

Two Prayers of Jesus

by W.F. Anderson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of dependence on God and compassion in ministry, as seen in the life of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 58:01

Scripture: Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 26:40, Mark 1:35, Luke 22:39-41, Romans 5:5, Romans 8:26

Topics: "Jesus' Prayers", "Christian Compassion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the personal relationship between Jesus and his twelve disciples, particularly focusing on Peter, James, and John. The speaker highlights how Jesus chose to have a close bond with these three disciples, as seen in various instances such as the raising of Jairus' daughter and the transfiguration. The speaker also mentions how Jesus took these three disciples with him into the garden of Gethsemane. The sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine compassion for the needs of others, which is exemplified by Jesus' love for all his disciples.

Transcript

For those of you who have just come in today, what we've been trying to do is look at the genuine humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we began by considering Philippians chapter 2 so that we did not in any sense minimize his deity. This is the eternal Son of God who has taken a complete human nature and in his own choice has decided to live on a completely human level so that he shared our difficulties, life as we know it, without taking any advantage of his own deity to make his life easier than it is for us.

And then we were looking at his baptism and his temptation. And now I've just arbitrarily picked out another aspect of our Lord's genuine humanity as it's revealed in the Gospel. Mark chapter 1 and verse 35.

Or perhaps we can see the contrast, perhaps the connection beginning with verse 32. Mark chapter 1 verse 32. That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons, and the whole city was gathered together about the door.

And he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak because they knew him. And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place and there he prayed.

Now chapter 14 and we'll read at verse 32. And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane and he said to his disciples, sit here while I pray. And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful even to death. Remain here and watch. And going a little farther he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from him.

And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee. Remove this cup from me. Yes, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

And he came and found them sleeping and he said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? As they heard sermons it would go something like this. Whatever the reading for the particular day from the Old Testament. The man who spoke would say, on this passage Rabbi Ben Joseph said so and so.

Or on this passage Rabbi Ben Eliezer, Rabbi the son of Eliezer said so and so. And the whole of their ministry consisted in quoting what ancient rabbis and judges of Israel had said about this particular passage. That was the whole of the training of the rabbi of the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He memorized what later took several volumes to write. Came to be known as the Talmud. And they memorized this long before it was put into written form.

And so when they came to any passage of scripture they already had what was the authoritative interpretation and application of it. As far as the people of Israel were concerned. And so the sermons would consist of these quotations from what the ancient rabbis had said about the passage.

And now our Lord Jesus Christ comes and he takes the role. And if the Sermon on the Mount is any indication of how he preached. It hath been said to you by them of old times, but I say unto you.

It hath been said to you by them of old times, but I say unto you. And what he did was cut right through all the authoritative interpretations of their tradition. And get them right back to that said the Lord.

And I'm sure the godly in Israel in those synagogues their hearts leaped as he preached. Because for the first time in their experience they had a man carry them right back to the Lord. And he spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes.

There were none of the quotations for authoritative interpretation from the scribes and the elders and the judges. They were face to face with the living word of God. And this is the first area in which his authority shows.

Not the first as far as the incidents of chapter one are concerned. And I'm always struck by Mark's account the way Mark presents it. Because the first contact our Lord has with his disciples in Mark's account that we know from the other Gospels if it's not.

But from Mark's account, the first account he records is our Lord walking by the Sea of Galilee and finding these men fishing or taking care of their nets. And he says to them, follow me. And they leave everything and they follow him.

And you wonder what kind of a man is this that he simply walks by, issues a command that men leave their families, their parents, their fishing business, their boats, their nets, their profits, everything. To follow

him when they were not yet sure who he was. And he had a tremendous impact on people like that.

A man of great authority. But his authority showed up as far as the word is concerned first in his preaching when he went into the synagogue. It showed up in a second way.

When he was there in the synagogue, there was a man possessed with a demon who disturbed the service. And our Lord cast the demon out. And the people were astonished.

On previous occasions when demon-possessed individuals would have disturbed the church service, they were helpless to do anything about it. And all the teaching of the rabbis stood powerless before the force of demons. But now this man commands and the demons go out.

And they're astonished. What authority this man has. Even the demons obey him.

And then in Mark chapter 1 his authority is seen in the area of disease. As people come to him with various diseases. We're introduced to it when he goes into the house of Peter and heals Peter's mother-in-law.

