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Presentation Transcript
Jesus' Human Experience
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“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that in the last day I shall stand upon the earth, and I shall see God.” Do you know who said that? Job said that. He said that *before* Jesus Christ came. And that’s interesting because we talked on Passover about how Christ had to come to pay for our sins. And we talked on the First Day of Unleavened Bread about how He had to come as a *man* so that we could understand God as a man. Job didn’t have that blessing that we have. I know we’re going to know more about God when we are all in God’s family. Paul said, “We see through a glass darkly,” but not as darkly as Job. So we’ve had some illumination from God about His nature and how He is.

Today we’re going to talk about God coming as Jesus Christ for one other reason – to pay for our sins, so that we could understand God better, and then this one. So let’s go to John 8, and verse 39. I’m going to *try* to keep you in suspense. See if you can figure out what the third reason is. When you get it, raise your hand. No, just kidding. Just kidding.

Jn. 8:39 – *They – that’s the Pharisees – said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” And Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham, but now you seek to kill Me – a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication. We have one Father – God.”* So there it is. They accused Him of being a bastard child. They went back thirty years to the stories about how His mother got pregnant before she was married to Joseph, and He was the result.

V-42 – *And Jesus said to them, “If God were your father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came forth from God. But I have not come of myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand my speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”* He invented lying. Now, you’ll notice that they call Him an illegitimate child. He’s giving pretty much as good as He got, isn’t He? Only He’s not using insults. He’s just telling the truth. *“Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe in Me. Which*

of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words. Therefore, you do not hear because you are not of God." Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that you are a Samaritan – that's like a slap in the face right there if you're a Pharisee! – and have a demon?" So now they're accusing Him of having a demon – being demon possessed. And Jesus said, "I do not have a demon, but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me." They made that accusation again in verse 52.

Has anybody here ever been falsely accused? People talking trash about you behind your back? You hear about it.... Then they get so brazen they just come and say it to your face. Ever had that experience? Jesus Christ *knows* what that feels like. He had people say things about Him that weren't true – gossip about Him, rumor about Him, impune His mother, whom He loved – and His Father. He knows that. He knows what it feels like to be dishonored.

Let's go to John 11, verse 1.

Jn. 11:1 – *Now a certain man was sick – Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother, Lazarus, was sick.)* So what does that say about how Mary feels about Jesus? She loved Him, didn't she?

V-3 – *Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick." So, He loved Lazarus, and He loved his sisters. And when Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of Man might be glorified through it."*

Now, do we not all know the story? Jesus is going to resurrect this man from the dead. He's going to come out of a grave. Out of a tomb. Jesus is telling us He knows this ahead of time. This is a down deal in His mind. It's already going to happen. And He knows that Lazarus isn't even dead yet. But He knows he's going to die. And He knows He's going to resurrect him from the dead.

Let's back up just a little bit. Here's a man, Jesus, who loves Lazarus, and He loves Lazarus' sister, Mary, and his sister, Martha. Now, He's a human male. He's like all human males. His brain is drenched with testosterone all the time – just like all guys are. And He's not my age. He's not fifty-nine. He's thirty years old. He has completely normal sex drives and He loves these two women. And we're told that He loved a number of women and was very close to them, and yet, He never thought anything improper about any of them, because that would have been a sin. So He's known all about how to live with testosterone.

I was telling someone recently that I went to an APS lecture on *Transgender Issues*. There was this lady there.... Actually, I'm sorry, I thought it was a man, but actually it was a woman who had had transgender reassignment surgery. One of the ladies asked him what it was like to be a man since he had been a woman at one time. What was it like

to be a man? How was it different? What he said was very interesting. All the guys already know this, but no women do. What he said was, “Living with testosterone is very difficult, because all you want to do all the time is think about sex, and have sex, etc.” He said, “I had to respect the men that I know, because of the character that they have to exercise in order to live like decent men in the world.” I thought, “Wow! That’s interesting that he would say that.” It was really, really sad that he was still attracted to men, because he started out as a woman.”

