

The Mystery of Incarnation (5 of 9)

by Art Katz

The sermon explores the profound mystery of the incarnation, emphasizing the significance of Jesus' humanity and its implications for believers' faith and experiences.

Duration: 1:04:14

Scripture: Isaiah 54:5, Matthew 6:33, John 11:35, Ephesians 1:23, Colossians 2:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Incarnation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of arriving late to a meeting and feeling out of place. He expresses his observation that the people in the meeting lack a tragic sense of life. The speaker then reflects on the value of life and the importance of not dismissing or forgetting significant experiences. He emphasizes the need for Christians to have a depth of character and a variety of experiences, rather than being one-dimensional and reliant on entertainment.

Transcript

And so I'm jealous over the days that remain to us, looking to the Lord earnestly, that not one of those days should be misspent, and not knowing one day from the other, not knowing today what's tomorrow, not even sure about today. But it's been brought to my attention that when I read something the last time, that I kind of looked down, my voice was muffled, and I mumbled or I read too speedily. So don't let me get away with that.

Throw spitballs. Don't let me get away with that. Hey, two fast cats, go slow.

What are you saying? If it's worth reading, it's worth hearing, or else don't read at all. And I know that reading is usually deadly, so it takes a special animation, a special alertness. And I'm going to begin by reading something this morning from a source that, as you know, speaks volumes to me, and it's Spurgeon again.

And it's out of his devotional book, somewhere in June or something like that, on the humanity of Jesus. It's a remarkable statement. He's one of the rare souls that would ever see something like this and express it as beautifully as he does.

And it's right in on the subject of the humanity of Jesus, the remarkable mystery of the union of what the theologians have called two persons, the Greek word, because they couldn't find an appropriate

vocabulary to encompass the mystery. And so they talk about the two natures. I'm sorry, did I say two persons? Two natures in one person, because they had to defend the deity of Jesus, while at the same time not allowing his humanity to lapse, because that is as important in the issue of atonement as is his deity.

And the two great controversies and heresies of that time, one is called Docetism, D-O-C-E-T-I-S-M, denies the humanity of Jesus, that God could not himself take upon himself the form of a man. It's totally incompatible with deity and actually dishonors God. And then the other tendency was to celebrate the humanity at the expense of deity, that Jesus was all man and that the only deity that he acquired was a kind of spirituality, an increase of spirituality that became like God but was not in fact God.

So the early church was battling against these two threats, one from the one side, one from the other, that they saw as being principal threat to their faith itself, that the faith rests upon the union of the two natures, both divine and human. And though it's a mystery and unprecedented in history, still it was a fact that though they could not explain it, they were obliged to defend it. And so there were a series of church councils, and one day if you have the time and want to look them up, they are of interest in the fourth and fifth centuries, in a Greek environment, Hellenistic, Greek philosophical environment.

So here's a Hebraic faith being defended by Greek mindsets of a philosophical kind that are rational, have to find terms that are appropriate to a mystery. And so they invented the two natures but are unified in one person. Jesus is one person, but how to explain that union they did not know.

And in fact they said it's not to be explained, it's in the realm of mystery. So that's where we are. But every writer that's worth his salt makes this clear, that this issue begins with an I. Incarnation is the issue of the faith.

Lose this and you lose Christianity as Christianity. Okay, so we're exploring, we're feeling our way through something that greater minds than us have allowed to rest in the realm of mystery. And maybe it's not to be defined, but to be appropriated.

So here's Spurgeon on the subject of the humanity of Jesus from June 18th, where I say that I've not heard nor read anything like it, which so much encourages a line of consideration in me that I think appropriate to the church. By the way, are you doing any writing lately? Are you being arrested by certain themes in readings? And that you'll sit down at your typewriter or your computer and you'll compose something about it? Just a summary of your own thoughts as it is provoked by what you're reading? I recommend that highly. We should all be reading, writing, and studying to show ourselves approved.

Workmen not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God. We need to benefit by others who have given themselves to these great questions. So I was moved by what I read, and this is what I wrote because of it.

So that what Spurgeon cites, and his theme was from Isaiah 54.5, in extolling all that we inherit through Christ, needs to be brought to the level of consciousness and faith. So here's Spurgeon, I'm quoting Spurgeon. Jesus hath no dignity which he will not employ for our exaltation, and no prerogative which he will not exercise for our defense.

His fullness of Godhead is our unfailing, inexhaustible treasure house. His manhood also, which he took upon him for us, is ours, and I put also in a box, in all its perfection. Jesus is an acquisition.

Jesus is a legacy. Jesus is all in all. In him is the fullness of the Godhead bodily, but also in his humanity is a remarkable resource because he has passed through the gamut of anything and everything that pertains to human existence and life.

