

Does Jesus Really Understand

by Keith Price

Jesus understands our sorrow because he experienced it himself and was separated from his Father, showing us the depth of his humanity and his understanding of our pain.

Duration: 38:40

Scripture: Psalm 22:1, Matthew 27:46, Mark 14:35, Luke 12:34, Luke 22:44, Luke 23:46, John 19:28, John 19:30

Topics: "Emotional Suffering", "Divine Empathy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the emotional and spiritual anguish that Jesus experienced before his crucifixion. The speaker emphasizes that Jesus had not yet been physically harmed, but his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. The sermon focuses on seven specific words that describe Jesus' anguish, which are found in the Bible. The speaker encourages the audience to reflect on these words and recognize that Jesus truly understands their sorrow.

Transcript

Did you pray that? Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son, and leaving your Spirit till your work on earth is done. Doesn't that sum it all up? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God three in one. I wonder if that was the first time you ever heard that as we sung it.

I mean, the first time you ever knew those facts, what would you think? Somebody is thanking God the Father for sending his Son to do what? To die on the cross. We're going to celebrate it this Friday, but my every day of every year. And then when that was done, sending his Spirit to enable us to do that work on earth.

Let's thank him. Lord, our hearts do overflow, and we want to thank you, our Father, for sending your Son. And thank you, Lord Jesus, for being willing to come.

There was no need for it, as far as you were concerned, for you need not have died. You need not have become man, but you chose to do that to identify with us in our need, in our suffering, and then to pay the price on the cross. And then, as if that were not enough, the sacrifice of all time and eternity, you then sent your Holy Spirit to minister this resurrection life of Christ to our hearts, that we may be able to do the work that you had called us to do.

Lord, thank you indeed. Thank you so much. Touch us afresh this morning, if our hearts are not soft toward you, Lord.

If we're no longer thankful for this because we've got used to it, oh Lord, rekindle that flame this morning, I pray, and grant that we may leave this place praising you and thanking you for sending us your Son. It's in his name we pray. Amen.

It's Palm Sunday, and of course we remember that the palm branches were put down before Jesus on that first Palm Sunday that we read about in John chapter 12 and elsewhere. But yesterday here, as you've already heard, we had the funeral for Mark Newenhouse. I wonder as we compare those, if you were not a Christian yesterday and you were here, surely you would have thought that because death would be the end, and that's what people who aren't Christians often think, then if that were the case, then there's nothing but sadness here.

And yet here we are today, Palm Sunday. There's this contrast. Thankfully, the family are Christians.

The family were Christians. Mark knew the Lord Jesus. And today, of course, we know that his wife Clarenda and his children Joshua and Charlotte and Nicholas, here they were yesterday here, they knew where Mark is.

They know where he is right now. But the rest of those officers, a thousand or more of them here, perhaps many of them didn't know that. And perhaps if they were here this morning, they'd think, well what a contrast.

Here we're thinking about Hosanna, we're putting palm branches down. I wonder how many of those people way back then who put palm branches down didn't actually feel that, but felt sad inside themselves. I wonder how many of them woke up depressed that particular morning, and they just got caught up with the throng and they threw down their palm branches, but in actual fact they didn't feel like that.

Maybe on Palm Sunday, you really don't feel like it also. You've come here this morning, and that's something that you're to be commended for, particularly if you didn't feel like. We do go through those times, and sometimes we can't understand why other people are praising and clapping and rejoicing and raising their hands.

They didn't have, perhaps, such a bad morning. But I want us to think of those this morning who may not be rejoicing, and I believe there may be many of us here this morning who may have not just got out of bed the wrong way. No, no, no, for that will pass quickly.

But frankly, something has taken place, something that's deep, something that's taken place deep in my spirit, deep in my heart, something that's filled with emotion, something that's filling me with grief. And I'm coming now to Easter Sunday next Sunday. We're supposed to rejoice on Palm Sunday this Sunday.

I believe this morning that the Lord would have me share with you something of what Jesus went through to show you that he really does understand your sorrow. And when you come with me and we travel through those things that Jesus went through, as we read of them in the gospel this morning, then I want us to come out the other side, and I want us to come out with an Easter Sunday sense as we leave this place, although it's not even Good Friday yet, because this morning this one, the Lord Jesus, knows exactly what you may be going through. He's gone through it all, far worse than you or I could ever go through, for the deep suffering of soul and spirit he went through was because of his consciousness and

anticipation that he was going to have to bear in his body all the sins of the world, to carry them away so that he could pay the price on the cross, pay for your sin and mine, and we could receive forgiveness by God's grace and by repentance and faith as we come to that cross.

