

"Jesus Understands"

Have you ever felt misunderstood, believed that no one knows what you're going through?

Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to think about the One who understands. Stay with us.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God has spoken to us in the Bible, and we want to hear what He says. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

A farmer had just relaxed on the front porch when a newsboy delivered the evening paper. The boy saw the sign, "Puppies for Sale." He got off his bicycle and said to the farmer, "How much for a puppy, mister?" "Twenty-five dollars, son." Well the boy's face dropped. "Sir, could I at least see them?" Well the farmer whistled, and in a moment the mother dog came bounding around the corner of the house followed by four cute puppies, wagging their tails and yipping with joy. A little later another puppy came straggling around the house, dragging a hind leg. "What's the matter with that puppy, mister?" the boy asked. "Son, that puppy is crippled. We took her to the vet and the doctor took an X-ray. She doesn't have a hip joint and that leg will never be right."

The boy dropped his bike, reached for his collection bag and took out a fifty-cent piece. "Mister," the boy said, "Please, I want to buy that puppy. I'll pay you fifty cents every week until the 25 dollars is paid. Honest I will, mister." The farmer replied, "But Son, you don't seem to understand. That puppy will never, never be able to run or jump. That puppy is going to be a cripple forever. Why in the world would you want puppy like that?" The boy paused, and then he pulled up his pant leg, exposing that all too familiar iron brace and leather knee strap, holding a poor, twisted leg caused by polio. The boy said, "Mister, this puppy's going to need someone who understands and loves him." My friend, we all too need somebody.

Now we offer this study about God's compassion free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our lesson and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free online at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Hebrews 4:14 to 16, and we'll consider how Jesus understands us.

Our reading today comes from the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 4, verses 14 to 16. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." That's a wonderful passage from the book of Hebrews. Let's pray together. Oh Father when we're tempted and we have problems we pray that we'll come to You for the help, the mercy and the grace that You can give to us in a time of need. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

Have there been times when you wished someone, just anyone, would understand and love you with all your faults and troubles? Well there's someone who does! He understands you and loves you. You may be hurting inside or outside; He understands. You may be tempted, but He understands. Your life may be hard, you may feel like quitting. He understands. You may have been offended and have reason to be angry. My friend, He understands. He knows all about you. He knows what you've been

through. He knows how you think. He knows what you've done. He understands and loves you in spite of it all.

The Bible describes Jesus as one who understands all our struggles. As we've read in Hebrews 4 verses 14 to 16 which says, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Jesus experienced in his short life all the struggles and temptations that we face. He knows what it is to be human, and he also knows what it is to be Divine. He knows what it is to suffer and to be tempted. He knows how hard it is to do what is right when things are difficult. He knew the pain of the world turning against Him.

The Bible says in John 2 verses 24 to 25 that Jesus "knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for He himself knew what was in man." Now as a human, Jesus understood hunger and thirst. Matthew 4 and verse 2 says, "And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." While hanging on the cross, Jesus, "knowing all that was now finished, He said to fulfill the Scriptures, 'I thirst.'" We also know Jesus got tired at times. In John 4 verses 5 to 6, the Bible says, "So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. And Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as He was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. And it was about the sixth hour." Yes, Jesus understood what it's like to have the basic needs of life.

Jesus never had a wife or any children. No doubt He understood what it was like to be lonely. His father probably died before his ministry began, leaving Him with a mother and several siblings to support. Isaiah 53 and verse 3 says, that "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

He had a hard life as an itinerant preacher. He was loved by some and hated by others. He never owned a home, walked everywhere he went, and knew what it was like to be rejected. Can you imagine, from the time of your birth people saying that you were illegitimate? Can you imagine the soldiers of King Herod the Great hunting you to take your life? The Bible says in Matthew 2 and verse 16, "Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were under two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men."

Can you imagine your family thinking that you were crazy? The Bible says in Mark 3 verse 21: And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind." The people who were supposed to know Him, and know Him best, didn't understand how He could work miracles and teach such great things?

Can you imagine your own family and friends that you grew up with refusing to believe you? John 1 verse 11 says, that "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him." The people of his home town, Nazareth, rejected him and even tried to kill him. Mark 6 verses 2 to 6 records this: "And on the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in

his own household.' And He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief."

Can you imagine your disciple and friend betraying you for money? The Bible says in Matthew 26 verses 14 to 16, "Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?' And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him." Thirty pieces of silver? Exodus 21 verse 32 says that this is the price of a slave. What treachery! Beyond that, can you imagine being betrayed with a kiss? That happened to Jesus.

Can you imagine being asked by your Father to be crucified? The Father sent his Son into this world to sacrifice himself as an act of love and to deliver us from our sins. It was most difficult for Jesus to face the cross. He understood how utterly painful and humiliating crucifixion was in the first century. In Matthew 26 and verse 38 Jesus said, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to the point of death." Have you ever been so sorrowful, that you wished you could just die that very moment? The Bible describes His prayer in the garden in Luke 22:42 this way: "And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground."