I hope Peter took that as a blessing. But he healed Peter's mother-in-law. And then, you'll catch up with me.

Just keep trying. You're coming, you're coming. If those worldly fellows will stop thinking about that golf game this morning and get with me here in Mark chapter 1. And then you have this sunset scene that we read about.

Where people were crowding around the door of the home where he would stay. It just became so great in Mark chapter 1. That so many people were coming to be healed. That he had to go outside the towns themselves and out into the country.

Because the number of people who were coming to him were so great. You find his authority in this area of disease, of healing disease. What an impact he must have made upon those villages and towns of Galilee with such a ministry.

His authority in the area of the word of God. His authority in the area of disease. His authority over demons.

They've never seen anyone like this. And then in the midst of all this, Mark gives us this little incident of chapter 1 verse 35. Where rising early in the morning a great while before day.

He slipped out of the house and went out into a wilderness area. It simply means an uninhabited area. And there prayed.

I take it this was not the first time that he had done this. Because Peter knew where to find him. Peter went out seeking him.

And somehow knew where to find the Lord. I take it this was not the only time they had found this one whom they were following now. They had found him at prayer.

And this is one of the evidences of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I wonder here if in one sense Mark is not giving us one of the keys to all this authority that he was shown. Is his own personal self

dependence upon the Father.

And with all the press of this work of healing and preaching. And teaching his disciples. He himself felt this need to get out into that wilderness place.

The need for communion. The need to pray. And here is the eternal Son of God.

So human. So dependent. That that dependency expresses itself in this early morning prayer.

If we are to follow the example of our Lord. I hope all of us have this sense of dependency. I am not primarily concerned about the particular time when one prays.

There is nothing in scripture to indicate that this was our Lord's habit. That every morning he got up early and went out to pray. On one occasion at least it would have been impossible.

Because on one occasion he stayed up all night to pray. But what I am concerned about is that our humanity. We in our humanity should have no less a sense of dependence upon God.

Than did the Son of God. When Paul writes to Timothy in the first chapter. In the first epistle.

And he is giving Timothy certain charges about the church at Ephesus. Things that he feels are vital. When you come to chapter 2 you find the first item in the list.

That Paul wishes Timothy to get across to the Christians at Ephesus. And he says I will therefore first of all. That men pray everywhere.

And then he gives a series of words that describe prayer. Synonyms. It is very difficult to find distinctions in some of those words.

You get the general sense of an emphasis. But it is very hard to pin down precisely what those different words imply in the area of prayer. One thing seems to stand out however in the first word that Paul uses in 1 Timothy chapter 2. When he talks about wanting the Christians at Ephesus to pray.

And the first word he uses stresses our need. The second word he uses by the way is a word that in the New Testament is used only of address to God. The word that stresses our need is sometimes used of need that is on the horizontal level.

That is expressed to another human being. That another human being can fill. But the second word he uses speaks only of address to God.

And if you put the two things together it is the realization that our real needs can be met only by God. But at least Paul is telling us that wherever he was with our Lord Jesus Christ it should be the sense of our need. One of the things that brings us.

I am diverting again. I wanted to talk about the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. But it seems to me one of the real difficulties in our prayer meetings is that we never.

One of the things I have noted or that has struck me in most of our prayer meetings. And this may or may not be true in your particular. Is that our praying is objective and for those who are absent.

By objective I mean we pray for things physical. Someone has a physical need. He is sick, going in the hospital, whatever it may be.

And that is a need. And we should pray for those who are in those situations. The second thing I have noted is we pray for those who are not there.

How very seldom we pray for each other when we are present there in the prayer meeting. Unless of course someone who is there in the prayer meeting is going to the hospital in a few days. Then we will pray for that individual.

But normally we do not pray for people who are present there in the prayer meeting. And we normally confine our praying to physical needs. And that may be, I am suggesting it may be the reason for some of the dryness and dullness of our prayer meetings.

And our reluctance to go. I was in a prayer meeting a short time ago. A prayer meeting of an assembly.

And it was following the traditional pattern. We were expressing requests for prayers. Until one brother got up and talked about the problem he was having with his son.

He was a Christian. His son was a Christian. And in his words it was a kind of problem that should not exist.

And he did not know how to handle it. And he asked us to pray for him and for his son. It galvanized the whole prayer meeting.

Almost instantaneously men got under him in prayer. My feeling was, now we were getting hold of some of the real needs that all of us felt. And we wanted, we wanted to get in with this man and his problem and pray.