Yes, he was never married, so how could he know about the intricacies and the difficulties of this most complex and demanding of all relationships, and yet he speaks of it, because though he had not that relationship, he was in a knit of relationship in which the constituent elements that make for marriage were experienced by him. He passed through everything in his humanity. I'm very responsive to this because even as an atheist, I wanted the same for myself.

I wanted to be man universal, and so when the Korean War was on, I was hoping that I would be drafted. I did not want to be exempt from that segment of human experience called military, and though I had a heart murmur, and they made me jump and prance and test it and retest it, I finally made it with a sigh of relief. I wanted to be in, and indeed those two years were a decisive turning point in my life, all the more that I was not sent to Korea but to Germany, where as a Jew I bristled, and yet being there, it proved an experience that was invaluable.

But I wanted to experience, what does it mean to be in the military? What does it mean to be under orders? I wanted to taste all the universal experience to be the complete man. In fact, my frustration that broke me as a humanist was the inability to do just that. I would hear conversations in the elevator going up, and they would be talking about Van Gogh, and the impressionist artists, or some composer of some book, or I'd go to a library, I'm staggered by the volumes.

I wanted to absorb it all. Did you ever read that poem, is it by Robert Frost, about two paths? And the wilderness lay, and I had to take the one or the other, and I always wondered that as I took the one, what's on the other? I was chafed by finiteness. I wanted both paths, and out of necessity, being man, you're confined to one, but I wanted all.

So, in a sense, we have all in Jesus. His experience, his life, brief though it was, is all-encompassing, and he passed through every essential issue that we will ever face in a long lifetime. He is the man, Christ Jesus.

His humanity is remarkable and as superb as is his deity. And what Spurgeon is saying is that we should obtain the full benefit, not only what has come to us through being the son of God, but being also the son of man, which title he used more frequently than the other. So he is the son of man.

What does that mean? Well, in today's conversation, it means he is essential man, that whatever man is in humanity, Jesus was, and is, and remains. He didn't drop off his humanity with his resurrection. He was resurrected in his humanity, and is right now at the throne of heaven in his human body.

And he will forever be in that status of the God-man that's fixed eternally, which is a statement from the Father that the humanity of Jesus was not just a temporary expedient to serve the purposes of atonement, though it did that, but that it's an enduring and eternal stature and condition that is pleasing in God's sight and will continue forever. That's how much God celebrates the humanity of Jesus. Because there's something about a man made in God's image that is precious.

And can God really be known except that he's manifested in man? So, Jesus had no dignity which he will not employ for our exaltation. When he humbled himself and opened himself to catch the full gamut

through which all of mankind passes, no matter what their race, their background, their history, and he would suffer in that and be accused in that, being a wine-bibber and a glutton and all the kinds of things that he suffered. He opened himself because he knew that we would receive the benefit and all of the subsequent generations of that through which he has passed.

It would not be lost. This is a remarkable thought. Not only for Jesus, but for us that I mentioned sometime last week that our human experience does not go down the drain.

Though we may forget it and we may have moved on from it to something else. The essential realities through which we have passed have an ongoing consequence in some ways transmuted and communicated to others, our own children, fellowship. It becomes embodied in us.

It's not something that occurs and is dismissed and forgotten. I like that because I think life is too valuable just to serve the purpose of a moment and then lose its validity. But that if it serves significant purposes it has every right to continue in some way to be effectual in the expression that is pleasing to the Lord and who has given us those experiences even before we were believers.

Our career, merchant seaman at the age of 16 with a bunch of toughs who would just as soon cast me over the side as have me there. The drunken Swedish anti-Semite who was the bosun's mate which was like master sergeant who would have preferred me dead than alive and would set me up for missions like tying up the two ton block and tackle that had broken loose in a great storm where we were going back and forth like this where water was coming into the smokestack. Here's this kid from Brooklyn, naive, poetic, romantic, you know, wanting life experience is being sent up with a rope to fix that block and tackle from swinging wildly and doing damage.

It was really intended for my destruction but I survived it because the God whom I did not know was there with me and guarding and watching one whom he knew would one day be brought into the faith and into sonship. So all of our experiences, the things which we have passed, even in our stupidity even in our foolishness there was some merit, some value if nothing more than to warn others that needs to be retained. We need to cherish our experience, cherish our human life and if our life is worth cherishing and has value by virtue of the diversity of our experience what shall we say about Jesus' human life? And that's what Spurgeon is saying here.

That he is an unfailing and inexhaustible treasure house. His fullness, his manhood also which he took upon him for us is ours also in all its perfection. To us our gracious Lord communicates the spotless virtue of a stainless character.

To us he gives the meritorious efficacy of a devoted life. On us he bestows the reward procured by obedience, submission and incessant service. His life our covering beauty, his character our ornaments and jewels.

