

Jesus a Man of Sorrows

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[Isaiah 53: 3-4] He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely, He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

None of us enjoys sorrows in our life. Sorrows come to us, however, either due to our faults or, more frequently, due to external causes. Some question, if Jesus was God, how could He feel sorrows? As God created humans in His image and likeness, and we experience joys, sorrows, love, and happiness, so does God. That is why God understands our sorrows and provides consolation and healing when we go to Him. God is God of empathy and consolation.

As we read above, the prophet Isaiah characterized the personality of the coming Messiah hundreds of years before His time as “He will be despised and rejected by men (His people), He will be a Man of sorrows, bear our (humanity’s) grief, and carry our sorrows.” Prophets of the Old Testament era, Jeremiah and Isaiah specifically, often experienced grief and sorrow when they faced the unbelief and stiffnecked hardness of heart in their people as they rejected God’s messages and warnings.

Jesus Christ came to Israel as their Savior. However, He was rejected, despised, misunderstood, faced an unjust trial as like a criminal though He was sinless, and died the cruelest death on a cross together with the criminals. The sorrows of our Messiah, however, were not because of the physical punishment and the pain of crucifixion death.

The Son of God left His glorious place in heaven, came to the earth in the form of a son of a poor carpenter in Nazareth, a village of Galilee. He inherited His earthly father’s occupation as a carpenter, served His parents and younger siblings for thirty years in a humble capacity. Then, He spent the last three and a half years of His earthly life in a humble, divine ministry, in which He had no home or properties but His clothing, totally dependent on the care of the believers. During His life, Jesus had more sorrows than joys. That is why Isaiah called Him, a ‘Man of sorrows.’

Lord Jesus visited His hometown, Nazareth, twice. On both occasions, He was rejected and the villagers attempted to stone Him to death [Luke 4:28-30]. His younger brothers did not understand His mission and tried to coach Him according to their own ideas [John 7:3]. When He declared, “I am the living bread from heaven that I give for the life of the world,” many followers left Him because they could not understand Him [John 6:66].

When Lazarus, who was a close follower of Jesus, experienced a death as a means of the Lord’s teaching on the resurrection, Jesus expressed the grief in His heart by openly weeping for him [John 11:35]. A few days before facing His death outside of Jerusalem, Jesus looked on this great city and wept in grief at the hardness of the hearts of those in the city, because of which they rejected Him as their Savior but rather condemn Him to death. He wept because of the great calamity that would come to them 40 years later.

[Luke 19:41-43] Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

In the garden of Gethsemane only a few hours before He would be arrested as like a common criminal, our Lord experienced deep sorrow and exceeding grief in His heart that He would bear the sins of all the world on His shoulders, be rejected by His Father in heaven, and spend three days and nights in the depth of hell. The three

disciples whom He trusted most, He hoped they would join Him in prayer in this time of extreme torment and grief, but they failed to understand His grief.

[Mark 14:33-36] Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch." 35 He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

Jesus Christ drank the cup of sorrow and grief all alone in the garden to save us from death and hell. He rose from death, was raised to heaven, and is sitting at the right hand of God as our High Priest, interceding for us. He understands the sorrows and torments of our life because He experienced them also.

What sorrows are you experiencing in your life? You may experience sorrows due to loss of property, health, social positions, deaths in the family, misunderstandings, or discrimination from others.

Then, there are other types of sorrows – sorrows you feel in your heart as the Lord experienced when you see those around you who are still without hope of salvation, when you see the evil forces inflicting awful harms on the people's lives and the society, when you come to know the suffering of the just warriors as they valiantly fight against the forces of darkness, or when you experience rejection and misunderstanding as you endeavor to fulfill the divine mission you received from God.

True Christians should know how to be partakers of the sorrows of our Savior Jesus. When we see Him face to face on the last day and see the nail marks on His hands and feet as well as the marks of the thorny crown on His head, we then will be truly comforted for the sorrows we had in this earthly life.

[Revelation 21:4] And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

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