I did not have that kind of courage. I hope Ginny will excuse me, but back in February she was faced with serious surgery. We were not sure what the outcome was going to be.

And the Christians of course prayed for the doctors, the surgeons, for her that she would recover. But that wasn't our real need. We appreciated that prayer.

But that wasn't our real need. Our real need was fear. She was afraid and I was afraid of what the outcome would be.

And that's what our real need. But do you think I got up in prayer meeting to tell those people my wife's afraid and I'm afraid of that surgery that she's facing? No, because a couple of reasons. One, I would have a verse of scripture thrown at me or some slogan that if you trust the Lord you don't worry.

I know that, I know that, I know that. But I need help where I am. I know that's the goal, but I'm not at that goal and I need help in moving toward that goal.

And I suppose the second reason was to try to save faith. You know a preacher is not supposed to have what we do. But wouldn't it be great to have the kind of prayer meeting where you could share that sort of thing and you sensed your brothers and sisters closing in around you and lifting you up before God.

But it's this sense of need that brings us to God in prayer. It was our Lord's own personal sense of need that took him out into the wilderness to pray early in the morning. Now someone's going to seize on that early in the morning and say every Christian should get up at 5.30 and pray.

I remember the answer of Dr. Arthur Wendell Short to that one. One zealous young individual who found a great blessing in getting up at 5.30 to pray expressed this to the whole group of young people, that you all must get up at 5.30 in the morning and pray. And Dr. Arthur Wendell Short said, young man, the only thing every Christian must do is what the word of God commands him to do.

Your personal experience cannot be a law for anybody else. And you see, we read these stories of the great men who got up at 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning to pray every morning. What those stories don't tell you is they went to bed at 7 or 8 at night.

That's true. They did. They did.

R.C. Chapman, I think 9 o'clock was his bedtime on. It didn't matter who was there or what was going on. Good night, gentlemen.

And he went to bed. Some of you who work, Wendell, I know most of you are farmers, aren't you? I don't know. I haven't got the feel of this audience yet.

But if you work in a factory from 4 in the afternoon to 12 at night, you're going to have a job getting up at 4 in the morning to pray. And some of us don't function as soon as we get up out of bed. I don't.

There are some people who, the instant they hit the floor, they're awake, and they can carry on an intelligent conversation, they can pray. Not me. I've got to wash and shave and get a cup of coffee down me.

And then I think God is saying, all right, now you're in decent shape to talk to. Let's talk. But until then, I'm not functioning.

No, I'm not saying it has to be a certain hour. But what I am trying to stress is there's something wrong with us if we do not have this sense of dependence, of need. If we get the idea where our Lord did not have the idea, that we can make it on our own.

Let me, while I'm talking along this line, suggest a couple of other things in Mark chapter 1 about our Lord Jesus Christ that I think Mark is telling us provides something of a key to his ministry. One of the things I've already stressed is one of the reasons he was able to meet the needs of people was his own authority. Now, I'm not sure I want to say that it's simply his authority as the Son of God.

He was baptized with the Spirit of God, anointed with the Spirit of God. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost of Mary. And he went out in his ministry in the power and authority of the Spirit of God.

That was one of the reasons he was able to meet the needs of people. The second reason he was able to meet the needs of people was this sense of dependence upon his Father as he expressed it in prayer. The third reason it seems to me that Mark presents in chapter 1 is our Lord's compassion.

We did not read the incident, but there's the story of the healing of the leper in chapter 1 where this leper comes to our Lord and he says, If you will, that is, if you want to, you can, you are able to make me whole, to cleanse me. Having seen what our Lord did in all those miracles of healing and casting out demons,

there was no question in this leper's mind of our Lord's ability to cleanse him from the leprosy. The question that remained in his mind was whether this man, and that's the way he puts it to our Lord, If you will, if you wish, if you want to, you can, you are able to cleanse him.

Now from Luke's account of the same incident, this man was far advanced in leprosy and must have been a rather loathsome sight. Our Lord was faced with that wretched human being who was in a condition that we, with our natural sensitivity, could find very, very repulsive. We were turned off by sores on the face of another person.

And this leper was covered in an advanced stage of leprosy. And really, by our sensitivity, in physical appearance, a very low commitment. I like Philip's translation of our Lord's response.