The superhuman meekness of his death I'll boast in glory. And more than that because Paul says, have this mind in you which was in him. So he's more than just an example the what Spurgeon is saying is that that very meekness by which he did not count himself though equal with God but emptied himself of the prerogatives is available to us.

That we don't become meek and humble by principle we become it by acquisition. Humility is God. Jesus manifested that in his humanity and Spurgeon is saying that there's a way in which we can appropriate the

meekness of the Lord into our own being and to our own character and that it's part of our inheritance and part of our legacy though he expressed it in his humanity.

Because God is always meek. This is God's character. What Jesus did was explicate and demonstrate what was always true of God.

That's why he said, if you see me you see the Father. Why do you ask show me now the Father? Have I not been with you so long that you don't see him? All my conduct, all my actions my speaking is the Father. This is very God.

God is meek you guys. Humility is divine and the only way we can get it is by appropriation of taking in and in union with this Lord who made it manifest in his own life and walk. That's why anyone who attempts to affect a humility that is not taken out from in union with the one who is this is immediately branded as phony.

Is there anything more fraudulent than a humanly affected humility? We had a brother who used to call that salesman's humility. That self-effacing well you know me I'm just, don't expect me to speak publicly, I'm just a that makes you dag. It's an affectation, it's a put on for avarice for gain.

But the humility of God is what he is in himself. This is his intrinsic nature and being and we would not have known it or even expected that God who is the creator of the heavens and the earth and the universe of universes is by nature humble. That this is God's character maybe his essential character and Jesus demonstrated that and Paul says have this mind in you which was in him.

We would not even be inspired to consider it if he himself had not demonstrated it. This is our legacy, our inheritance. This is the language that Spurgeon uses of course is flowery.

Our ornaments and jewels the superhuman meekness our boast and glory all his thoughts, actions, emotions utterances, miracles and intercessions were for us. Isn't that a remarkable statement? All his thoughts, emotions, actions utterances, miracles and intercessions were for us. He trod past tents of tread the road of sorrow on our behalf and made over to us as his heavenly legacy the full results of all the labors of his Mamma Mia! Think of that.

Wouldn't you like to leave a legacy like that? To your children or to the church? That all the labors of your life are not in vain though you didn't see the fruit of them while you were laboring. In fact most often you will not see. That's why Paul has to encourage us.

Be assured your labors are not in vain. Why should we be assured? Because we're not going to see the evidences that they are taking hold, that something is taking place. More often there's people who look at you like you're a freak or yawn or turn away or be offended but be assured your labors are not in vain and Spurgeon is saying about Jesus that we receive and can receive the full legacy of the results of all the labors of his life.

That's remarkable. It doesn't mean that we need to know them in detail. Most of them are not recorded because of all the things that he said and did were written, the world would not be great enough to contain the book.

How then can we receive the legacy of all his labors when we don't know of them? That's not the way you receive it by that kind of knowing. You receive it by impartation. You receive it by union.

You receive it by oneness. If he's in us to will it to do of his good pleasure if we can say for me to live as Christ when that Christ that is living in you is the one who performed all those labors and said all those things. He comes complete with the whole resonance of a life fully lived in the totality of his humanity as true man.

That's what these Greek councils said. True man, true God. This is man and he lived that full human life and we are the beneficiaries by faith to believe for this and to receive this.

And you know for me one of the most impressive testimonies that this is true, though I can't find any scripture that says this, is Spurgeon himself. Think of the selections I read this morning at the prayer time. Last night's devotional and this morning's.

Anyone who could write two such statements like that ought to retire. He could put his pen down. He said enough for the rest of his life.

They were golden. They were resplendent. They were poetic.

They were deep. They were encouraging. They were a glimpse of eternity to come that would encourage us in this life.

How did he know that? And he knew it from his earliest believing on. So I'm saying that Spurgeon, what we read in Spurgeon, is not the result of a long life. He died at 57.

It's the result of an appropriation of the life of another who knew heaven because he came down from it. And something was infused and taken up into the life and character of Spurgeon because of the depth of his devotional union with that God that is expressed in morning and evening in the devotional statements. There's no other way to explain him that I can see.

And that's why we prayed, Lord if you can do this with Spurgeon, how about us? Maybe our union is not as deep with that source. Maybe we're not in the kind of constant communion in which Spurgeon was in love and therefore we have not his faith and we have not thought that the Lord's human life is a legacy that we can inherit through the things through which he has passed and therefore we have not appropriated it. Faith is not some vague thing.

Faith is a belief for something in particular which evidently he had and evidently he expresses. I'm saying I'll just sum it up in one way. There's no way to understand Spurgeon as being the result of a long life of experience then expressed through his writings.

