

FATHER'S EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE CRUCIFIXION

Recently the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to something I had never seen before. What was our Heavenly Father's *emotional* response to the cruel torture and crucifixion of His dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ?

In the last 20 years or more, Mandy and I have often been involved in visiting and counselling thousands of people (mostly farmers) who have suffered terrible trauma in one way or another. We have witnessed the bitter tears of deep emotions as we have listened to heart-wrenching stories of people who have been cruelly attacked in their homes, terribly beaten, had their possessions stolen or deliberately destroyed, houses ransacked or burnt down, farms sabotaged, animals maliciously and irrationally killed or maimed. We have tried to understand and comfort people whose dearly beloved family members have been viciously murdered, and we have seen devastated children standing by the open grave of their father who had suffered deep depression as a result of the unfairness of what life has dealt to him and had finally committed suicide.

These are all things which cause deep emotions and bitter tears. The thoughts of taking vengeance run through their minds, and the never-ending questions, why, why *WHY?!!!*

So, as we were contemplating the crucifixion of Christ, the Holy Spirit awakened in me the thought, "*What about the Heavenly Father's emotions as He observed the terrible suffering of His*

own dearly beloved Son at the hands of cruel people because of my sins – all our sins?” Let us go through the story with a view to considering the emotions involved.

Let me start by pointing out the deep emotions which Jesus Himself had, and remind you that the Father was watching this all the way through. Any of you who have children of your own, would have experienced these emotions personally when your child suffers in any way, even emotionally. You as a parent cry with them. So, as we observe the deep emotional pain which Jesus suffered, we must know that tears flowed in heaven, too.

The betrayal

We start at the last supper where one of Jesus' 12 closest friends betrays Him. The prophetic Scriptures which describe this event are filled with emotions.

Psa 41:9 “Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”

Psa 55:12 “For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him.

*55:13 “But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my **familiar friend**;*

*55:14 “**We who had sweet fellowship together**, walked in the house of God in the throng.”*

What deep emotions must have been felt as Judas brazenly took the bread which Jesus offered him, got up and left to go

and betray his Lord. The Scripture makes an interesting observation at this point ...

*John 13:30 "So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; **and it was night.**"*

Gethsemane

Then we read of the deep emotions in Gethsemane. Firstly, Jesus asks His three closest disciples to support Him in prayer in this His time of greatest need. Three times they failed Him. When He returned, they were asleep. His response to them again reveals a depth of emotions:

Mat 26:37 "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and begun to be grieved and distressed.

*26:38 "Then He said to them, '**My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death;** remain here and keep watch with Me.'*"

In His own prayers, we read that Jesus was so emotional that His sweat poured from Him like big drops of blood.

Luke 22:43 "Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

*22:44 "And **being in agony** He was praying very **fervently;** and **His sweat became like drops of blood,** falling down upon the ground."*

In deep earnest He prayed,

"Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me ..."

Jesus knew the excruciating pain that was waiting for Him. Yet, in obedience He continues,

“... Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done.”

12 Legions of angels

The emotions are so deep that the Father sends an angel to strengthen His Son. He is given a promise. You are not alone. You have 12 legions of angels at your disposal. If the burden is too heavy to bear, You just need to speak one word of command, and the world can be destroyed, and all Your suffering ended immediately (my own wording as I understand this). Here is the Scripture ...

Mat 26:51 “And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

26:52 “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.

26:53 “‘Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

26:54 “‘How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?’”

The apostle John adds another interesting perspective, naming the slave:

John 18:10 "Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

18:11 "So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?'"

Jesus is arrested and His unfair trial starts in darkness, under cover. He is falsely accused, unfairly condemned, beaten and handed over to the Romans for crucifixion. Again, His trial before Pilate is unfair. Pilate himself realises that Jesus is innocent - yet bows under pressure from the Jewish leadership and hands Jesus over to be flayed most terribly and then crucified – probably the cruellest death that any person could die.