Philip skips it across by saying, Of course I want to. Of course I want to. And this man had been cut off from society.

As you know, the law in the Old Testament. He was removed from the congregation of Israel. And if he saw anyone approaching, he had to cry unclean, unclean.

For food, he was dependent upon the kindness of people leaving food along the roadside that he could come when no one was around and pick up and eat. It's not just the physical suffering of the diseased. It's that isolation of the diseased broth.

If you've ever been in a situation of isolation, you know that tremendous longing for human comfort. Now when our Lord healed this man, what did he do? You remember when ten lepers came to him? Go. And as they went, they were healed.

But not in this case. It's not something our Lord had to do to heal the man. He could have healed the man with just a word.

Be clean. Or go. And the man would have been clean.

Our Lord didn't have to do what he did. But I was going to say instinctively. And yet I'll keep that word.

Instinctively he did what he did. He reached out and touched the man. He reached out and touched him.

He didn't have to do that. But all the years of isolation that this man had experienced were broken down in that one moment. A human being was not repulsed by him.

Another human being reached out and touched him. And of course in that touch there was healing. But the point is, our Lord reached out and touched him.

He did it out of his own compassion. So I think in Mark chapter 1, as we look at our Lord as a human, as the Son of God who has become man, serving his Father here on earth, there are at least those three factors involved in the effectiveness of his service as a man. The authority of the Spirit of God.

There. His own personal sense of dependence. First time I'm preaching I've ever touched a bell ringing.

Can you hear me back there in front of that? Okay, fine. I'll keep going. I think those are the three factors Mark shows us in the effectiveness of our Lord's ministry.

The Spirit of God. Our Lord's own sense of dependence upon the Father. And our Lord's own compassion for other people.

Our Lord who could see beyond the external. Beyond the thing that so often turns us off. In this case it's a matter of disease.

For some of us it's the way some people dress. The way they look. We can't get beyond that to the individual and the emptiness of the heart and of the life.

We are without compassion. It does not mean that our Lord accepted leprosy as normal. It does not mean he was putting his approval on leprosy.

But our Lord reached the individual. And it's certainly one of the reasons for the effectiveness of his ministry. You can make the application, can't you? If we human beings are to serve our Heavenly Father as his representatives here on earth.

Saying three things. It's one of the reasons we have been given the indwelling Spirit of God. One of the reasons we have been given the avenue of access to the presence of God in prayer.

And one of the reasons the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Is to reach out in a genuine compassion for the needs of men. So in chapter one, here are the evidences.

And I was stressing the one that's dependent. Of the genuine humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now in chapter fourteen.

Our Lord is at prayer again. Only this time he's at seven. Here he is not alone.

By his own choice he is not alone. As in chapter one, by his own choice he went out alone to pray. And I think all of us have that sense.

There are particularly those times when we need to get away from everyone else. And have that time for quietly alone with the Lord. We can spend that time with him.

By the way, I'm going to throw in this aside again. I throw in these asides and they don't cost you anything extra. When in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord said to his disciples when they prayed.

That they would enter the closet and shut the door. In context he's not telling them to do that. So that they could shut out all distraction.

He's telling them to do that in the context of his instruction. He's telling them to do that so that no one will see them pray. He just talks about people who pray out on the street corner.

In order to get the praise of men. And he's saying when you pray you go into the broom closet and shut the door. Who's going to look for a saint in the broom closet? But that's where you go and you shut the door.

And it prevents your praying in order to get the praise of men. So everybody knows how long you pray. And here it's great to think of prayer.

No? You go in there where no one can see you. And that's the indication you really need to pray. And not to use prayer to get the applause of men.

So when our Lord went out alone. It was to avoid the press of the people who are constantly coming to him for healing and help. But now in chapter 14 he is not alone.

He doesn't want to be alone by choice. He puts AIDS at the entrance of the garden. And takes three with him.

Peter, James, and John. And I want to talk about that relationship for a moment. Particularly as it relates to this incident in chapter 14.

One of the things that impresses me as I go through the gospel narrative is the relationship of our Lord to these 12 men. I say 12 including Judas until the time when Judas left to betray him. But our Lord's personal relationship with these 12 men.

You find it for example in chapter 3 of Mark's gospel. In chapter 3 there are certain identifications made of our Lord Jesus Christ. One that he is controlled by the power of Beelzebub.

That's bad enough. But then in chapter 3. Our text says that some of his friends came out to get him. Because they said he is beside himself.

