

“He Shares Your Sufferings”
(Hebrews 4:14-16)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We are to put off our sins and put on obedience.
 - a. To put off the flesh and put on Jesus Christ.
 - b. Why?
 - c. We’ve already seen several reasons.

2. This evening, I want to return to love.
 - a. We should because of our love for Him.
 - b. And because of His love for us – all He’s done.

B. Preview.

1. There is one more thing we should consider
 - a. Having to do with love,
 - b. That follows up on the point
 - c. Of last Lord’s Day’s morning sermon:
 - (i) The suffering and grief
 - (ii) Jesus endured in this world for our salvation.

 - d. This is certainly part of what He’s done out of love for us.
 - e. But let’s consider how it applies to Him now
 - (i) As He is in heaven and glorified.
 - (ii) Does what we do here
 - (a) Affect what He experiences there?
 - (b) Can we either increase or decrease His joy?

 - (iii) If what we do does affect Him
 - (a) Doesn’t that become another motive
 - (b) To put off our sins and to put on obedience?
 - (c) Tonight, let’s consider that this is the case.

2. Let’s look at two things:
 - a. First, it’s true that as God, Jesus’ happiness neither increases nor diminishes.
 - b. But it’s also true that as man, it does both.

II. Sermon.

A. First, as God, Jesus’ happiness neither increases nor diminishes.

1. How blessed is God?
 - a. How much joy does He experience?
 - b. Like everything else about Him, it’s infinite.
 - (i) Whatever God possesses is infinite: His power, presence, knowledge, wisdom, etc.
 - (ii) The same is true of what He experiences:
 - (a) If He is angry, His anger must be infinite.
 - (b) If He experiences love, that love must have no limits.

- (c) And so if He is blessed –
 - (1) If He experiences joy and happiness,
 - (2) That must also be infinite.

- (iii) If this is true,
 - (a) Then with regard to His blessedness
 - (b) He is a full bucket.
 - (1) Nothing we can do
 - (2) Will either increase His joy or lessen it.
 - (3) He is always the same.

2. One argument to prove this

- a. Is to think about how God would be if He was unhappy.
 - (i) If He was unhappy,
 - (ii) That unhappiness would be infinite,
 - (iii) And so He would be infinitely miserable,
 - (iv) Which we know is contrary to fact.

- b. How can God be infinitely happy
 - (i) When things happen in this world
 - (ii) That aren't pleasing to Him
 - (iii) In and of themselves?

- c. How can He be infinitely blessed
 - (i) When His children are struggling with sin,
 - (ii) When they're being persecuted and put to death?
 - (iii) When thousands of people
 - (iv) Who are made in His image
 - (v) Descend every day into hell?
 - (vi) When He says in His Word
 - (vii) That He takes no pleasure
 - (viii) In the death of the wicked (Ez. 33:11)?

- d. It really has to do with perspective:
 - (i) With what the Lord has in view.
 - (ii) If He was to consider any of these events
 - (a) Isolated from everything else,
 - (b) It could not be pleasing to Him.

 - (iii) But if He considers them
 - (a) In light of everything He has planned
 - (b) They can be.

 - (iv) For instance,
 - (a) We know God doesn't delight death of wicked.
 - (1) Yet, there are wicked who die every day.
 - (2) Why isn't He infinitely miserable then?

 - (b) It's because even though
 - (1) He may not delight in that event by itself –

- (A) In the fact that One of His creatures
- (B) Died while in rebellion against Him,
- (C) And one who bears His image
- (D) Will now have to face eternal damnation –

- (2) He does delight in the good things
 - (A) That will come from this:
 - (B) In the fact that a wicked man
 - (C) Is justly punished for his sins.
 - (D) In the fact that His justice
 - (E) Is vindicated by this punishment.
 - (F) In the fact that those
 - (G) Who have been injured by this wicked man
 - (H) Have received justice.