Thank you, O our Father, for sending us your Son, for sending him to die, but en route to that cross he suffered such deep suffering in his spirit that I believe this morning he understands where you and I may be. As we do that, I want you to remember what I shared with you three months ago in January before I came here for a six-month period. I shared with you then as I came here to preach that weekend that we tend to think of him only as God.

We forget that he's fully man. Liberals, on the other hand, think he's just virtually man, and we're not sure about this God bit, but certainly he's a man. But evangelical Christians, those who believe the Bible, those who believe that Jesus came to die for our sin and it takes that new birth in accepting him as our Savior, we tend to think of him as God much more than we do as man.

But he wasn't half and half. He was fully God, fully man, and as I said three months ago, he took the right arm of his deity and put it behind his back while he came down here to live with that humanity. And apart from those times in his role as mediator, he kept that arm behind his back as he lived and went through the trials and sorrows and troubles of this world.

So with that in mind, I want to read you three verses, then I'm going to take you to the Gospels, and I'm going to show you something of what Jesus suffered. What I share this morning, I hope you will never forget. I've never heard anyone sharing on what I'm going to share with you this morning, except one man, 25 years ago, who opened up the Scriptures to me and taught me something of the inner sufferings of Christ.

Two of his daughters are in our church this morning. They were in the earlier service, and one of them happens to be my wife. And my father-in-law taught me what I'm going to share with you this morning, and I dedicate this message to his memory, a wonderful man of God who walked the life as well as taught it.

So let me read you, first of all, three verses. There's no need to turn to these, and as you leave this morning, you're going to receive a little sheet. As you go, the ushers will give you a little sheet on which you will have the seven words I'm going to use to show you what Jesus really went through before he went to the cross.

So don't feel you've got to write everything down, yet if you wanted to, you'll get it as you go out. So let me read you first from Hebrews 4, the last two verses. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who's been tempted, or put to the test, that word means, in every way just as we are, yet was without sin.

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Then the last verse of chapter 2 says, because he himself, that's Christ, suffered when he was tempted or put to the test, he is able to help those who are being put to the test. So today, because Jesus has gone through what he did, he is able now to fully sympathize and understand where you are, and deepen the suffering of your soul and spirit that you feel maybe you cannot share with anyone.

He understands this morning, he really understands, and not just says, well I understand, but I'm sorry I can't do much about it, but he understands and he pours in his grace by that spirit that he sent us until his work is done, pours in that grace to enable us not just to cope, but to enable us to grow through these times of deep sadness maybe that we're going through. The seven words are unfortunately not all in one paragraph, which I like to deal with one paragraph. They're scattered in the Gospels, all except one of them take place in the final week of Jesus' life on earth.

Because they're scattered, I'll have to turn to the different Gospels, and I don't want to distract you, so you'll get those references as you leave. But I couldn't find any version of the English Scriptures in which all seven words, as they were written in the language of the New Testament, I couldn't find any English version that they were translated by seven different English words, except one. That was the King James Version.

It's the only one that had seven different words, so rather than confuse you with, like the NIV may use the same English word for two different words that were used in the language of Scripture, I'm going to use those words. I've got the King James up here, and I've got the NIV down here, so I trust I don't get them a little muddled up, but I'm going to give you those seven words, and I'm going to turn you to them. As we do, we may need to take our shoes from off our feet, figuratively speaking, because the place in which we will stand will be holy ground.

We're entering into areas of Christ's personality and depth of his Spirit that we really don't know very much about, except that the Spirit of God has chosen to use certain words which God the Father wanted us to have to show us the depth of Christ's anguish. So let me walk you through the seven words. The first one is in Luke's Gospel, chapter 12.

This one takes place possibly some weeks before the final week, all the others in the final week, and we'll move following his footsteps. But he says now, before the cross has come, before that week has arrived, yet anticipating what it would mean to bear all the sins of the world and be separated from his Father to be forsaken. Anticipating that three hours of darkness, knowing what it would mean, and knowing that he had no choice because he set his face as a flint.