Jesus was a male and He had to deal with all of that. And He *did* deal with it. So He knows what it’s like to be tempted in that area of life and to completely withstand it – to act in a loving way toward women without taking advantage or doing anything improper.

V-6 – *When He heard that he was sick He stayed two more days in the place where He was. He let Lazarus die.*

V-11 – *These things He said. And after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” Then his disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps, he’ll get well.” However Jesus spoke of His death, but they thought that He was speaking of taking a rest and sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.” “Don’t you get it? He’s dead!” “And I’m glad for your sakes that I was not there, that he may believe. Nevertheless, let us go to him.” Then Thomas, who is called The Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” So when Jesus came, He found that he’d already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away, and many of the Jews had joined the women around Mary and Martha to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him. But Mary was sitting in the house. Then Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, If you had been here my brother would not have died. But even now, I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” And Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” And Martha said, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” That’s how we comfort each other, isn’t it? We say, “We’ll see them again in the resurrection.” And that’s what she was doing. She didn’t say, “I know he went to heaven,” did she? And Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” And she said, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is come into the world.” And when she said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary, her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha had met Him. Then the Jews, who were with her in the house and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out following her, saying, “She is going to the tomb to weep there.” Then when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.” Therefore Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, and He groaned in His spirit, and was troubled. He said, “Where have you laid him?” And they said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” And then we come to the shortest verse in the Bible. It says, *Jesus wept.**

Now, why did He cry? He knows that He's going to resurrect Lazarus from the dead. He staged this whole thing. He deliberately waited two days before He went so that he would be good and dead when He got there. It's very clear that He's about to resurrect him from the dead. So what's to be sad about? What's to be so sad about if He knows he's going to come up? Well, Jesus had the ability to feel the pain of His friends. He was understanding what it was like to be a human being, and to be held captive by death, and to be afraid of death – the finality of it, the loss of it, the jagged hole that it leaves in our hearts when somebody that we love dies. You know, very occasionally we have loved ones who become stressed, or bothered, or beset with worry or concerns, and we become worried for them and with them. And we do what we can to help them. And Jesus is here understanding what this is like. He *knows* He's going to resurrect him. He knows in a little while they're going to be really happy and dumbfounded, but He was just connecting with how badly they felt. He did what He could to help, too, didn't He? He raised Lazarus from the dead.

I'm not going to read the rest of the account, but it's really sort of a comic scene. He stands outside the cave, where he's been buried for four days, and yells, "Lazarus! Come out!" And this guy, wrapped in these grave clothes, stumbles out into the light – can't see, can't walk well – and probably fell down at their feet. And Jesus said, "Well, unwrap him." And there he was. He was alive again.

Jesus understood what it's like to be called names, to have His character assassinated, to have accusations made against Him that weren't true, and He knows what it's like to be sad for His friends and to try to help them.

Let's go to Matthew 23, verse 29. Here Jesus is on a roll. He's really loading it on the scribes and Pharisees. He says:

Mt. 23:29 – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would have not been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves, that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt – which they were going to do, weren't they? They were going to send Him off to be crucified. They were the ones that were standing outside when Pontius Pilate had Christ scourged – a Roman scourging – hoping that that would pacify them. And he went out and said, "So what do you want me to do now?" And they said, "Crucify Him!" And so he turned Him over to them to do that. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents! Brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. And they certainly did that, didn't they, of Paul, and of Peter, and the others. That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachias, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly I say to you, "All these things shall come upon this generation."*

And then right in the middle of this attack speech, He says:

V-37 – *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her, how often I wanted to gather your children together, as the hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. See your houses left to you desolate. For I say to you, “You shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’”*

What do we make of this? At the same time He’s reading the Pharisees the riot act for their sins, He also *deeply* understands their blindness and their helplessness. He understands their viciousness, but He also understands their blindness and their helplessness to see what is true. And He has *compassion* for His people.

That’s a good thing for you and me, isn’t it? That’s a *very* good thing for you and me. He can be really upset with us for our foolishnesses and our meannesses, and yet, He has the ability – because He was a human being – to look past that and to see our helplessness, and to have compassion on us.