Can you imagine your close friend and disciple lying three times about knowing you? The Bible describes the boast of Peter in Matthew 26:33 to 35: Peter answered him, he said "'Although they all fall away because of you, I'll never fall away.' But Jesus said to him, 'Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.' Peter said to him, 'Well even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!' And all the disciples said the same. But when the pressure came upon them, they buckled under the pressure as Jesus said they would. Peter denied him not once, not twice, but three times; and the last time in the very presence of Jesus."

Can you imagine having been bound and brought into court, where people falsely accused you with lies? Can you imagine people purposefully twisting your words to condemn you? Can you imagine dying on the cross, bruised and bleeding, while the people around you were mocking you? Matthew 27 verses 41 to 43 says: "So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He's the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we'll believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" Can you imagine remaining silent during all their ugly mockery? Can you imagine being in excruciating pain at the hands of very wicked men and never striking back?

Jesus understands the good and the bad, the easy and the hard, and the fair and the unfair. He knows everything about His people and His churches. You'll remember in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 that Jesus spoke to each of the seven churches of Asia. And to each of the seven he said, "I know your works." Oh, He knew the positive and the negative. He praised them for the good and rebuked them for the bad. He praised them for their toil, their perseverance, their sound doctrine, their faithfulness in tribulation, their willingness to suffer poverty and even blasphemy for the name of Christ, and for how they lived, and how they showed love, their faith, He loved that about them, and their service to the Lord. But He rebuked them when they left their first love, when they compromised, when they supposedly were alive but had died, when they were distastefully lukewarm. Oh, Jesus knows about your spiritual life too, whether you're growing or dying or lukewarm. He knew churches sometimes failed to be what they should be; and He rebuked and warned them, because He loved them.

He knows when you're tempted. I love God's faithful promise in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13. Where the Bible says: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation also will provide a

way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." God understands your limits and He will not let temptation and trials so overwhelm you that you can't endure them. When you can't stand the temptation, the Lord will make a way of escape so that you don't fall into sin. He'll bless you and be there for you. He promises in Hebrews 13 verse 5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." The God who understands is also the God who stands by us to help us through all the struggles that we face.

Jesus knows when life has filled you with fear or heartache. He knows life can be overwhelming, but not one cause of your anxiety escapes His attention. 1 Peter 5 verses 6 to 11 says, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (Oh), to Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Jesus knows your victories and your defeats. He knows your heart. If you love him, he knows it. If you have ignored or forgotten him, He knows it too. If you've let sin come into your life, he knows it; and if you're overcome by that sin, he knows it and He grieves. In spite of all He loves us anyway and wants us to repent and to come to Him. He loves us even in our sins and weaknesses. And to the lukewarm church at Laodicea, that He was ready to spit out of His mouth, you remember the Lord Jesus said in Revelation 3 verse 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and I knock. And if anyone hears my voice and opens that door, I will come in to him and I'll eat with him, and he with me."

Though Laodicea was lukewarm and so offensive, so offensive that Jesus would spit them out of His mouth, still Jesus took the initiative to restore a relationship with them. He knocked at the door and He told them they needed to repent. The Lord wants a relationship with you. He wants to be your friend. He took the first step in building that relationship by offering Himself on the cross to atone for your sins, our sins. Won't you respond to His love and his grace? Won't you let Him into your life? Put your trust in Him and obey Him today! Let's pray together. Oh Father, we're so grateful that You do know all about us and love us, and were willing to give Your Son Jesus for our sins. Father help us to come to You and to do Your will always on this earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

No matter who you are or what you've done in the past, the Lord's heart is big enough and open enough to forgive you and welcome you into his family, if you're willing to come to him humbly and penitently. Saul of Tarsus was the chief of sinners, but God forgave him. The apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 1 verses 12 to 16, "I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because He judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life." If God could forgive Saul of Tarsus, my friend, he can forgive you too!

Won't you humbly come to Jesus? Come in love and faith by repenting of your sins, confessing him to be the Lord and Christ, and by being baptized in water? The Lord is longing for you to come to Him in love and obedience. "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2 and verse 38). When you’re baptized, He’ll add you to His church. You’ll be His child.

Sometimes Christians drift away from the Lord. If you’ve forgotten Jesus, my friend, you’ve built a spiritual barrier between the Lord and yourself. Come back to the Lord today by repenting. Get back to church. Just as the Lord forgave Peter, He’ll forgive you.

Well we hope today’s study about these things has stirred you to think your soul. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now friends you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There’s also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses, and many other things. Now don’t worry, if you get a hold of us, we’re not here to get your money. We’re here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one. It might be that you’ve got a spiritual problem or something that you just need to talk to somebody about. We’ll be glad to help you find somebody in your area that you can talk too. Well we’ll be back next week, Lord willing. And when we come back we ask that you keep searching God’s Word with us and tell a friend about this program. You’ve got friends and neighbors that live right in your area that need to know about God, need to know about His love, and His grace, and His forgiveness, and need to know what to do in order to be right with Him. As always, we want you to keep searching the Bible with us. And we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.