Now friends is an understanding and an expression that simply says those who are with him. Those who are his really is what it's getting at. And as you read down through the chapter and come to the end of the chapter.

Evidently those are his mother and his brothers. Who back in Nazareth. Hearing all that was going on.

He didn't even have time to eat. Hearing all that people were saying about him. How the religious leader from down in the capital city of Jerusalem.

The official religious delegation that had been set up to investigate him. Had reached the conclusion he's controlled by demons. Could no longer handle the pressure and went out to get him and bring him home.

Because he's beside himself. To me as I think about it that must have been the most cutting thing of all. That he had to experience in those early days of his ministry.

They had come to get him. Take him home. He's lost his self control and his reason.

And so while he's teaching his disciples. One of them comes through the crowd and says your mother and your brothers. Stand on the outside of the crowd.

They want to see you. Many of them were at Lord's response. Who is my mother? Who is my brother? Who is my sister? And then looking round on his disciples he said.

These who do the will of my father. These are my mother and my sister. And at least to me one thing he is saying.

Is that in a family where John in his gospel tells us. Neither did his brothers believe in him. He had found a kinship.

Far greater and deeper. Among people who were not physically related to him. But who were spiritually related.

And at least in his words I sense this. Human hunger for companionship. For people who understand.

Who see as he sees. And who identify themselves with him. Some of you perhaps have come from that kind of a situation.

I have not. But I have talked to many Christians who have. Who have come out of a home.

Where there was no love. And particularly because of this individual's confession of faith. In Jesus Christ.

There was a total misunderstanding. A total rejection. On the part of the rest of the natural family.

And people like that have told me. I have found among the people of God. A love and a relationship.

Far deeper than anything I have ever experienced. On the merely human level. So did our Lord.

So did our Lord. So those of you who struggle with that kind of a situation. Our Lord knows what you are going through.

Because he experienced it in that home with Nazareth. And he found among these men. He found among these men the kind of companionship.

That he never experienced in the natural family back in Nazareth. These are people who are really my family. These are people who I really count as my brothers and my sisters.

I love that. Oh I love that expression in the letters of the Hebrews. He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

I like that. Do you remember the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son? Do you remember how he designated his brother when he came home? And he was out in the field now talking to his father. The elder brother talking to the father.

He said this your son. He wouldn't call him brother. And sometimes in the human family.

Human parents disavow their children. Usually because the parents feel they've been disgraced by the children. They disavow them.

Our Lord never does that. And if I can use the colloquial. That's my kid.

That's my kid and I'm with him. He's not ashamed to call them brethren. And you look around at that crowd of disciples.

How often they misunderstood. How often they failed. He looks at those same people.

He says these are my mother and my sister. And he found a companionship there. And then when he called out of that group of disciples the twelve.

In chapter four of Mark's gospel. He called out twelve among those disciples to be apostles. And Mark gives us the reasons why he called them.

The first of which was that they might be with him. Now I have always looked at that from their point of view. Of course they needed to be with him.

Because he was going to train them. Which he did for those three and a half years of ministry. But look at it the other way.

That they might be with him. It's his own desire for their fellowship. That they might be with him.

To me that's strengthened by his words in John chapter six. When preaching those hard sayings about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. He watches the crowd begin to melt away.

They can't take that kind of saying. And they turn and leave. And then in one of the most poignant statements anywhere in the earthly life of our Lord.

He turns to the twelve and he says will you also go away. And really you could translate it. You're not going to go away are you.

His consent of a relationship with these men. That meant a great deal to him. Maybe we'll talk about that tomorrow morning in a certain passage of scripture.

Where this comes out even more clearly. And other than that. What seems to be a greater kinship with Peter, James and John.

Not that he loved them more than he loved the other disciples. He's impartial. We show all sorts of partiality.

He doesn't. But there evidently was a response on their part. That did not exist to the same degree on the part of other disciples.

Now any teacher has to watch that by the way. And I can't imagine our Lord making the kind of mistake I made. I write myself a little note at the beginning of the year.

By the end of the year I have to confess to the Lord that I failed to live up to it. But I write myself a little note in my class notes at the beginning of the year. Don't play up to the smart kid.

There's always a teacher's danger. When you're interacting with your students. And the kid that's got the wits and the brain.

He's been doing his study. And he sees what they're doing. He's able to interact.