- (c) God didn't create evil –
 - (1) He didn't make these wicked men
 - (2) Commit these evil acts –
 - (3) But He can use their evil
 - (4) To bring about good,
 - (5) And in the end
 - (6) Punish them for their evil.
 - (7) He can rejoice both in the good He brings
 - (8) Through their evil,
 - (9) And in the punishment He inflicts
 - (10) For their evil.
 - (11) He can be infinitely happy in what happens
 - (12) Because everything that takes place
 - (13) Takes place according to His plan
 - (14) For some good purpose.

3. Now as I said,

- a. Because He is infinitely happy
- b. We can't make Him more or less happy.
 - (i) Whatever we do –
 - (a) Whether we obey or not –
 - (b) Is all part of His plan.
 - (ii) If you do what is right,
He will rejoice in the good you do;
 - (iii) If you do what is wrong,
 - (a) He will rejoice in the good
 - (b) He will bring out of it
 - (c) Both for you and for His kingdom.
 - (iv) God is infinitely happy
And always will be.
 - (v) That doesn't mean you have an excuse to sin,

- (a) But it does mean that your sin
- (b) Doesn't take away from God's joy –
- (c) From either the Father,
- (d) Or the Son
- (e) Or the Spirit.

B. Now Jesus is God and as God His happiness can't be increased.

But Jesus isn't only God,

He is also man;

And as man, what we do does affect Him.

1. Here is something new the incarnation brings.

a. Jesus could not be really be blessed

- (i) Anymore than He is as God
- (ii) By what we do.
- (iii) But as man, He can.

b. This was Jonathan Edwards' answer

- (i) To the full bucket problem.
- (ii) Before, you could not add to God's joy,
- (iii) But now you can!
 - (a) One person of the Godhead
 - (b) Was made like us.
 - (1) He took to Himself not only a body,
 - (2) But a human soul, heart/affections.
 - (c) He came into this world
 - (1) And experienced everything we have.
 - (2) Now He knows
 - (3) What we feel,
 - (4) What we go through
 - (5) By having gone though it Himself.
 - (6) The only exception is sin,
 - (A) He never experienced this,
 - (B) But He did temptation
 - (C) To its greatest limit
 - (D) Because He never gave in.

(d) He did these things

- (1) That He might become
- (2) Our faithful and merciful high priest (Heb. 2:17-18).

2. Now what's the point?

a. The point is this:

- (i) Did Jesus return to heaven with knowledge only?
- (ii) No, in our text, the author to the Hebrews tells us
- (iii) He can now sympathize with us (4:15).

b. To sympathize means to know what you're through –

- (i) Especially with regard to pain –
- (ii) And to enter into that suffering with you.

- (iii) That's what you do
 - (a) When you sympathize with someone,
 - (b) You've gone through it before,
 - (c) You know what they're experiencing,
 - (d) And so you feel it with them.

c. Jesus can now do the same:

- (i) Knowing what you're going through –
- (ii) Because He went through it Himself –
- (iii) Knowing what it is to be tempted
 - (a) To be sick, hungry, weak,
 - (b) To experience pain, sorrow, and grief –
 - (c) He can and does go through it with you.
 - (d) Henry writes, "Though he is so great, and so far above us, yet he is very kind, and tenderly concerned for us. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities in such a manner as none else can be; for he was himself tried with all the afflictions and troubles that are incident to our nature in its fallen state: and this not only that he might be able to satisfy for us, but to sympathize with us."

- (iv) He does the same with regard to your joy.
 - (a) When you rejoice,
 - (b) He rejoices with you.

3. Application:

a. Now the author to the Hebrews

- (i) Applies this by way of giving you confidence
- (ii) To come to His throne of mercy
- (iii) To receive mercy and find grace
- (iv) When you need it.
- (v) And that's certainly true.

b. But let's apply it differently tonight:

In line with our series.