He knew that that's where he was going to go, and he came determined to go there. He was incarnated into human flesh, that he may go to that cross. He was the man born to be king, and in Luke, chapter 12, he says in verse 50, I have a baptism to undergo, and how, here's the word, distressed I am until it is completed.

Distressed. The King James uses the word, an old-fashioned word that I'll have to explain. How am I straightened until it be accomplished? Not G-H-T, straight, but A-I-T, straight.

How am I in a straight? I'm in a straight betwixt two, says the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1. I don't know which way to go. It's preventing a definite choice. Or sometimes I'm in a straight between, like, the Straits of Juan de Fuca, between the Olympic Peninsula, the state of Washington, and where I live in Victoria.

And frankly, you're in the Straits, and that's one of the graveyards of the ocean, isn't it? Right there. And I've passed through on several occasions the Straits of Gibraltar, where you know you come in that ship with the southwest coast of Europe on your left, if you come out of the Bay of Biscay, the roughest part of the North Atlantic, and on the right you have the coast of North Africa. And as both continents press in on you, they have to stop the ship, and a pilot climbs on board, comes up the ladder alongside, and he takes

you through the Straits for fear that you'll be thrown against the rocks on either side, pressed or depressed, pulled or pushed against them.

This is in a straight. It's the same as a straitjacket. And Jesus said, now am I in a straitjacket, as it were.

I know where I've got to go. I've set my face like a flint. I'm going to die for the sins of the world, and I'm not going to turn back.

I don't know whether you've ever watched a cattle squeeze in operation. If you live in Alberta or Montana or places like that, you'll see more of them, where they take an animal to give him perhaps some medication, take him through the guardrails, and he'll eventually come to a dead end. He can't go any further.

He can't go forward, and then a rail comes down behind him. He can't go back. Then the farmer pulls a lever, and the two rails on the side squeeze the sides of his body.

He can't move forward or backwards or sideways. He's in a straitjacket. He's in a cattle squeeze.

That's the exact thought of this word. Jesus said, I have a baptism to be baptized with. Not John's baptism, but the baptism when all of the billows of God's wrath upon your sin and mine would be poured out upon Jesus.

He would be baptized under them. And he says, as I anticipate that, how am I straightened, preventing a definite choice? You're in that situation this morning, not for that purpose. Obviously, there was none other good enough to pay the price of sin.

He only could unlock the gates of heaven and let me in. But I wonder whether you're in a strait, whether there's pressure on you, whether we feel forced into a certain situation. You say, well, I know if I'm suffering in body, then people pray for that.

But how can I express even what it means for me to be in this situation this morning? Listen, he understands. He knows what it was to be constrained. Same word.

For as the King James says in 2 Corinthians 5, 14, or the Apostle Paul says rather, the love of Christ constrains me, impels me, moves me on, motivates me, activates me. I can't go any other way. I'm going to move up.

That's it, straightened. How am I straightened? Word number two is in John's gospel, but the same number chapter, chapter 12. And you may recall that when I mentioned about Jesus being both God and man three months ago, I was speaking from verse 27, where our second word is.

I didn't talk about this word then, but now's the time to do that. He says, starting again in 24, that he was that kernel of wheat that fell into the ground and died, you recall, on that first Good Friday, I said. And then on that first Easter Sunday morning, he broke up through the earth and began to grow towards heaven.

Then you remember at Pentecost, the Spirit of God was poured out upon the church. He's the corn of wheat. And knowing what that would mean to be separated from his Father, bearing your sin in mind, he now says in verse 27, now my heart is troubled.

Do you remember we saw those five statements? Well, forget those now, but just look at the one word. Now my heart is troubled. It's the same in the King James, troubled.

It's the same in almost all the versions, troubled. And you say, but I find that hard to understand because he's the Prince of Peace. Am I bringing back something I said before? But he is the Prince of Peace, and he can minister to us in our need, and he can fully understand where we are because he was troubled.

That was the very reason. That's the reason why he can understand. This is a strong word, troubled.

It occurs, written by John again, a few chapters earlier on in John chapter 5, we're at the pool of Bethesda. You remember that man was there for 38 years, crippled? And it says that every time an angel would come down to trouble the water, whoever was first in would be healed of whatever disease he had. And then in John 5 verse 7 he says, but whenever the water's troubled, someone else gets in there before me.

And the word he uses about troubling the water is the word that means that which is normally calm water is now in a state of agitation. It's agitated. I've just been ministering the last week or the week before that at Staying Right Facing the West Edmonton Mile, and they have that huge, all those waves that come in, you know, and they suddenly create this agitation.

