

## JESUS UNDERSTANDS THE MISUNDERSTOOD

I don't think I'm going out on a limb to suggest that **most** of us—at one time or another—have had a thought something like this: “**No one understands** what I'm going through—and **no one cares!**”

**Humanly** speaking, that may be true. **People** certainly are **not all-knowing**—or **mind readers**—and often times are more concerned about **themselves** than they are the people around them. But there is a **Someone** that **is** all-knowing...and a mind-reader...and **knows** what you are going through. That Someone, of course, **is Jesus!** And Jesus not only knows what we are going through—**He cares!**

*Does Jesus care when my heart is pained, too deeply for mirth and song—*

*As the burdens press and the cares distress and the way grows weary and long?*

*O yes, He cares—I know He cares; His heart is touched with my grief.*

*When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.*

We **sing** that—and we know that **to be true** because the Bible says it! But too often times we have difficulty **believing it!** We forget—or at least under appreciate—the fact that Jesus went through much of what we go through so He can **sympathize** with us—and **help us!**

Last week, we noted that Jesus went through **temptations** similar to what we go through.

--From the temptation to turn **stones into bread**, we know that Jesus can relate to us being tempted to **do wrong** in order to satisfy the desires of our bodies.

--From the temptation to **jump off the pinnacle of the temple**, we know that Jesus can relate to us being tempted to foolishly **test God**. **How** do we “test” God? By continuing in a pattern of sin—and thinking God won't bring about the reaping of what we sow!

--And from the temptation to **bow down and worship Satan**, we know that Jesus was tempted to **bypass the suffering of the cross** and do things the easy way—instead of God's way! Are we tempted to choose **our** way over **God's** way? All the time, right?

This morning, I want to continue with the thought that Jesus didn't take on flesh and blood **just to die** for us!

--We saw in His **forgiving of Peter**—after He died and rose again—that He is **still a merciful** high priest that wants us to come to Him in our failures!

--We saw in His **suffering temptation**—and overcoming it—that He knows **what it is like** to be tempted—and wants to help us overcome temptation!

--And today we will see that Jesus **is touched**—He is affected by—our infirmities, meaning our weaknesses.

We see that truth in Hebrews 4:15; let's turn there. Please follow along as I read verses 14-16. This morning, we are going to look at what it means when it says that Jesus is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities”—and one of the ways He was “tempted like as we are.”

### **1. The context of verses 14-16**

Verses 14-16 make up one small paragraph, so the verses are obviously connected to one another. At the end of vs 14, we are exhorted to “hold fast our profession.” “Profession” here does not refer to **an occupation**—like my “profession” is the ministry. It refers to what we “profess” to believe. Because Jesus is our great high priest that is passed into the heavens, we need to **hang onto what we believe** and **Who we believe in!**

In vs 16, we also have an exhortation—to “come boldly unto the throne of grace...” It ought to amaze us that God not only wants us to come to His throne to “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”—He wants us to come **boldly!**

And between the exhortation to be faithful to sound doctrine (vs 14)—and to commune with God in confidence (vs 16)—we have vs 15. People much smarter in Greek than me point out that verse 15 is the “anchor” of the paragraph. That means verses 14 and 16 both depend on the truth found in vs 15.

--Why should we hold onto what we believe? Because we have a high priest who is touched by our weaknesses.

--And why should we come boldly unto the throne of grace? For the same reason—because we have a high priest who is touched by our weaknesses.

Next, let's consider... **2. The compassion of Jesus in vs 15**

Vs 15 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Let's unpack this a little bit.

First, there is the **double negative**. "For we **have not** a high priest **which cannot** be touched..."

"Have not...which cannot" really emphasizes that Jesus **is** touched—He **is affected**—by what we go through!

Then, there is the word "touched." Not hard to imagine that the songwriter of "Does Jesus Care?" had this verse in mind when he wrote this part of the chorus: "*His heart is touched with my grief.*"

**Whose** heart is touched? **Jesus'** heart!

**What** touches Jesus' heart? **Our grief**...our infirmities...our struggles...our sins...our weaknesses, all touch the heart of Jesus! The very things that we think causes Jesus to **withdraw from** us are what **draws Him to us!** Isn't that a wonderful thought?

It is not **feeling sorry for us**, though. **Newell** put it like this: "...it is not the emotion of pity here, nor feeling **for** us, as one far off from us, but of feeling **with** us—sympathy." (Hebrews Verse by Verse, pg 148).

We certainly see the idea of "sympathy" in the Greek word that it comes from: *sumpatheo*! The word means to have sympathy based on a **common experience**. Jesus can feel our difficulties **with us** because He **experienced them** while here on earth.

--Like us, Jesus experienced contempt...and hatred...and rejection.

--Like us, Jesus was misunderstood—and was sometimes lonely.