All the while Jesus is aware of *12 legions of angels* surrounding Him. He is the darling of heaven, their King. One word from His mouth could end it all, the entire world being destroyed. That is the authority which Jesus had at His disposal, and the whole of heaven (Father included) was watching His every move, every blow raining down on Him, the nails piercing His hands and feet as He was being nailed to the cross. Just one word from His mouth could immediately end it all. The angels are waiting, swords drawn, ready to come to His aid. They are waiting for a command from their King. Yet, Jesus remains silent. Jesus makes the decision to walk in complete obedience to His Father's will, and willingly goes through with this most terrible suffering. His willingness to be obedient to this degree must in itself have brought tears to His Father. If I were the Father, I would have wept uncontrollably.

Isa 53:7 "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth."

Separation

Then the most terrible part of the suffering comes. As Jesus hangs upon that cruel cross, the sun is darkened. The sins of the world are placed upon Jesus' shoulders, and the Father can bear the emotions of it no more. He hides His face, and the earth is plunged into pitch black darkness for three long hours. For the first time ever, Jesus is completely alone, separated from His Father. At the end of this terrible loneliness, whilst carrying the full weight of your sins and mine, a most pitiful cry escapes from

His lips, revealing the depth of His own emotions,

Mark 15:34 "At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?' which is translated, 'MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?'"

That was the deepest part of the pain which Jesus had to bear, as even His Father could bear it no longer, turning His eyes away from His Son. The ordeal is past. Jesus cries out, "*It is finished!*" He bows His head and breathes His last.

The Father's response

How does the Father respond to His own beloved Son's terrible ordeal, and explicit obedience through it all? In our experience

in counselling people who have suffered immeasurably, we find a response of deep bitterness, hatred, and a passion for revenge evident in such sufferers. But what is the Heavenly Father's response to such cruelty against His own beloved Son? We read of His response, and it stirs me so deeply that I just want to weep!

Mat 27:50 "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

27:51 "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split."

The Father's response as He sees the completion of the agony of His Son – He rips the veil in the temple from top to bottom. So great is His response that the earth quakes. History tells us that the earthquake was so powerful that it was even felt in Rome, and the Caesar at the time sent a delegation to Jerusalem to find out what had happened to cause such a great earthquake.

What is the significance of this response? The Father rips the veil in the temple. The veil separates us from God. He is HOLINESS personified, and it is impossible for us, sinners, to come into His presence.

A longing to be in His presence

We read many writings in the Psalms and the prophets, of men of God longing to come into God's presence.

Psa 42:1 "... As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.

42:2 "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?"

Psa 63:1 "... You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water."

Psa 15:1 "... O YHWH, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?"

Throughout all the centuries, people longed to come into God's presence – to have intimate communion with Him, but their sins separated had them from God and so their longing could not be fulfilled.

Because of our sins, it was impossible to enter His presence. Now, the terrible price of sins being paid by Jesus' death sacrifice, instead of breathing hatred and bitter vengeance for the pain which Jesus had to bear, the Father, instead, rips the veil of separation and welcomes us to come into intimate fellowship with Him.

Access into His presence

The blockage of sin is now removed. We have access into His presence – *should we accept*. We, whose sins caused the terrible suffering of His Son! He welcomes us in. If we are willing to accept His Son and the price He paid for our sins, then the blockage which stood in the way, prohibiting us from intimate fellowship, He rips apart with such force that a violent earthquake rips through the earth for many thousands of kilometres. The price for our sin has now been paid, the way is open, and we can enter His presence if we want to.

What awesome love!!! It is a love beyond our wildest human comprehension. This is not just forgiving our enemies. It is welcoming them to become intimate friends – should they accept the One who paid that terrible price for their sins.

Oh, how I love Him. I just want to run in to Him and let Him envelop me with His arms of love. I had never realised how deeply He desires to have an intimate relationship with us, His children, and how far He was prepared to go to make that possible. Let us open our hearts to Him and run into His arms of love and forgiveness.