He catches on. He needs to pull in material he's been reading. And the thing begins to sparkle and jump.

Your tendency is to concentrate on those kids. The kids that aren't as swift. Can't read as well.

And don't study as well. You leave them out on the periphery. And you begin to show partiality.

And I can't imagine our Lord being guilty of that kind of failure. His love is impartial. He loves them all as he does us.

But there was a response of three who seemed to be able to enter into his feelings and thinking in a way that the rest could not. Peter, James, and John. And three times in Mark's Gospel he separates those three from the rest of the disciples and takes them with him.

They were present when he raised Jairus as daughter. They were present on the Mount of Transfiguration. And now in chapter 14 they are present when he goes into Gethsemane.

They go in further into the garden with him. I'd like just to make a suggestion about those three incidents by the way. When he raised Jairus as daughter I wonder if they were not seeing him as the Christ.

The anointed of God. When he was on the Mount of Transfiguration they were seeing this man Jesus in his resplendent glory. But now when you come to the Garden of Gethsemane they are seeing as they never saw before the man Jesus.

And in the three incidents with Peter, James, and John there's the revelation of the Christ, the Lord. Now there's language in the accounts of Gethsemane that leaves me baffled. I don't understand them.

I don't understand the terminology Mark uses. I can't put it together with our Lord. But at least let's have a look as far as I'm able and as far as perhaps we can follow into what this shows us about the genuineness of his humanity and something of the depth of his suffering as a man here this night in Gethsemane.

It's revealed in several ways. One, it's revealed by what Mark says about the Lord Jesus. And by the way, Mark's gospel according to reliable history Mark's gospel is the written record of Peter's preaching.

So we're getting really what Peter saw that night when he went into Gethsemane with the Lord Jesus. Mark recorded Peter's preaching. Now what Mark says about our Lord is one of the revelations of how intensely he felt this night.

And that's in verse 33 of chapter 14. He began to be greatly distressed and troubled. That's Mark's description, really Peter's description.

Now by the way, do we have any other translation besides the King James or Revised Standard? Have we got something like a Phillips? Anybody got any different translation that would read those two expressions for us? Maybe we'll get some idea of the difficulty in trying to translate them. I don't know for where, but I know there's something like deeply depressed. Deeply depressed.

I'm sore amazed. I'm sore amazed. All right, any other translation? One of these words reading in between and no longer using terror of the Lord and every other thing that the heart of Mark is about.

It's the end of everything. It's the beginning. Further in this and the beginning of this issue of crucifixion and what Peter's primary physical crucifixion and what the patient's subsequent healing.

When he heard that this was coming of course, I think he probably experienced something as simple as having lots of pain. He did not think that surgery is going to be safe except for surgery. David.

There's another place in the New Testament that the people in Caliphate had learned of his illness and carrying the money to Paul in Rome. He was greatly distressed. We really don't know what the word means, how it's used.

There are some... how the word is used is really what we're asking. But the root meaning of the word to be away from home is the idea of the expression. And I suppose for Epaphroditus his sense of suffering was greatly increased by the fact that he was so far away from Philippi.

If you've read the story of Henry Martin, the missionary to India, up through the Near East and across Turkey trying to get home. And in his biography, the last part of that journey he took in a caravan that was led by an Arab. And an Arab who seemed to take great delight in driving the caravan a little further every day than Henry Martin's strength would take until finally in some obscure little village, Henry Martin died.

When they found his diary, his great longing was to get home to England to die. And his suffering was intensified, not just by the tuberculosis, but by being so far from home. Now if that's the expression, if that's the force of this expression used of our Lord Jesus, it's not magic he's thinking of.

It's not magic. And the intensity of his suffering is increased by the fact that he's so far from home that night in England. He's going to be even further tomorrow when he's on the cross.

You see, one of the things that intensifies our suffering as human beings is that intelligently we can look ahead. Now I'm not talking about those irrational fears that sometimes overtake us. I'm talking about the solid thinking when we know the way the course of events is going.

So that we are aware now to some degree of what is still to come. And our Lord, when he was hanging on the cross, would be the furthest from home he could be when he says, My God, my God. So here it all comes upon him that night in Gethsemane.

We learn first of the intensity of this suffering that this man went through by Mark's description of it. We learn it secondly by our Lord's own words in verse 34. He said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.

And his own description of it is the intensity of his sorrow in his experience brings him very, very close to death. Even that night in Gethsemane. I understand from doctors what I've read.