--And—like us—I believe Jesus felt the "pressures of life"—and even felt like giving up!

How do we know Jesus experienced these things? Notice the middle of vs 15 "...but was in all points tempted"—meaning tested—"like as we are..." That means what we are going through is **not unique**—Jesus already went through the same!

What I want to do now is look at **one** of the ways Jesus **connects with us** and what we go through. I just listed seven—and there are obviously more. We'll look at one today, and one or two more next week—unless the Lord leads otherwise. Why did I settle on this **particular** one? I really don't know—other than I was really struck by **how often** Jesus was misunderstood while here on earth!

**3. The connection of Jesus with the misunderstood**

Have you ever been misunderstood? This isn't the greatest example, but it will at least get the point across. Last Saturday, I agreed to give someone a ride to church, and we arranged a time and place to meet. On Sunday morning, I texted him about 45 minutes before I was supposed to leave to confirm that he was still going to come. Fort-five minutes went by...then fifty...then fifty-five...then an hour. After an hour and some odd minutes, he texted me and said he was ready. Unfortunately, it was now too late for me to pick him up.

So I called him—instead of texting—and told him I couldn't pick him up because it had gotten too late. I also said something to the effect that I didn't just jump in my car to go get him because I had never picked him up before and was afraid he wouldn't be ready. I thought he understood, but I later found out he didn't!

How did I find out he misunderstood? Because he texted me later in the day and wrote that Jesus **wasn't afraid of people** He had never met and that I shouldn't be either! Needless to say, he somehow thought that me saying "I was afraid" of **being late** meant that I was afraid **of him!**

I'm sure many of you have been misunderstood in ways bigger and more hurtful than that! I have, too, but don't have the liberty to share them! Let's look at some ways that people misunderstood Jesus.

A. Jesus was misunderstood by His physical family. Take your Bibles and turn to John 7.

--Vs 1 "Jewry" was where the Jews were—like in Jerusalem.

--Vs 3 Depart hence—from here in Galilee—and go into Judaea—the land of the Jews.

--Vss 4-5. It seems His brethren—His literal, physical brothers—doubted that Jesus was the Messiah! In their minds, if Jesus really **was** the Messiah, He would want to **publicly announce** that in a place where a lot of people would be—like the feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem!

So Jesus was doubted—and misunderstood—by His **own family!** His brothers **possibly thought** He was a glory-seeker that wanted to make a name for Himself. It seems a bit strange, doesn't it, that Jesus' own flesh-and-blood brothers would not believe in Him! After all, they grew up with Him—and He never sinned! It is quite possible, though, that His brothers did not see Him **do miracles**—and least not up to this point.

Also, let's not forget that Jesus **did not begin His public ministry** until He was 30 years of age. And it's pretty safe to say that prior to that, Jesus was a carpenter! In Matthew 13:55, Jesus is called "the carpenter's son" and in Mark 6:3, He is called a carpenter. So...imagine Jesus building things for roughly 15 years—and at least part of the time with **His earthly father**, Joseph. Then—"out of the blue" it seems—Jesus leaves the home, finds John the Baptist and is baptized by him, then starts doing miracles and claim to be the Messiah!

No wonder His brothers said, "If thou do these things, shew thyself unto the world."  
Maybe we shouldn't be too hard on Jesus' siblings after all!

What about you? Ever been misunderstood by someone in your family? Without getting too specific, many years ago I declined the offer to be a groomsman in a wedding. Why? Because I believed the guy was saved—but the gal he was marrying was not! You can debate the rightness—or wrongness—of that decision all you want—in your own mind **after church is over**—but that was the decision I made. Needless to say, not everyone agreed with my decision. I believe the Lord did, though, and that's all that mattered!

Mark it down—if you choose to do right in God's sight, the members of your own family may not understand you. **Mt 10:34-36** "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. <sup>36</sup> And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

### Second, B. Jesus was misunderstood by His friends

There are a number of instances where Jesus was misunderstood by His closest disciples, but we only have time to look at one. I'll mention a couple of others, though, that you can look up on your own.

Let's turn now to Mark 8, beginning with vs 27. Follow along as I read through vs 29. Here we have Peter's great confession "Thou art the Christ." In Mt 16, we have a similar account. Notice some of the slight differences in what God had Matthew write—and Jesus' response.

**Mt 16:16-17** "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

--Think about what Peter is saying. 'You are Christ—meaning the anointed One—the Son of living God.' Jesus not only confirms that Peter gave the **correct answer**, but He also states that Peter did not come up with the answer on His own—**God Himself** revealed it to him!

Back to our text; look at Mark 8:31. Here we see Jesus plainly telling His disciples what was going to happen to Him. How did Peter respond? Was he **sad**? Did he **ask why** Jesus was going to suffer and be killed?