The way to really understand Spurgeon is that he had a knowledge and an inward sense of the deep things of God beyond his years and independent of his actual experience by the appropriation of one whose experience preceded him and was communicated to him by faith. Got that? And that what was possible for Spurgeon was possible for us. So you don't have to wait a hundred years to become mature that a young believer can obtain a maturity by the appropriation of that through which Jesus was tested and passed through his life and be communicated as a sense of things that would astonish us and hear that young believer will be making statements and observations and have a discernment and a sense of things that you cannot explain in terms of his years.

That the mystery of incarnation has hardly been scratched. And God is wanting us to more than scratch but to appropriate this remarkable legacy of what has come to us not only through the deity of Jesus but

now especially his humanity. The full result of all the labors of his life.

Even his sorrows and his grief. Have you known that? Have you ever had a sense of inexplicable sorrow? Of an ache? Of a grief that has nothing to do with external events taking place in your life or even in the world? You just, you wake with it or it comes upon you or in a time of communion or prayer or you just find yourself grieving. Not despondent in that melancholy way that has to do with sickly personality but the grief and sorrow of God is clean.

It's pure and he's a man of sorrow still and there's much for him to sorrow over and to grieve but you know the only fellowship that I have ever met in 41 years in the faith that thinks like this are the sisters of Mary in Germany, the Marie and Schwestern. You know how they talk? They commiserate with the Lord. They share his griefs and his sorrows.

They don't want him to bear it alone. I mean what is with these women that somehow by their prayer and their empathetic relationship they are entering his griefs and his sorrows and bearing it with him. You know I think they're right on and you know a little grief and sorrow wouldn't hurt any of us.

In fact that may be the Lord's divine antidote to the lightness that pervades the church. Our lightness is disgraceful all the more when we know that the word glory in Hebrew is the same word for weight. That when I break my neck to go out of my way to hear the so called oracles of the hour, the prophets I come away every time disappointed for the lightness that pervades the places where they're speaking, the atmosphere that they create and to which they themselves contribute.

It doesn't hurt us, especially as Americans, to have a sense of sorrow and grief. And where's our sister from Bielefeld? We'll remember as I have mentioned before either this week or last week if you were not here, that when I came to Germany to this little fellowship from which he's come of charismatic believers, university students who found me on the website and said, you seem to be the real thing. You seem to be.

So, come and prove it. And we found three days for them. Sandwiched them in between Holland and other commitments.

And came into came late riding hours in the back of a little car and all cramped up and and heavy traffic and you know how that affects you? It's like a downer. And you come in and the meeting has already begun and you're late. And you come right up and there are these kids and they're singing their charismatic choruses and they seem to have it together.

And then they look to me to say something and I opened my mouth and I said I perceive that you lack a tragic sense of life. Poor Reggie was with me. Almost fell off of his seat.

My interpreter looked at me as if I'd gone bonkers. Is that how you begin? And what does that mean? And I couldn't tell you. All I knew was that it came out of my mouth.

It was not premeditated but it was the choice divine beginning of confronting German young believers with the fact that they don't even reflect their own history. It's as if the history had not taken place and they are as impervious and as unaffected as if they had come from any country in the world and therefore have lost the value of their own history which would be a wonderful tempering thing for this present generation. We're not cut off from our fathers and from their past.

We share the guilt and responsibility with them. In fact in general the disposition of mankind is to sweep history under the rug. We don't want to remember history particularly painful history.

We want to go on to the bright future and not be affected by the errors of the past when really we should benefit by the past because some sage has said that nation that will not learn its own history is doomed to repeat it. And indeed Germany I think will. If you will forsake the gospel to the Jew you forsake the gospel and if you forsake the gospel you forsake the church and you will again create the absence of the presence that a true church of an apostolic kind would have given to the nation in the absence of which demons and dark demonic spirits will occupy that vacuum because nature abhors a vacuum.

If it will not be filled by God it will be filled by the devil. So the church has got to be the church and the issue of the church for the church of Germany today is the issue of the Jew which is in their midst not just a small trickle but a hundred to three hundred thousand strong and increasing every day. So yes if they forfeit they could again open the door to demonic infiltration of the kind that Nazism was.

Okay are we Americans disposed to the things that are tragic? To sorrow? Is there a place for grief? Or am I just a freak? Just a voice out of an earlier generation? I ache for these missing components in our present culture and especially in the church because it leaves us shallow and frivolous and light and in fact that's indeed the atmosphere that prevails in our churches. So I think that there's a place for the things that are tragic for grief, for sorrow and who passed through that? Who's the man of sorrows? Notice the phrase man of sorrows. It wasn't of course God can and does sorrow but Jesus in his humanity was the man of sorrows.