- (i) If Jesus experiences something
- (ii) Of what you're going through
- (iii) When you go through it,
- (iv) Then there is a very real sense
- (v) In which what you do
- (vi) Either increases or reduces His happiness.
 - (a) When He sees you lovingly obey Him,
 - (b) It brings joy to His soul.
 - (c) But when He sees you disobey,
 - (d) It not only robs Him of joy,
 - (e) It must cause Him some measure of grief/suffering.

c. Let me ask a question I hope you find offensive:

- (i) Why should you care
- (ii) What you put Jesus through,
- (iii) As long as you get what you want?

- d. If you love Him at all
- (i) You can't be happy as long as He isn't happy.
 - (a) You certainly can't be happy
 - (b) If what you're doing
 - (c) Is causing Him grief.
 - (ii) That's what love does:
 - (a) It makes you think about
 - (b) How your actions affect others.
 - (iii) If you love Him,
 - (a) You will want to bring Him joy,
 - (b) Not grief.
 - (iv) But how many times
 - (a) Do you choose the sin
 - (1) That brings Him grief,
 - (2) Rather than the obedience
 - (3) That is His joy?
 - (4) Even when you know
 - (5) What you do will affect Him in this way?
 - (b) Just how much do we really love Him?
 - (c) Not nearly as much as we should?
- e. Does Jesus really experience this for each of His children?
- (i) Yes.
 - (ii) Why?
 - (a) Because He knows what we're going through.
 - (1) And because He loves and cares for us
 - (2) As a husband loves and cares for his bride,
 - (3) He feels our pain.
 - (b) Because we are in union with Him.
 - (1) We are His body,
 - (A) And He is our Head,
 - (B) And as our own head is aware of and experiences
 - (C) What's going on in our bodies,
 - (D) So Jesus is aware of and experiences
 - (E) What's going on in His.
 - (2) There's no literal nervous system connecting us,
 - (A) But there is a spiritual one.
 - (B) John Gill writes that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, "Such as bodily diseases and wants, persecutions from men, and the temptations of Satan; under all which Christ sympathizes with his people; and which sympathy of his arises from his knowledge and experience of these things, and the share he has had of them, and from that union there is between him and

his people: and it is not a bare sympathy, but is attended with his assistance, support, and deliverance; and the consideration of it is of great comfort to the saints.”

- f. Granted this connection exists,
 - (i) How can the Lord experience this for so many?
 - (ii) No mere man could,
 - (a) But now that He is glorified in heaven
 - (b) His abilities are expanded.
 - (c) He has been equipped to do things
 - (d) He could not have done
 - (e) While in His humiliation on earth:
 - (1) Now He rules and overrules all things for good of kingdom.
 - (2) He has power to raise nations and destroy them.
 - (3) He knows everything that goes on in this world.
 - (4) The union of His divine and human natures
 - (5) Gives Him the ability to carry this out.
 - (f) In the same way,
 - (1) He is connected to His whole church in general,
 - (2) And to you in particular,
 - (3) So that He can experience joy at your triumphs
 - (4) And sorrow at your failures.
 - (g) If this is the case, will His sorrow ever end?
 - (1) It will only when it finally ends for you.
 - (2) After the consummation,
 - (3) There will be no more sin, struggles, or pain for us.
 - (4) And so there will no longer
 - (5) Be any pain to sympathize with.
 - (h) There will only be joy:
 - (1) As our blessedness continues to grow in heaven,
 - (2) So His will grow as our Mediator throughout eternity.
- g. Finally, knowing that His heart moves for us in this way,
 - (i) And that our decisions
 - (a) Will make Him more or less happy,
 - (b) How can you not out of love for your Savior
 - (c) Do all in your power to increase His joy
 - (d) By putting His happiness in front of your own?
 - (e) That’s what genuine love does.
 - (ii) Since it’s obedience that makes Him happy
 - (a) And sin that grieves Him,
 - (b) Do all in your power
 - (c) To put your sins to death
 - (d) And to walk in obedience
 - (e) From the heart.
 - (f) He will be happier,

(g) And you will be too. Amen.

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