

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 22, 2023

The Lord in with you.

“Hey, I know what you're going through.” I wonder, has anyone ever said those words to you. I mean, your world has been turned upside down, you're just trying to put one foot in front of another, and someone who is, well, they were well-meaning, they had good intentions, they were only wanting to help and they say, ‘I know what you're going through.’ Really, you know what I'm going through?

Well, I've heard those words myself and I've said them, and they can... Well, they can ring hollow, because how can another person really know what you're going through today. I am looking at this incredible passage of Scripture that tells us that in fact, Jesus really does know what you're going through, and what's more it says that Jesus feels with you in it. And Jesus cares and Jesus wants to help. Here was a passage of Scripture that seems like the old spiritual... Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, nobody knows, but Jesus. Jesus knows.

I'm looking at Hebrews Chapter 4, Verses 15 and 16. I love these verses, here is what it says. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect, has been tested as we are. Yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Now notice our text says that we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. Now, our English word sympathize, it's actually a Greek word. It's a compound Greek word. Sympatho the Greek prefix sym means together with, but that all means to feel with even to suffer with. And so, you see, Jesus today doesn't just know the facts of what it is you're going through, but Jesus feels with you in it. Jesus actually feels with you in what you're going through, that that's the idea here, that there is no part of your life that Jesus cannot say, I feel what you're going through. I've been there.

So when you stand by the open grave of your loved one and you weep, Jesus feels with you, when you're let down by friends, when you are rejected, Jesus feels with you. When you're facing a future that is uncertain, Jesus feels with you. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle was famous for having defined God as the unmoved mover, and sadly, I meet many people in churches today that's kind of how they think about God. Well, he's high up there, some place in heaven, unmoved by what I'm going through. Thankfully, that is not the God of the Bible, because Jesus is the move mover, Jesus is moved by what you're going through, Jesus feels with you in it, he suffers with you.

Now, as a father, I can say that there have been times that I have felt with my sons and what they were going through. I can say that there have been times that I suffered with them, but you see, for Jesus is so much more than that because Jesus has taken us to Himself, He has taken our flesh to himself. The Bible says that Jesus has made Himself one with us, and so that's how Jesus can take all of our sins to himself, and how Jesus can give to us all of his righteousness as we are one together. But there's more here. The scripture says that Jesus can sympathize with us, he can feel

with us in our weaknesses. Now that amazes me that the sovereign are powerful Son of God can actually feel with you and me in our weaknesses.

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Water From Rock

Now, the Greek word here translated his weakness is the Greek word as *astheneia*. And right now, I'm looking at a Greek lexicon that lists these various meanings of *astheneia*, and here they are, it means weakness, want of strength, feebleness, bodily infirmity, state of ill health, sickness, frailty in perfection, intellectual and moral weakness as a calamity.

Now, to labor the point, I read all of these for you just to emphasize, so whatever the weaknesses that you and I are feeling today, Jesus is not put off by them, Jesus does not scold you. Jesus truly feels with you in your weaknesses. Our text says that we have one in Jesus Christ who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Jesus says, Yeah, I've been there. I understand what you're going through. I feel with you, I care.

Okay, that takes us to the bottom line. This is the take-away.

Had a professor who said at the bottom of every sermon to write two words, So what... Here's the so what of this wonderful Bible passage. So what? Well, let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. It's interesting that it speaks of the throne of grace, because in the ancient world, that would have been an oxymoron because the throne was... The throne was the throne of judgment, the throne was where the king's judgement was handed down. And Jesus makes it a throne of grace, that we are the children of God, adopted into God's family, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Therefore, with boldness. We come to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Okay, what's the difference between mercy and grace? Well, here's a little short hand that I like to remember, it helps me to make that distinction, that mercy is when God takes away what I deserve, like judgment. Grace is when God gives me what I don't deserve. Like total forgiveness, declared holy and blameless before Him.

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So I wonder, can you today name your need, can you name the weaknesses that you're struggling with, well go to Jesus with boldness and you will receive mercy, and you will find grace you want to to to help it in your time of need.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler in the pilgrim way. Thank you for listening. Until next time.