15). Because He's with us to take away our worries, ultimate good can only come at the end—an anticipated result which calls for continual rejoicing and hope, not sorrow:

- <sup>1</sup>Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
- <sup>2</sup> By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- <sup>3</sup> And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
- <sup>4</sup> And patience, experience; and experience, hope:
- <sup>5</sup> And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us (Rom. 5:1-5).

The hope will not fail to materialize. We are at peace with God; we are no more alienated from Him but are reconciled to Him and live in harmony with His will and purpose for our lives through Jesus Christ. And this peace, which is a work of grace, is the basis of our joy "in hope of the glory of God". And the joy never stops—unaffected by circumstance or mood. In tribulations we *still* glory because the peace of God assures us of a chain of positive outcomes—

we master patience, and from patience we gain experience and experience hope which does not disappoint because the love of God underlies it all!

God loves and pities us; He won't ever leave our side to face trials and troubles alone. He is with us, and His peace in our hearts is the proof.

Above all, His peace which is assurance and hope never puts to shame. Therefore actual deliverance will come, healing will come, prosperity will come, and blessing will come. By then, you will have known God and His ways better, namely the patience to wait for Him in time of trouble and first-hand experience of His goodness and faithfulness.

Let's just have the positive attitude that He feels for us and has taken away our problems. It was for this purpose that He stoically bore the cross to Golgotha:

<sup>4</sup> Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:4-5).

"The punishment of our peace was upon Him". It's real. He took away all our sorrows, all our hurts, all our sins and all our diseases. Let not a heart of doubt and fear crowd out His peace in our lives. Let's take heart! He feels our pain and has taken away our worries. Halleluiah!