He bore our griefs and what Spurgeon is saying though he doesn't mention those two things that there's a way to assimilate and take in this valence this disposition this resonance from the humanity of Jesus and his experience that would do us good. We don't have to be shallow or be the necessary product of our civilization and our time. In fact God calls us to be transcendent.

The church has got to be other than the product of its time. It's got to bring eternity eternality with it and values of a kind that celebrated invisible God and anticipate his coming. So there's a place for dimensions available to us through union with Jesus not only in his dignity but his humanity that we have not tapped and Spurgeon is saying it's part of our legacy.

There's something and God is wanting demonstrated by the church in these last days out from our humanity. So for us to exhibit true men and by the way I'm not talking about gender. This is not limited to males true humankind true humanity male or female would be a grace for our age because all we're seeing is deformed stunted paper mache characters who are celebrated through public hype.

What do they call that? PR They can take anyone and make an overnight personality. He doesn't have anything to commend them. Trump, Donald Trump is a television star now.

A nothing a non-entity doesn't have a thing to commend. He's just a woman chaser. He'll marry and take off and put on wives.

He can afford them but what do they are? Sexual playthings and he's celebrated as a personality and has his own TV programs and I never would have watched it but I did catch a glimpse of a commercial for a credit card which Donald Trump is on top of one of his buildings holding his card and it falls out of his hand and topples down and falls into a garbage dump a bin and the next scene is he's hoisted over the bin and

all you see are his buttocks and his legs and he's fishing to retrieve the card What's the message? If Donald Trump multi-millionaire who has everything so covets this credit card as to leap into the garbage bin so as to retrieve it, you need to have one also. But he's going to carry that image into eternity that he's willing to go into a garbage dump for a card but how far has he been willing to go to find out the truth of life, it's meaning and the God who has given it. This is our culture you guys and it's crying out for true man.

Mensch Menschen. See that T-shirt that I wear? Mensch. It's not a sign to the boys room.

It's a word that is so choice both in the German language and Yiddish because Yiddish is essentially German the word mensch means more than just a male it means a man who has come of age it means one who's responsible, one who can be counted on, one who's trustworthy one from whom you can hear wise and sage things, a man who has life experience, character integrity, a mensch Would to God that this were a a model for us, that we would desire to be such, instead of the slipshod, casual get along characters that we are and for which our wives suffer and our children. Let me ask you this question. The sorrows and griefs characteristic of Jesus, was it only the result of what he suffered in himself and the pain and the things that he bore? Is that what he's grieving? Is that what he's sorrowing? It's not a personal self-pitying thing woe is me he's grieving and sorrowing for the condition of the world and of men, it's godlessness and we would do well to grieve and sorrow over exactly the same thing, but like humility it must not be an affectation it's got to issue out from the very nature of the god man himself which Spurgeon says is available to us as legacy and he writes, oh to make a full appropriation of this legacy, to bring it into our humanity what was forged in his as part also of the remarkable privilege which is ours by faith.

You know, I don't think that's Spurgeon, that's me. Not there, cats. Let's hear that again.

And where did I get it? And where do I have such disposition of the kind that you're hearing, which is utterly unique, is it just accident of history and time or is it that in the same way by which Spurgeon acquired a certain depth and incisiveness and intuition of things that are rare, something like that is working in me. It's taken 76 years to get there but this is not bad. This is me crying out after reading that part from Spurgeon, oh to make a full appropriation of this legacy, to bring it into our humanity what was forged in his as part also of the remarkable privilege which is ours by faith.

We are falling short of the glory. We had not thought that there's an appropriation available to us of dimensions in God that were wrought through the life of Jesus in his humanity that can aid and benefit our being, facilitate our maturity and bring us to become men of full stature. Oh how tragic I'm crying out if we fail to make this appropriation by faith.

This is an issue of humanhood, of true humanity which is as required and as becoming to women as to men, in fact maybe more becoming to women because remember when we read about Romans where Paul says that even women have given over the natural use of their bodies to burnings and to illicit I'm paraphrasing, that are disgraceful. Why does he use that language? He doesn't begin by talking about homosexuality with men he begins by talking about lesbianism with women. Why? Because he wants to shock us of what is the consequence of godlessness and turning away from the testimony of God and refusing to believe.

And the consequence is that God abandons you to your own propensity where you forsake the natural use of your body and turn it to that which will consume you in burnings and the consequence of the sicknesses that follow. But he begins with women where he says even women will turn from the natural use of their bodies. Why does he say even? Because women are thought to be, and I think rightly more sensitive and

more disposed to holiness and purity than men so when a woman will abandon herself or be abandoned to the misuse of her own body, that's a statement of how vile sin is and what is its consequence.

So yes, there's I'm saying men, manhood but don't think that that limits it to the male species. This is for all of us. So what incalculable loss not to obtain the value of what he passed through in his own humanity as a man in suffering, obedience, tested character death and resurrection and enthronement.