That's the idea. That's what the word means. It means in deep trouble, agitated, perturbed, disturbed.

Jesus was like that, and he was like that because he knew that what had never happened before was now going to happen on the cross. He was going to be separated from the one with whom he was the very same substance, his father with whom he'd been unseparated for all eternity. There's a third word, and it's in Mark's gospel.

Mark's gospel chapter 14. Now we are in the garden of Gethsemane. On Good Friday we'll doubtless hear about the cross.

He hasn't reached the cross yet. But I want you to notice all the spiritual suffering he went through before he ever reached the cross. So verse 32 of Mark 14, they went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, sit here while I pray.

In verse 33, which is our verse, he took Peter, James, and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed, says the NIV. The King James puts it, and he began to be sore amazed. Now distressed is good, deeply distressed is better, but we've had that word before, just to be up to back, remember, in the NIV.

This is a completely different word in the New Testament language, and this doesn't mean just distressed. It doesn't mean just distressed and depressed. It means more than that.

It says he began to be sore amazed. We don't use that expression now. It's an antiquated form, so let me express what it means.

It's translated in two chapters later on from this. In chapter 16, when the women come to the tomb on Easter Sunday morning, they came to the tomb expecting to find Jesus, the body, there, and they found the stone rolled away. And when they looked, they saw a man dressed in a long white raiment.

Now if you came to a tomb expecting to find a dead body, and the stone was gone, and you found a man who was obviously an angelic being, and you found him in a long white glistening raiment, I'll guarantee

that you would be what it says of them, the women, it says, and they were affrighted. And the word actually means in modern idiomatic English, they were scared stiff. They were actually alarmed, and the angel says, don't be alarmed, don't be affrighted, because he had good news for them.

That's the word that's used of Jesus. He began to be exceedingly frightened. No, I'm not a heretic.

I've done my homework on these words. And when the Spirit of God puts a word like that in, he means us to know that if you're frightened right now, fearful of facing what phone call may bring this afternoon or this evening, or what Monday morning may bring, Jesus really understands, because he was exceedingly affrighted, because he knew in that three hours he was to bear away the sins of the world and be shut out from his Father's presence, something otherwise unimaginable. Look at the fourth word, it's right next to it.

Same verse. He began to be deeply distressed, Mark 14, 33, and oh, here we have again in the NIV, troubled, but it's a completely different word. The word in the King James is, he began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy, very heavy.

Now, we don't say that, well, my brother, you're looking very heavy this morning. I suppose we'd understand what someone meant, but we don't use that kind of wording these days. What we mean is, there's something, you're very down, you're very discouraged, something's taking place.

What is it? You've got a heavy heart, we may say. Full full of heaviness, it says. Isn't it of Epaphroditus, I think? Full of heaviness.

Do you know there are three words for depression in the New Testament? This word is the strongest of the three. You say, Jesus, depressed? Now I know you're a heretic. No.

The reason you may think I'm a heretic saying that is because you may wrongly think that depression is a sin. But depression is no more a sin than a toothache or a headache. But with us, usually or often, depression is accompanied by self-pity.

We become drenched in it, we are wallowing in self-pity, and we're filled with ourselves and preoccupied with that. And depression, the whole thing, then becomes a sin. But never with Jesus.

He became so deeply depressed. Depressed because of the weight of the waters of the baptism of God poured out upon him, because he was the sin-bearer bearing away the sin of all the world. It's not yet come, Lord, but anticipating it.

I can't imagine what it's going to be like, my father, he would say. Very heavy. But there's a fifth word out of the seven, and we're fortunate that this one comes again in the next verse.

But that's it, then we'll have to move on. He began to be deeply distressed and troubled, and then Mark 14, 34, my soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Don't forget, they've not touched him.

They've not laid a finger on him. That Roman procurator's whip hasn't come down 39 times upon his blessed back, created all those ugly wounds, with that semi-congealed blood sticking to the crossbar of the cross as he carried it up the Via Dolorosa. One could understand, but no, they haven't touched him yet.

This is the thought of my sin. This is why Jesus came. This is the whole point of the gospel.

He came because we are sinners. Every one of us is not one of us that is not. We've all failed even to meet our own standards, leave alone God's standards, and he was going to bear the weight of all of that.

