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Looks Like Jesus to Me

One of the most fascinating looks into the heart of God is a look into Jesus on the cross. Today I am not thinking of what happened spiritually, although that is completely and fully worthy of our thoughts. Today I am thinking of what happened in the realm of Jesus' earthly relationships.

Believing that Jesus was 100% God and 100% human is one of the great mysteries of the church. Maybe you think that is an overstatement. Certainly we "believe" it mentally, but practically, I feel that oftentimes we have difficulty accepting this truth. We can get the 100% God part, but the 100% human part is incomprehensible to us. Yet it is a cornerstone of our faith.

Can we look at Jesus' last days from his human perspective for a moment – imagining the emotional inner world of Jesus – feeling the highs and lows of a roller coaster of experiences? Can you allow yourself to step into his humanness or is it too sacrilegious for you? Let's take a look – with our hearts – imagining what his heart experienced emotionally and then I want to say something about relationships.

...Jesus teaches the people and ministers in the miraculous realm, receiving direction from His Father (I only do what I see the Father doing)

...He prophesies of his own death and torture

...Jesus experiences the cheers and praise of the people as he enters Jerusalem

...His authority is questioned

...A woman anoints his head, i.e, she touched him in front of his disciples who were offended by the whole scenario

...He celebrates (strong word – don't miss it) Passover and vividly portrayed his forthcoming death

...He delivers tough words to one of his best friends, Peter

...He prays in the Garden, experiencing tremendous "sorrow"

...His best friends keep falling asleep while his heart is torn apart for what he is about to endure

...He is BETRAYED, arrested, falsely accused, spit upon, slapped, mocked

...Peter, again remember, one of his closest friends, is overtaken with fear and says he doesn't even know Jesus and punctuates his statements with swearing and cursing

...The religious leaders plot against him and have him bound – tied up – and then led him away to Pilate

...He is shuffled back and forth from Pilate to Herod

...Barabbas is released instead of Jesus

...The people scream that they want Jesus to be crucified

...Jesus is beaten, scourged, stripped of his clothes, mocked, crowned with thorns, spit on and hit, has to carry his cross until he cannot in the midst of a cruel crowd, and crucified and "even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him".

...He is unoffended, seeing past the thieves' words and finding a wounded heart that needed his care.

...Then he cries out feeling that God has forsaken him.

And then we could add all the spiritual weight of the sins of the world that was upon him.

How would you be doing about right now?

And at that point, we see one of the most beautiful pictures into the heart of Jesus. His heart for individual people. Can you imagine the pain of his physical body? His spiritual anguish? His mental torture? And right in the worst of it all, he saw his mother and John standing nearby. The two people who loved him most and whom he loved most.

In the midst of emotional, physical, mental, spiritual hell, Jesus cared. In his 100% humanness, he moved beyond himself and cared. He invited his mother and John to enter a mother/son relationship.

What are the implications of this moment?

...Jesus validated the pain Mary and John were feeling.

...He validated the fact that the days ahead for Mary and John were going to require some human interaction and relational care giving.

...He trusted the hearts of Mary and John to be able to care.

...He cared about the emotional needs of people. Individual people.

...He knew that we all need someone “with skin on” - it began in the garden –it is not good for man to be alone encompasses not only marriage, but the entire relational realm.

...He blessed Mary and John to keep living beyond their grief.

Well, maybe this was the long way to make a point, but Jesus validated and still validates our need for human relationships and for the deep care of each other’s souls. He didn’t give Mary and John a lecture on how they shouldn’t grieve, how they should be strong, just be spiritual, etc. He communicated that they should invite each other into their lives in a deeper way – in a deeper human relational way.

Sometimes when we are in intense emotional pain the way Mary and John were, we try to handle it alone. We attempt to be strong in our humanness by invalidating our level of pain. But it seems to me that Jesus did just the opposite. He validated the emotional part of their pain and invited them to get into one another’s life in order to make it though.

So my question today is...

When is the last time you purposely pursued a heart that was hurting and committed yourself to helping someone through a tough time?

When is the last time you were willing to be vulnerable enough to admit you needed someone else?

We were created for relationships right from the very beginning. 100% human relationships. 100% spiritual relationships. And there is no contradiction of the two.

Real people. Real lives. Real pain. Real encouragement.

Looks like Jesus to me.

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