He had His character attacked. He knows what that feels like. He knows what it feels like to stand by and watch His friends suffer great loss – and to understand that feeling of what it feels like to be a human and lose someone you love. He knows what it feels like to have compassion on our helplessness and sin, doesn’t He?

Mt. 26:19 – *So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and they prepared the Passover. And when evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. And now, as they were eating, He said, “Assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful. And each of them began to say, “Lord, is it I?” And He said, “He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man, indeed, goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man had he not been born.” Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?” And He said to him, “You have said it.”*

If you go back to the Psalms, we’re told that He was betrayed by His – the term is – *familiar friend*. We think of Judas as a coward and a villain, don’t we? But Judas was chosen by Jesus. He was His friend. Jesus loved him. He was the one that they gave charge of the money bag – to take care. And he stole from it. Jesus knew that. But He was betrayed by somebody He loved – somebody that He chose to be a part of His work. When He was going around picking those guys to be His disciples, and to be the core of what was to be the church, I’m sure that we can understand that He had a very special feeling for all of them. And yet this one stabbed Him in the back.

V-47 – *While He was still speaking, behold, a multitude and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before Him and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. He told the Jews that he would kiss the One that was to be betrayed. And Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you really betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? (I learned a new Shakespeare line – and*

I wish I could say I learned it from reading Shakespeare, but actually I learned it from watching *Seabiscuit*. Because the Toby McGuire character quoted Shakespeare. And he said, “And this the most unkindest cut of all!”) He went and kissed Him on the cheek so that they would *know* who it was to take.

So He understood what it meant to have His character denigrated. He knew what it felt like to be sad for His friends. He knew how to look at people that were unbelievably self-serving and mean minded, and totally oblivious to it – thought they were God’s gift to the world – and still have compassion on them. And He knew what it meant to be betrayed by a friend. That’s a pretty bad feeling, if that’s ever happened to you. You know what that’s like. It’s not good.

Continuing on in verse 57:

V-57 – *Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest’s house. And Peter followed at a distance.*

V-69 - *Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down, Peter sat among them. So he was kind of anonymously hanging around – pretty brave actually, in a way. And a certain servant girl, seeing him, as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him, and said, “This man was also with Him.” And he denied Christ, saying, “Woman, I do not know Him.” He lied to save his own skin. And after a little while, another saw him, and said, “You are one of them!” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.” Then after about an hour passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, “Surely, this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So Peter went out and wept bitterly.*

There’s another portion here where it says that every last one of them – every last one of them – ran away in the dark. So all those that He loved, all those that He was close to, all those that He trusted ran away when it got tough. When He needed them most, they left. They left Him.

He knows what it’s like to have His character assassinated. He knows what it’s like to feel sad for His friends. He knows what it’s like to have compassion on great weakness. He knows what it’s like to be betrayed by a friend. And He knows what it’s like to be abandoned by those He loved when He needed their support the most.

Luke 22. There are those people who say that because Jesus was God, this whole sacrifice thing was a done deal – that there was never any doubt about the outcome, that it was just something they went through, there was never any problem with it – because He was God. Verse 39:

Lk. 22:39 – *Coming out He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples followed also with Him. This was before He was taken. And when He came to the place He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from Me.”* Can you feel it? Do you understand what He’s saying? He knows what He has to do, but as the hour approaches, the thought of it is so absolutely terrifying that He’s, in a very human way, asking if there isn’t some way that He won’t have to do this. *“Nevertheless, not My will, but Your’s be done.”* And then look in verse 43:

V-43 – *Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.* You think everything was a done deal? That it was no problem? I mean, He’s being *tested* here to the max – so much so that God sent an angel to be with Him.