Oh, he had to go to the cross, for as I said, without the shedding of blood, there's no remission of sin. But this was his deepest suffering, and he was filled with anguish. My soul is, says the King James, exceeding sorrowful unto death.

Straightened, the corn of wheat is falling. Troubled, sore amazed, very heavy, exceeding sorrowful. Where it says exceeding sorrowful unto death, I used to think that meant my soul will be like that until I die.

But it doesn't say until death, it says unto death in the English translation, or in the NIV, better still, to the point of death. And the whole idea there is that it isn't that he just would be filled with sorrow until it was all over, which of course would be true. But much more than that, my soul is so exceeding sorrowful, so overwhelmed with anguish, that the anguish and the sorrow itself is calculated to bring about my death.

So that without any of the spear or the nails or the crown of thorns, without them taking him and crucifying him, quite apart from that, Jesus could right here have died of a--we often say that, don't we? The nails didn't keep him there, he died of a broken heart. Hard to find a good verse to show that, but if anyone comes near it, it's this one. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

I wonder if we're as sorrowful for what our sin did to him, as he was filled with anguish because of what your sin and mine would do in separating him from his father. He needn't have come, he had no sin, he needn't have died, but he chose to come to take my place. The questions I want you to ask yourselves as I go through these beautiful words are twofold.

Number one, does he really love me? Ask yourself that, for he needn't have gone through this. Secondly, does he really understand when I go through loneliness and sorrow and heartache and inner anguish and emotional turmoil that I can't even share with anyone, for I don't know how to put it into words. Thirdly, does he love, does he understand? Yes, he was filled with anguish to the point of death.

Before we come to the sixth word, I want you to notice it's in the same context, but in a different gospel. So for you to get the connection which you'll get on that sheet you may pick up later, I want to read the next verse. Verse 35, Mark 14.

Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. Now, picking up that very place in the garden, bowed beneath the olive trees in the garden of Gethsemane, turn now to Luke's gospel, chapter 22, for our sixth word. Luke chapter 22.

Our sixth word is in verse 44, where it says, and being in anguish. The King James, being in an agony. You say, well, you were too, if they put you on a cross, hasn't got there yet.

He's in an agony, but he hasn't got to the cross. They haven't lifted a finger. Oh, they were just a few footsteps away from him when this was happening.

They were coming through, led by Judas, soon to get him right there as Judas would betray him with a kiss, but they hadn't got to him yet and hadn't laid a finger, but he's in an agony. Now, look what led up to that. You see, verse 41 is where we picked it up from Mark's gospel.

He withdrew about a stone's throw, knelt down and prayed, Father, if you're willing, take this cup from me. Our cup is our lot in life, biblically. My cup runneth over, says Psalm 23.

If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, says Jesus, speaking of the cross. James and John, can you drink the cup that I drink? This is the cup of suffering in his passion. Now, he says, Father, if it be possible, take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done.

There were a group of people in the early centuries of the church called the Monothelites, a word meaning one will, who believed that Jesus didn't say, not my will, but thine be done, for he was almost all God and only a little bit man. It's around today. So how can Jesus say that? But he did say it, and they expunged this verse from scripture and wiped it out of many lines of copies.

And had it not been for the intervention of a seventh-century pope that said, what has been written has been written, and you cannot destroy it from scripture, it may not have been in some of the copies we see, but it's there, and we know the suffering Jesus was going through, not because he was God and man, but because like you and like myself, we too struggle like this. We want God to have his will done in our lives, but it's so terribly hard to allow that right now and to say yes to that question. Others are waiting for an answer from me on.

He understands. But then it says, in that struggle, verse 43, an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. I suspect that this is where Hebrews chapter 5 and verse 7 comes in, where, with prayers and petitions and with strong crying and tears, Jesus spoke to the one that was able to save him out of death.

I suspect, my brothers and sisters, that this strong crying and tears took place here between verse 42 and 43. And as he was there in the garden struggling with this, wanting to do his father's will, but being very human as well, an angel sent from God the Father. At any time he could have called upon legions of angels.

His Father could have sent down all kinds of angels, thousands upon thousands, but he never did. But here he sends down one angel to touch and strengthen this body, and God never does anything unless it's necessary. He's not a waster.

He feeds the 5,000, but he gathers up the fragments after. And our God would never have dispatched an angel to those olive trees in the garden of Gethsemane had not Jesus been the one that would have expired there in agony before they'd ever lifted a finger upon him. The angel then strengthened him so he could go on to die on the cross.

