

Please welcome...

Preaching for us today is **Larry Houchen**, a very familiar face to many of us. Be sure to welcome him and thank him.

Keeping Perspective on Life

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference." - Reinhold Niebuhr - (Serenity Prayer)

"Every man's life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another." - Ernest Hemingway –

"Letting go doesn't mean giving up, but rather accepting that there are things that cannot be." - Unknown -

October Birthdays

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Brandon Taylor | 25 Christina Bruni |
| 3 Betty Heitmeyer | 28 Allan Brown |

(Note: if anyone is "missed" here, let Jim know)

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
 Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
 Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
 Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
(Vacant)

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"Discouraged?..."

When Life Doesn't Make Any Sense

By Allen Webster

Jesus understands and is touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Peter 5:7). Jesus understands because He chose to get involved in humanity's pains. He came to make our lives better (John 1:14).

Someone wrote, **"God Leads a Pretty Sheltered Life."** It goes: Billions of people were scattered on a great plain before God's throne. Some of the groups near the front talked heatedly—not with cringing shame, but with belligerence.

"How can God judge us?" one asked. "What does He know about suffering?" snapped one woman. She jerked back a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number from a Nazi concentration camp. "We endured terror, beatings, torture, and death!"

In another group a black man lowered his collar, "What about this?" he demanded, showing an ugly rope burn. "Lynched for no crime but being black! My people have been wrenched from loved ones, have suffocated in slave ships, and have been worked like animals till death gave release."

Far out across the plain were hundreds of such groups. Each had a complaint against God for the evil and suffering He permitted in His world. How lucky God was to live in Heaven where there was no weeping, no fear, no hunger, no hatred!

Indeed, what did God know about what man had been forced to endure in this world? "After all, God leads a pretty sheltered life."

So each group sent out a spokesperson, chosen because he or she had suffered the most. There was a Jew, a black man, an untouchable from India, an illegitimate, a radiation casualty from the Hiroshima bombing, a prisoner from a Siberian gulag, and many others.

What did God know about what man had been forced to endure in this world? After all, God leads a pretty sheltered life. In the center of the plain they consulted with each other. At last they were ready to present their case. It was simple: Before God would be qualified to be their judge He must endure what they had endured. Their decision was that God should be sentenced to live on earth as a man. But because He was God, they set certain safeguards to be sure He could not use His divine powers to help Himself:

- Let Him be born a Jew.
- Let the legitimacy of His birth be doubted, so that none would know who His Father was.
- Let Him champion a cause so just but so radical that it would bring down upon Him hate and condemnation and cause the leaders of every major religion to seek to eliminate Him.
- Let Him try to describe what no man has ever seen, felt, tasted, heard, or smelled. Let Him try to communicate God to men.
- Let Him be betrayed by one of His dearest friends.
- Let Him be indicted on false charges, tried before a prejudiced jury, and convicted by a cowardly judge.
- Let Him see what it is like to be terribly alone and completely abandoned by every living thing.
- Let Him be tortured, and let Him die the most humiliating death, with common criminals.

As each leader announced his portion of the sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the great throngs of people assembled before God's throne. But when the last had finished, there was a long silence. No one uttered another word. No one moved. For suddenly all knew . . . God had already experienced it all.

- Christ was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). He experienced many of mankind's common sufferings while on His visit to our planet.

- He wept (John 11:35).
- He was weary (John 4:6).
- He was hungry and thirsty (Luke 4:2; John 19:28).
- He was poor (2 Corinthians 8:9).
- He became homeless (Matthew 8:20).
- His friend Lazarus died (John 11:14).
- He had family issues (John 7:5).
- His closest friends betrayed and forsook Him in His hour of greatest need (Matthew 26:25; Mark 14:50).
- He was misunderstood (Mark 9:32; John 8:27).
- He was hounded, badgered, and watched (Matthew 27:36; Mark 3:2; Luke 6:7; 14:1; 20:20).
- He was despised and rejected (Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 26:67; 27:39-44, 63).
- He was arrested and spent time in jail (John 18:12-14).
- He was lied about and wrongfully condemned (Matthew 26:60; Luke 23:13-24)
- He was physically assaulted (Matthew 26:67; John 19:3)
- He died (Hebrews 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:10)

Peter once wondered, "*Master, carest thou not?*" (Mark 4:38). Many have wondered that in their hour of trial. In Philadelphia, Frank E. Graeff preached around the turn of the previous century (1900). The Graeffs had a beautiful daughter. The custom at the time was for girls to wear floor-length layered lace dresses. Homes were heated with fireplaces or wood-burning stoves. One day she got too close to the fireplace, and her long skirt caught on fire. They frantically tried to put it out, but the fire consumed her so rapidly, nothing could be done. She burned to death.

Her father was so overcome with grief that he began to question if Jesus really cared. One night he wrote,

***Does Jesus care, when I've said goodbye
To the dearest on earth to me?
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks-
Is it aught to Him? Does He see?'***

Graeff related that he could almost hear the Lord answer:

***Oh, Yes, He cares! I know He cares,
His heart is touched with my grief;
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary;
I know my Savior cares.***