V-44 – *And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And then His sweat become like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* In this translation it sounds like his sweat was just *like* great drops of blood. But the actual meaning is that He sweat blood. That’s where the expression *sweat blood* came from. And there have been instances where people became so anxious that their capillaries opened up so much that blood actually came out of their pores. That’s what He did. I’ve heard of people wetting their pants when they’re afraid. He was *so* afraid that blood oozed out of His pores and fell like great drops of blood on the ground. He was literally sweating blood He was so afraid of what was going to happen. He’d seen people crucified before. He knew what a Roman scourging was like.

So Jesus knows what it’s like to fear for your life, and to be afraid of pain, and to be helpless in the hands of people who are without mercy and cruel. He knows what it’s like to be in their hands, and not be able to get away, and have everybody run away.

Psa. 22:1 – *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning?* He said that on the cross. *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* And that is part of the first verse of Psalm 22. You know, I’ve always had a real problem with this. I never understood why God would turn His back on Him. And yeah, I know all the explanations about how He took all our sins on Himself and all that stuff. He *never* committed a sin. He was *paying* for our sins, but He never committed any. And so I don’t think that He really had to be separated from God. But that’s just my.... I would never turn away from one of my kids. How can we explain this?

I heard an explanation just the other day. I don’t know if it’s true. Maybe I’m dead wrong about this, but I’m just going to let you know what I heard. If you read the whole Psalm, it’s all about God’s deliverance. And the way Jews knew Psalms back then was...they didn’t say Psalm 22, because they weren’t numbered. They said the first few words of the psalm and everybody knew what He was talking about. So He could say, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?” and every Jew standing there could recite the rest of that psalm, which was a song of deliverance. That just makes a lot more sense to me. But

that might just be me. Certainly, while He was up there on that cross, God wasn't going to take Him down, because He had to go through that. That was part of the plan.

So, He understood character assassination. He understood being sad for friends. He understood compassion for weakness. He understood being betrayed by a friend that He loved. He understood being abandoned by His friends when He needed them most. And He understood isolation from God.

So what's the point of all of that. All of that was so that He could be the perfect High Priest for us – so that He would know what it's like to be human.

Let's go to Hebrews 5, verse 6.

Heb. 5:6 – *As he also says in another place, “You are a Priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedec,” who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of the godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Jesus Christ had to come down here and He had to suffer so that He could understand what it was like to be in our shoes. And having been perfected.... See, He was perfected by the suffering that He went through – when He was weeping for Mary and Martha because of the loss of their brother, when the disciples were all showing Him their backside as they ran away, when He was being scourged and crucified. He was being perfected. And because of that, He was able to become the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.*

Backing up a chapter to chapter 4, it says in verse 12:

Heb. 4:12 – *The word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him to whom we must all give account. You know, when Adam and Eve were standing there in the Garden, with their pitiful little fig leaves covering themselves up, that didn't hide anything from God. And when we read this scripture, it sounds somewhat threatening to us, doesn't it? Because we all have lots of things we don't want anybody else to know about. It's like being naked. It's like being an open book before the all probing eye of Jesus Christ. But you know, there's another way to think about this.*

We live in a world where people are mostly isolated from each other. We hurt each other and we withdraw. And we pull back. And because of that we crave closeness, but don't know how to get it. We don't understand that to be close to each other we have to be willing to be known and understood by other people. If we realize that Jesus Christ knows more about us than we know about ourselves – He knows about all of our self-deceptions, all of our problems that we don't want to admit to others or ourselves – and then He still loves us in spite of all those things, then being known becomes an incredibly powerful, healing thing for us, doesn't it?

I remember when one of my daughters got into a scrape at college – was being disciplined by the administration – and I believe the administrator told her, “If you don’t call your parents and tell them about this, I *will*.” So she had to call us and tell us what had happened. She was absolutely mortified of losing our love. So we sent her flowers, and we called her, and we told her it would take a lot more than that for us to stop loving her. There wasn’t really anything that she could do that would stop that. That’s how God is with us. We learned how to be that way from Him.