Is this not the fullness of the Godhead bodily? Ours forever and most richly to enjoy? The Lord passed through all of this. He's passed through rejection suffering, death burial, resurrection ascension and enthronement in his humanity. He didn't leave his body behind.

It came with him and was raised and he possesses it even now. It's one with him even now. So he has passed through something in his humanity in which we can receive some measure of the benefit and if we do I think we'll be less prone to be hypersensitive about ourselves and sickly in our own concern and so easy to be offended or hurt because if we have passed through some measure of his sufferings what place then for this pouting, sickly defensiveness of our little humanity? Just to share some measure of what he's passed through serves to nullify what would otherwise affect you.

We are much too prone to our own suffering and it is exaggerated beyond its real value because we're living so close to our skin and we are so centered in ourselves and so narrow in the scope of our experience that we see ourselves at the center of the universe. Anything that happens is only as it affects us. But if we had some union with God in his humanity who has passed through real suffering it would inure us excuse my language I-N-U-R-E to the kinds of things that now disturb us and are really just momentary and light.

We're missing something that God intended for our benefit and therefore we're much too partial to our own aches and pains and ailments and insults and offenses than we have any right to be. If we had passed through any measure of the sufferings of the Lord we would be immune to these petty things and be much braver and much more stalwart in what we're able to bear in this life. I've seen grown men just collapse in fear military men as we went through the lines, I've shared this a number of times, and the needles were poised, we got injected in both arms like pin cushions and I watched men keel over fainting at the sight of a needle that was going to prick their flesh because they live so close to their flesh that their flesh is their life.

But others of us, we could be pin cushions and hardly blink. Why? Because we're inured against pain. We're not living in ourselves.

There are other dimensions that occupy our soul and it renders us relatively immune to what makes others faint. So how are we going to be good soldiers in the last days? This is part of the provision to take his sufferings into ourselves in a way that can be appropriated by faith. You know what, guys? First time I have said this anywhere.

Anywhere. I've never shared this publicly. This thing has been in my briefcase from June, April of last year.

And this is the first time that I'm having the courage to bring it out in the subject of the mystery of incarnation. The humanity as well as the deity of Jesus that we mustn't miss it because we're called to explicate and to demonstrate it. What grief and sorrow through which Jesus passed was in any way inadvertent or circumstantial? Not an iota.

Everything was prescribed, intended in the sovereignty of the Father through which Jesus must pass as Son of Man. And didn't Jesus know that when he was with the Father in his pre-incarnate life and they talked together about the calling of the Son that had to be sent into the world and suffer those things. So doesn't this add a dimension of admiration for the Son of God that who was equal with the Father as deity knowing what coming into the earth would mean and taking upon himself the form of a man is yet willing to agree to do it.

That he's going to be passing through griefs and sorrows and experiences that never need have been his experience if he chose not to be sent. He had to voluntarily be sent and he was willing in that anticipation that could only be experienced in a human body. God is, there's a word for this in theology, is impassable.

It means that he is unaffected by sin. He cannot feel what we feel as humans unless he takes upon himself the form of a human and that's why he's become a high priest because at every point he was tempted like as we. He's passed through our humanity.

He knows what it means and therefore he can live to make intercessions for us as his eternal calling because he has passed through the reality of what we face being human. Hey, you know, it's one thing for us to bear that but for God to bear it? What kind of a God is this that would allow his son to be sent and to bear this experience and find it to be eventuated in its vilest form which is crucifixion. The death for slaves, criminals, and rebels.

The most agonizing of deaths. What kind of a father is it that will send his son to suffer that and what kind of a son is it who is willing to bear it so that we might receive the benefit not only of the atonement but of the experience itself of the suffering itself of the grief itself as a necessary corrective to being the victims of a blithe and superficial age in which nothing affects us and we're totally blah. Well, you know what? For me, this heightens my appreciation.

My gratitude. My love. And if God keeps on showing us this, I might even come to the place one day where my love breaks through into the transcendent form that is called adoration which we have not yet obtained or attained and when we will, with that depth of identification and love that is called adoring, I think that there will be a companion power and authority released in us because anyone who adores God like that is not going to misuse the authority that God will invest in him for his own glory.

Got that? There's a payoff. Where do you get this, cats? Don't ask me. I don't know.

And yet I'm speaking it like it's gospel truth as if thus sayeth the Lord. Well, there are a lot of things that are not said and that are not written as we read before, quoted if all the things could be written which Jesus both said and did, the world would not be greater if it contained the book. And what about the things that are that were not explicitly said and yet are part of the reality of his life? So, if God keeps this up, we have every reason to admire him the more that he's willing to suffer the pangs of humanity.