No; He didn't, did he? Look at the middle of vs 32 "...And Peter took Him [Jesus], and began to rebuke Him." Peter had just gotten done saying that Jesus **was from God** and was anointed **by God**, but now he believes Jesus is **saying something wrong** and needs to be corrected! Beware of thinking God is doing wrong!

Notice Jesus' response to Peter's response. Vs 33 "But when He had turned about and looked on his disciples, He **rebuked Peter**..." Please know that Jesus is not rebuking Peter just because Peter first rebuked Jesus! Peter was not understanding **why Jesus came** and was siding with the devil—that is why Jesus rebuked Him!

Here's two other places where Jesus was misunderstood by His friends. In Luke 9:51-56, James and John wanted to command fire to come down from heaven because some Samaritans did not welcome Jesus to their city. And in John 11:21, Martha says to Jesus "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

What about us? Just as Jesus was misunderstood by those who were close to Him, our friends can misunderstand us. And **they certainly will** if you choose to do right in God's sight! **I Peter 4:3-4** "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: <sup>4</sup>Wherein **they think it strange that ye run not** with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:"

In a nutshell, these verses **simply mean this**—your party friends now think you're weird because you don't party anymore! To which I say, "Praise the Lord! Let them think you're weird!" **Here's a head-scratcher for you!** If a woman stops drinking because **she is pregnant**, that's commendable. But if she stops drinking because **God wants her to**, there's something wrong with her! Kind of a strange way to think, isn't it?

First, Jesus was misunderstood by **His family**. Second, Jesus was misunderstood by **His friends**.

Third, C. Jesus was misunderstood by religious people

Again, there are a number of examples of this, but we will look at just one and I'll mention another. We're going to stay in the book of Mark; turn now to chapter 2.

--Notice vs 15. Here we see many publicans—meaning tax collectors—and sinners sitting with Jesus and His disciples. It is interesting that "many" is used twice—so there obviously were many!

--Vs 16. "And when the **scribes...**" Scribes were men who studied the Law—meaning the OT. They didn't **just study it**, though. They transcribed it and wrote commentaries on it. In other words, if anyone "knew the Bible," it would be the scribes. The **Pharisees** were also what we would call "religious" people. They were known **for keeping God's Word**, but unfortunately they also **added to it**—something God forbids.

--Back to vs 16. Because both the scribes and Pharisees knew the Old Testament well, both should have known that God **delights in sinners coming to Him** in humble repentance.

They **would have known that** from **Isaiah 1:18** "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." They **also would have known** from **Isaiah 53:5-6** that a **suffering servant** would come to die as a substitute for sinners! "But He was wounded for **our** transgressions, He was bruised for **our** iniquities: the chastisement of **our** peace was upon Him; and with His stripes **we** are healed. <sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath **laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**"

It shouldn't have been hard, then, for the scribes and Pharisees to understand that if Jesus was willing to **die for** sinners, He was also willing to **dine with** sinners! But they failed to connect the dots; they misunderstood **who** Jesus was and **why** He came. We have a similar situation in Luke 7:37-50 where a Pharisee thinks to himself that if Jesus were a prophet, He would know what kind of woman it was who had just washed His feet with her tears!

Who misunderstood Jesus? Proud, holier-than-thou "religious" people! People who—in their mind—were okay just as they were and did not need a physician. We see that in vs 17. It's one thing to think you're **not sick**—but quite another to think you're **not sinful!** Sadly, the scribes and Pharisees did not see their sin and consequently did not see their need for the Savior. So if proud, holier-than-thou "religious" people misunderstood Jesus, don't be surprised if they misunderstand you, too!

I want to end the sermon by reminding you how I started it. Sometimes we think, 'No one understands what I'm going through—and no one cares!' **Humanly** speaking, that may be true! **I don't know** what you are going through—but **Jesus does**. And He cares! His heart is touched with what you are going through because He has gone through the same thing—and because He has a **heart of grace**. And because Jesus has a **heart of grace**, we can come boldly to the **throne** of grace. Are you doing that?

So what would God have us do with what we've heard this morning?

1. He wants us to see the heart of Jesus—and come to Jesus because He cares.  
Regardless of what your heart needs, Jesus can meet that need.

Your number 1 need is to be ready to meet God after you die. We read just a few moments ago a statement directly from Jesus: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." We are all sinners—and Jesus calls all of us to repentance.

Have you answered that call? Have you come to Him in humility and repentance and faith?  
--The self-righteous don't answer Jesus' call—they believe their own "goodness" will get them to Heaven.  
--But just as the sick know they are sick, a sinner knows they are a sinner—and that they need a Savior!

We need to have Christ—not just know about Him! "He that hath the Son..."  
Do you have Him?

2. But our spiritual needs don't end just because we are a child of God! We still need Him—more than we realize or care to admit! Let's not forget that *the very things that we think causes Jesus to withdraw from us are what draws Him to us!* So draw near to Him...