

## Jesus Is Our Empathetic High Priest

- *Vs. 14 intro.* Undrstdn diff btwn symp & emp? Very simlr concepts; both have to do w/showng care, concern, compssn for smone else. Symp: when truly feel sorry for smone; it's when see smone going thru diffclt time in life & care, concern, compssnt twrd, hrt aches for, try help & show love – that's symp. Symp card only one small way show symp. Symp: when smone diagnsd w/illness; loses job; loses loved one; in bad accdnt; going thru prtclrly diffclt life situatn, whtvr – and you care for, hurt for, feel sorry, love – that's symp.
- And our Lord: certly symphthc twrd us: feels sorry for our sorrowfl situatns; cares, takes pity, loves us. Think prbl Good Sam: found man beatn up, side road; so took care/wounds, got/innkeeper, paid/stay. That's symp.
- But there is diff btwn symp & emp. Emp: when not only care for & feel sorry; but also can relate to exactly what going thru, bec you've been thru same thing yourself. Emp: still care/concern for smone else's suffrng – like symp. But emp goes one step further; emp: when you/self've exprncd same suffrng; been thru it; so can relate to what other prsn's going thru. Could say: you've walkd/shoes. So for ex: if my spouse dies, can relate to & be empthc twrd smone else whose spouse dies; if exprncd miscrrg, can show empthy twrd; if I suffer physcl pain in back, I can empthz w/smone. I not only feel sorry for prsn (symp); I can also relate to exctly what going thru (emph), bec I've been thru it myself. That's basic diff between symp & emp.
- Today in Heb 4, we see that J not only symphthz for us, but also empthz w/us. J: our empthc HP. **Vs. 15ab.** J can undrstdn & relate to what we're going thru bec he's been there himself; he's walked/shoes! Think re that for moment. Do you ever...
  - Feel pwrless, weak, exstnd bec some heavy burden you're bearing in life? J been there! Look at J in Grdn Geth, w/sweat like drops bld bec of burden he was bearing! J empthz w/you.
  - Feel lonely, all alone, bec frnds've abndnd you? J been there! Look at discs, running away when J gets arrstd; at Pt, denying even knows him; at Judas, betraying J for \$! J empthz w/you.
  - Feel very angry smone, even perhps temptd hate for cruel thngs done you? J been there! Look at Phars plotting kill, mockng, beatng; at Rom soldrs torturng, whippng, spitng, crucifyng! J empthz w/you.
  - Feel temptd give up on God bec seems given up you? J been there! Look at J sufferng in hunger/loneliness out in wildrns w/dvl; on cross, dying/agony, crying out "My God why forskn?"! J empthz w/you.
- J knows exactly what we go thru, what feel, how suffer, how temptd, bec been thru all self! **Vs. 15a.** Today we see J tmptd in wldrns. Alrdy physcly famishd. But sprtly, J is in anguish. Stn: in his ears/head. **"For 40 days he was tmptd by dvl" (Lk 4:2)** – to turn stones into brd, & worship Stn, & jump off tmpl & let angels catch him. And we might think: he's J; he can handle that. We can hardly fathm incrdbl amnt/pressure J was constntly under. Think re it: Stn knew if cld get J sin just once, God's whole plan/salvtn for wrld'd unravel, & all humnty'd be condmnd. That's burden J bore! So Stn mst've been constntly wrking on J, nght/day, ceaslsly trying get him sin – in wldrns, thruout life, & esp on cross! Don't ever think J only temptd during these 40 days in wldrns. No, J: single most tempted prsn who ever lived!
- So J most certnly can empthz w/us! In all our tmptns/suffrngs/doubts/wkns, in all the phscl/sprtl/emtnl burdens we bear – not like J just says, "Sorry, feel bad for you." No, J says: "I've been there! Know/like; walked/shoes; suffrd same tmptns; felt same emtns; endurd same pain; exprncd same anguish; know/like; been there! And I care for you; & I'm there for you; & I'm there w/you!" That's not just symp; that's emp.
- Kinda makes me think show used be on TV: Undrcvr Boss. Remem? 2010-few yrs ago. Premise: high ranking exec fr big company (ie, CEO of Culver's), goes undrcvr as entry level employee, flipping burgers & serving custrd at local Culver's. So instd of sitting in high rise office, very detachd fr reg wrkrs, he gets right dwn into kitchn; got deal w/all day/day probs/tasks that come w/wrkng in restrnt. And usually in show, CEO discvrs newfnd apprctn for reg wrkrs, bec sees what going thru & does it himself.
- J doesn't have make that discvry. He's alrdy come dwn to our level; left throne/hvn to take on human flesh & become reg human; suffrd what we suffer; went thru what we go thru; knows what life is like. Not some detachd deity who doesn't really undrstdn us or care re what we're going thru. J is our brthr! The HP who stands btwn sinful humnty & holy God is our brthr. He's walked/shoes! Gets it! That's empathy!

- **Vs. 15abc.** And that's key diff. J lived perfly sinless/holy life. But didn't just keep it for self; gave it to us! Traded w/us! Took the sins we're guilty of upon self; and took his own holiness & applied it to us. We call that God's Great Exchng. J acted on his empathy.
- Suppose cld say: dsn't do anone any good if you feel empathy for smone but don't do anthng help. (I.e., if I've been thru miscrrg, but when smone else goes thru miscrrg all I do is say "Rough; sorry," dsn't really help them at all!) What helps: act on empth. J acts on his empth. Says, "I've been temptd just like you; know exctly what going thru! And I am here to help you! I put your sins on me, and I put my holiness on you, so that now you can stand before our Fr/hvn holy & blameless. I care re you; love you; undrstnd what going thru; and I'm here to help!" That: our compssnt, symphthc, empthtc HP. **Vs. 14-15.**
- And I think that really impacts how we view God, esp when going thru dffclt time in life. He's not some unconcerned, indifferent, disinterested deity, far removed fr his ppl. He's our loving Fr; and J: loving Bro – which why psg: **vs. 16.** God is approachable, merciful, gracious; loves us. Just look at Xp on cross – that's love/God for us! We don't have be afraid of him or ashamed call on him. We turn to him in all our tempttns/weaknsss/struggls bec he knows what we're going thru & truly cares. Walked/shoes & walks w/us. J is empathetic.

**Hebrews 4:14-16** <sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.