Now our verse, and being in an agony, being in anguish, agony. The word agon was the name of the race where the chariots were and the horses were there, and they would strain every muscle and fiber to try and win that race. And then the word agon came to be applied to the whole stadium.

It was called the agon in Roman times. And then it came into the Latin language, and the kind of strain that those animals went through was called agonia. And when John Wycliffe, the morning star of the Reformation in the 1370s, translated the Bible, the New Testament, from Latin into English, he didn't know what English word to use for agonia, so he transliterated it.

And being in an agonia, agony, will make up an English word. It means something that's deep inside me, and it was only used of that, never of outward physical suffering. So Jesus was in an agony, and they

hadn't lifted a finger upon him, so much so that his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

The word drops is the word from which we get our word thrombosis. That's the word. And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, says the King James.

For as Kenneth Woust interpretively translates it, he was in such agony that the blood burst through the ruptured capillary walls, reddening the perspiration and enlarging the drops as they fell from his forehead, all because of your sin and mine. Are you in deep inward anguish this morning? Do you think he understands? Yes, he understands. And that brings us to our last word, which is in Matthew 27.

Matthew 27, and verse 46. Now the corn of wheat has touched the ground. In this verse, he is on the cross.

They've done their dirty, dastardly, deadly deed. They have crucified him by wicked hands, yet all according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. But on that cross, before he expired in agony, before he said it's finished, he went through three hours of such darkness that the world has never known.

A human being cannot imagine, for it says in verse 46, and about the ninth hour at three in the afternoon, Jesus cried in a loud voice, My God, my God, why have you, here's our word, forsaken me? Forsaken, straightened, troubled, sore amazed, very heavy, exceeding sorrowful, in an agony, and now into the ground. Why have you forsaken me? For in that three hours of darkness, Jesus, who was bearing my sin upon his body, had to be ignored by God the Father. God the Father, who is holy, had to turn his back away from sin, as he had from Adam when he created him.

But now Jesus, or rather when Adam fell in the garden, and so now Jesus is taking the place of humankind. Jesus is bearing our sin in his body, and instead of turning away from us, God now has to turn his face away from his son. He's forsaken me.

Why have you forsaken me? Do you recall me saying weeks ago that God forsook his son Jesus, so he would never have to forsake us? And that's what the word means. It means abandoned. It means isolated.

It means just far out, away from anything else. It's like the scapegoat in Leviticus chapter 16, who on the day of atonement bore the sins of the people, and was sent out into the wilderness, never to return, carrying those sins away. That's what it means, utterly abandoned, totally isolated.

More remote it means than a rowing boat in mid-Pacific, or a star flung into the farthest reaches of space. This is where Jesus went, my friends, in order to bear away your sin. And in that three hours of darkness, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? I wonder if you've said to him, you were forsaken because I need not be forsaken.

I never knew this was the heart of the Christian gospel. But I now want to come to the foot of that cross where you died and give myself to you. And I want to say thank you for taking my place.

Thank you for dying instead of me. I could never have made it. None of us could.

But you loved us enough to die. And you understand us enough to minister the grace that we need in our time of need. What language shall I borrow to thank thee, dearest friend? We sang this morning, for this thy dying sorrow and pity without end.

Oh, make me thine forever. And should I fainting be, Lord, let me never, never outlive my love for thee. But I don't want you to leave here this morning sad.

I don't want you to go out here thinking that Jesus is still in the grave. I don't want you to leave here this morning thinking all is lost. No! He died upon the cross, and on the third day, Easter Sunday morning, he broke up through the earth.

Up from the grave he arose, a mighty triumph for his foes, triumphing over death and hell and the grave. And this Jesus this morning is alive. He's my living Savior, my living Lord.

And he's interceding for you and for me at the Father's right hand. And he says, look, I know what my children are going through. I've been through it all.

And now I want to minister grace and pour it into your life. Just takes a little bit of faith, like a mustard seed grain, like a mustard tree seed, to accept that grace and say, Lord, I want to thank you this morning for becoming my Savior. But today, particularly, I want to thank you for understanding where I am right now.

And at that first Good Friday, ministering to my need, and in the week before, going through far worse than I could ever have gone through. Thank you, my Lord. Thank you.

Thank you that you're alive.

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