Haven't you ever had an ache and a pain because you're human all too human? A stubborn thing that will not be released? Haven't you suffered humiliations and misunderstandings and the frustration of your own life and being finite and limited where you want to choke and spit it out and it's a grief and a pain? That's one thing for us to bear being human but for God to bear it is a remarkable condescension. This is humility that God is willing to bear what we of necessity have to bear in our frailty. He bore by taking upon himself the form of a man.

But now how much spite are we doing what he suffered if we don't avail ourselves of what he has passed through? It could come in some measure into our own being not by copying him but by assimilating by union with him because nothing through which he has passed is lost. A man is the sum of all his moments. Isn't that true of you? A man is the sum of all his experiences.

He may forget them as invariably he will but the effect of what through which he has passed is there. Number one, do you desire to acquire something of what he has passed through? It would add dimensions to us that would save us from being one-dimensional. Is there anything duller than a saint that has only two or three scriptures that are favorite and once they've finished sharing that there's nothing more to say? You have more fun and more reality and benefit with unbelievers who have rich life experiences and are characters than you have with saints that are predictable.

One-dimensional saints. So aren't these dimensions valuable? Do we desire them? Number two, do we have the faith to appropriate them? That the life experience of Jesus and his humanity is not something lost. It's eternally registered, eternally available to those who will have the faith in union with him to appropriate the desire.

The briefest verse in all scripture is in that context in John 11 two words, Jesus wept. Well you need to hear my message in which I say he wept at their weeping. He didn't weep in commiseration for the untimely death of young Lazarus.

He wept because Israel was weeping in a saccharine sentimental, slobbering way over the tragic premature death of a young man. He wept because of their lack of faith. He wept because they did not know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

He wept because they were making a ceremony. They were getting esoteric psychological they were getting a bang out of weeping. This is Jewish as anyone who has ever had a Jewish mother knows.

They love to wring their fingers and oy vey and woe is me and gossip and talk about the operations and Jesus wept because their weeping was a statement of the ineptitude of Israel. It was a summation of how shallow that nation was in its own comprehension of the issue of death and resurrection. And what are the real issues that celebrate mortal life as if it's the thing in itself rather than the gateway to preparation for the life that's eternal.

He wept over their condition. He wept over their weeping. But he wept.

Jesus anguished plenty. We're not given long and ample descriptions but we can imagine the groanings and his own prayers and what he saw even in his own disciples. How long must I suffer you? The exasperation of men living with him day in and day out and yet failing to have registered the most elementary understanding and lacking in faith.

The Lord suffered and there's an efficacy to suffering and there's a dimension available to us through his sufferings that will do us good. It'll not make you morbid but it'll save you from being shallow. But the tempered life, the seasoned life, the life that has passed through a remarkable depth of experience, that's what he sends down from the throne.

It's not just an abstract energy, it's himself as he has passed through the things that preceded his enthronement. Namely, his suffering, his crucifixion, his burial, his going down into hell. How many people have had that experience and been raised up by the power of God to the throne of God? He's had a

history as a man that is astonishing.

And when he sends down his life, the spirit of his life, it is shaped and affected and carries the valence, the resonance of that through which he has passed. But to see it only as a power, now we have power, no? And not to receive what is inherent, what is intrinsic to that life is a tragic loss. And somehow it seems to be our experience that we're only emphasizing the power but not the character of that life.

God's life is not an abstraction. Is your life an abstraction? My life is unique and distinct. No one else has ever lived my life.

I cherish it every day and every year of it. What a history. And there's yet a future.

Life is an enormous thing. It's not an abstraction. It's particular.

It has history. It has disposition. It has mood.

It has the things that are unique to it. And you know, that's how we ought to be appreciating each other. Because there's no two alike.

There's no two snowflakes alike. There's no two fingerprints alike. How much more variable is the variety to be found in the body of Christ? And I want to meet and touch and receive the benefit of the life of that one different from my own.

And hear it and converse with it and relate to it so that the body of Christ should not be threadbare and barren and malnourished but have the benefit of the richness of the life of its members as it is freely expressed. For the want of that, the world is rushing for entertainment and videos and games because they're dull. Because they have nothing to give and nothing to express.

They have no opinion, no thought. Their experience is vain. So they have to fill the vacuum with things that excite.

And if it grows dull then those who create that stuff have got to be yet more daring, yet more pornographic, yet more vile in the murders, the deaths, the rapes, the things that are depicted, even in video games. Because people get bored and need yet more innovative and exciting things because they have grown dull to the last. We are an entertainment-oriented civilization.

For the want of character, for the want of the enjoyment of what God has made in his image, man the supreme pinnacle, the zenith of God's creation is flat as a pancake, dull as a dodo, has nothing to distinguish it and needs to be entertained. For the church to be in that condition is yet more tragic. The reason for the sorrow and the grief may pass but the resonance of having experienced sorrow and grief remains.