Heb. 4:14 – *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.* That’s an interesting statement – “has passed through the heavens.” Do you remember what happened there when He left? It said that they watched Him rise up and were standing there looking up. And all of a sudden when they looked down there were these two angels standing there. And they said, “Why are you guys looking up in the sky? Don’t you know He’s going to come back the same way that He left?” So when He *passed through* the heavens...Jesus, the Son of God, passed through the heavens so that we would know that He’s there! And He’s up there now. And He says, “*Let us hold fast our profession* – our commitment. *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are* – was in *all points* tempted as we are – *and yet without sin.*” When those disciples turned and ran, He didn’t get angry with them. He didn’t hate them. When they crucified Him, He didn’t blame them. *Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* When is that? *All* the time! He understands fear. He understands weakness. He understands being tired. He understands sexual temptation. He understands anger, sadness, loss, betrayal, jealousy.

I’m a pretty hard person to surprise anymore. I sit and listen to people talk – kids and adults – in counseling and I hear about everything – *everything*! I know that I can’t really hold a candle to Jesus Christ, because He knows *everything*. And there isn’t any problem that we can bring to Him that’s going to surprise Him or shock Him. He understands us and He *still* loves us.

At the Children’s Grief Center we know that people who have grieved the loss of a loved one – and those who are grieving the loss of a loved one – can help other people who are going through the same thing. Sometime ago I conducted a session with five women in it. Their kids were all off in other rooms – different ages – in grief therapy sessions. So we had one for the parents. They were all between thirty and thirty-four. They all had between two and four children. And everyone of those women had lost a husband in some sort of drug-involved way. Two of them – their husbands died of overdoses. One they believe was a suicide. One was murdered in some kind of drug deal. Their kids were not only in therapy in the Grief Center, they were all seeing psychotherapists. And all these women were very, very angry and very upset about what had happened to them – the way their husbands had *abandoned* them through death. And I thought, “Wow!” As I started to listen to these stories and realize who I was working with, I thought, “What’s going to happen here?” I don’t mind admitting I was pretty much at a loss as to what to do – so much suffering in that room. But I kept doing things with them to get them to talk

about what had happened and then about the feelings they had. Pretty soon, you know, I was just kind of invisible. They'd come in and start talking to each other about what was going on. What could *I* say to help any of them? I wasn't a woman. I didn't have two to four kids who were in psychotherapy. And my husband hadn't died from drug-related issues. So the best thing for me to do was keep my mouth shut and let them help each other. They started connecting with each other, because they understood each other in a way that I never could. That's the whole point of the Grief Center – to get people together that have suffered the same things.

And I remember the last night at the end. They all started copying down each other's phone numbers, because they wanted to stay connected. And they started hugging each other. One of the five of them, on the way out the door, turned back at me, and said, "Oh, thanks!" And they left. I was happy about that because the Grief Center worked the way it was supposed to work. The people that are hurting help each other. They're still hurting, I think, but now they have someone who can understand them in a way nobody else can. And that was a very healing thing for them.

We're offered the same kind of understanding relationship with Jesus Christ, because He knows what it's like to be us. He's been here. He's done that.

Now, we're told that when Christ returns that He's going to heal the brokenhearted. And He is *fully* equipped, let me tell you, to do that job. He understands human brokenness, because He Himself was broken. And that was the *only* way that He could accomplish that task – that He could be perfected. And that fact points us to two things. One is that He is offering His healing to us *now* – ahead of other people. All we have to do is throw ourselves on His care. And He is capable of healing us now. If we need some human to talk to, He'll direct to them. He'll provide what we need. And the second thing is that He had to *suffer* Himself to be perfected. That points to us. We also have to suffer to be perfected. We're going to learn to be compassionate healers because we also have suffered. So all the trials that we face – all the things that we have to go through in this life – are ultimately all going to be for a purpose beyond ourselves. We say, "Life is terrible," or this or that problem, but you know – and that's always true – the things we go through *do* hurt us – but God promises that He's going to turn all that into good later on.

So God reveals to us, through the holy days, and through the Festival of Unleavened Bread, that we are being cleaned up. We are being prepared. We are being transformed for God's great purpose – both now and in His eternal Kingdom. And that is a comforting truth.