There are people who die of broken hearts. There are people the intensity of whose suffering or sorrow makes them give up the will to live. And there are even people like that who die without any medical reason.

We are not the kind of people that we can clearly separate soul and body in our human life. And our Lord says, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. And the intensity of his feeling had its physical effect.

And those are his words. The third way we see the intensity of his suffering is by his prayer. We know that ultimately the intensity of his praying laid him out prostrate on the ground.

But it's what he says here that to me indicates the genuineness of his humanity and the intensity of his suffering. It's not just, though it is that, the prayer that the cup be taken from him if that is possible. But it's the address he uses in the prayer where he says, Abba Father.

Now, Abba Father is a translation of a Greek word. Abba is not. Abba is a transliteration.

It's simply putting the equivalent English letter for the Greek letter. In fact, the word in Greek is not a translation. It's a transliteration of the Hebrew in which the Greek letters simply are put in place of the Hebrew letters.

And so what we really have is not a translation but a transliteration. And for some reason or other, and I suppose we wouldn't stand for the translation if we had it, but for some reason or other, no translator will

translate this. All of us know, I'm sure, that Abba is the word a Jewish child uses of his daddy in his home.

The interesting thing is that no excellent piece of Jewish literature has ever been found containing this word as an address to God. They felt it was far too familiar. It's the family word of a little child running around in the home.

That's the word he would use as a Hebrew little Jewish boy. He would say Abba when addressing his father. And really if we wanted to translate it, we'd have to translate it daddy.

And this is why I suppose no one will translate it, but that's all we would have to do. We'd have to translate it daddy. Now you can say okay, our Lord took the Hebrew word and the Greek word, Abba the Hebrew, the father, the Greek word, and he combined them in his prayer.

I'd rather think, however, in the intensity of his need that night as a human being, spontaneously there came to his lips the word that a Jewish child uses running around the home, or when he comes to his own earthly father with a need. What interests me is that twice, once in Romans, once in Galatians, we use the same term by the Spirit of God. We cry Abba, daddy.

Now we don't use the term, I'm not sure why, but I think all of us sense that. We have this relationship like little children. Sure we are mature sons, that looks at it in a different way.

But in our hours of need, we are little children who are throwing themselves into their father's lap and looking up into his face and saying, I had a friend who was a psychiatrist, a Christian. I remember him telling me about working with a patient whose experience as she grew up in the home was so revolting that she could not use the word father. She was a Christian.

She found it impossible and her problems were so intense that by this time she had been hospitalized. As a Christian she could not pray, she could not get that word father out of her mouth. She couldn't.

She had too many painful hate-filled memories for her to use. And so what this Christian psychiatrist did was suggest to her that just to start the next time the nurse brought in her tray of food, that she give thanks by saying, Daddy, thank you for this food. And she did.

And it was the start of her healing. It's that infinite relationship of a child coming to his father. But here is our Lord Jesus.

That night in Gethsemane, there comes to his lips Abba, Father. Finally, the intensity that is needed as a human being to me is shown by the fact that he took Peter, James and John with him. That was his choice.

And I take it now, the intensity of his need was such that he wanted to reach out to these men. He wanted them to watch and pray with him, as another gospel account has, watch with me. And I think all of us have known this.

There are those hours when you want to get alone and pray. And there are those hours when you desperately need the companionship of good, solid Christian friends who pray with you. So does our Lord.

And that night in Gethsemane, no, he did not want to be alone to pray. And that night he wanted Peter, James and John with him. He wanted the sense of their support.

He wanted the awareness that they were praying with him. They went to sleep. I've often wondered if they had stayed awake, if the ministry of the angel would have been necessary.

I don't know, but I've wondered. But here is our Lord as a man, reaching out to his fellow men, men whom he deeply loved, reaching out to them and asking them to pray with him. Now I wanted to turn to two other passages of Scripture that I've talked too long.

Hebrews chapter 5 seems to be in that verse that in the days of his flesh he offered up those prayers, strong crying and tears. Seems to be a commentary on the Assembly account. I won't look at that.

We'll have to pass it by. But let me say this. That when you get in those situations where your own sorrow and your own need is so great that you throw yourself flat on the floor before God and hardly know what to pray, will you remember that at God's right hand there is a high priest who understands exactly what you are going through because he has been there himself.

Amen.

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