It brings a dimension and a layer to your person that serves you in good stead and benefits many. So we need to see like that. When we will enjoy each other, even in silence, we will come to a place of reality where we don't have to be clever, we don't have to be engaging, we don't have to be amusing.

There are times when we will be that and the best times are when such things come spontaneously without self-conscious effort to be amusing or attractive. But even if you're sitting with other saints and you're quiet, there's an enjoyment because their life and the reality of what they represent in God is somehow there. And there's a fellowship even without speaking.

That's not to say that they should not be speaking but when we come to this enjoyment of each other in silence and quiet, it shows that we're under, we've come to a dimension. The Spirit is given without measure unto him and as many as are in him can also receive the Spirit without measure, without fear that it's going to go to their heads, encourage their egotism or their vanity, or be misappropriated for their human glory. That's why the Spirit was given without measure to him because he was a son.

He's not going to receive anything from the Father that he will turn to his own self-aggrandizement. The Father can afford. That's why Jesus said in John 13, the foot washing, that I've come from the Father, I'm going to the Father, and the Father hath given me all things.

How can the Father afford that? In fact, finally, the Father gives him the name above all names. That to him every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. The Father is so giving he's extravagant in what he gives the Son.

Do you know why? There's never any fear that the Son will utilize it for himself because everything that the Son does, thinks, and is, is for the Father. It will redound to the glory of the Father. When we are sons like that, we will have the Spirit in much greater measure than we are now presently enjoying.

How does it say? Our life is hid with Christ in God. How about his life being hid in our life? If our life is hid with him, what about his life hid with us? Isn't that exactly what Spurgeon is saying? That this is a two-way street. If our life could be hid with him, then by the same measure his life can be hid with us.

How is our life hid with him? In death and resurrection. Because we're crucified. We're dead and hid with Christ in God.

So that something can take place where he becomes our life. But by the same token, if our life is hid in him, could his life then be hid in us? And is that the way in which we can appropriate his grief, his sorrow, his character, his tempering, the things through which he's passed? And even though we can't identify or articulate this, this, and this, and what consists of the valence. I don't have a word for it.

Somebody help me who has a little mastery in the English language. The sense, the valence, the sum, the resonance of the reality of the life that Jesus lived as man is transmuted and brought in to us. What was hid in him is imparted to us to the measure of our faith and appropriation.

That's not a bad thing. That we would really be then a witness unto him. And there would be dimensions in our being that would bless many.

That is not to be explained by what we have attained by our own endeavor, or by our length of life, or by our experience. All of those things are valuable. But here's something additional that imbues and enhances everything.

It's his life as it has been lived, and the reality through which it's passed, is now transmuted and conveyed in some measure to us. There'll not be a shallow believer in the bunch. And this is the mystery of incarnation that goes so far beyond just the necessity for a man to suffer and die for sin.

That's great! But redemption is more than atonement. The capstone of redemption is incarnation, and sons brought to glory, and fullness. And that's what we're talking about.

That's what we need to see. The church has become, what's the word, stagnant and fixed over the doctrinal dispute. How many natures and how could Deity be in union with humanity? But that's that Greek mentality.

But the Hebraic, if I could put it that way, the spiritual, the mentality that Spurgeon is expressing here, goes beyond the issue of doctrinal correctness. It goes to the issue of assimilation, appropriation of dimensions of reality that we would never consider is available to us. That is part of our legacy and the humanity of Jesus as well as his Deity.

So on that note, we need to take a break. Stagger out of the room gasping. Lord, who is sufficient for these things? We can hardly understand it, let alone appropriate it.

But if we do, you will be so much more glorified. Why should your precious experience be lost? Why should it not be continued and conveyed by those who are presently in union with you? Why should they be doomed to just the narrowness of their own earthly humanity and the circumstances by which they were born in Russia or Brooklyn or any such thing? Why can't they envelop and take in the dimensions that come through you, that enhance and deepen and make them so much more a blessing to the church and to all men everywhere and to themselves? So Lord, teach us what these things mean. Thank you for the privilege, my God, of a first opening up of such a subject as this that seems to threaten the prospect of heresy.

We've not been this way here before. This is a little different than what it is. And it could if we were immature and run with this in the wrong way.

But Lord, watch over us. Remember how we prayed, Lord, in the prayer time? Have we come to a place in time where you can look upon us with such favor that you can communicate to us some of your secrets? Some of those things that are hidden, that you don't bandy about generally, but you wait for an occasion where you know it will be heard and received. Is that what we're getting today? If so, Lord, receive our gratitude and keep on keeping on and we'll thank you and give you praise.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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