

## A Father at the Cross

If you had been the Father that day, what would you have done?

Matthew 27.45–46

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • June 15, In the year of our Lord, 2014  
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Ten Thousand Angels; This Is My Father's World

### Prelude:

#### I. I have always loved what the Lord said about Abraham's fatherhood,

**19 "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice..." (Gen 18.19).**

A. If the Lord can say that about me,

1. I will have considered my fatherhood a success,
2. in spite of all my failures in life.

B. If the Lord cannot say that about me,

1. I will have considered my fatherhood a failure,
2. in spite of all my successes in life.

#### II. The Lord knows that fathers understand the mourning of David,

**33 Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!" (2Sa 18.33).**

A. Fathers, would you give your life for your child,

B. even a wicked one like Absalom?

#### III. Then there is the father in the story of The Prodigal Son,

**20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him" (Luke 15.20).**

A. Why was it that the father saw his son coming "a great way off"?

B. I think it was because

1. the father spent a great deal of time thinking about his son.
2. The father looked often to the horizon to see if his son was returning.
  - a) Then it happened one day.
  - b) The father caught a glimpse of his son in the distance, and
    - (1) knowing his son,
    - (2) knowing his body language,
    - (3) seeing that his son was broken,
      - (a) the father did not stand with folded arms and spread legs,
      - (b) no, the father ran to his son, and
        - i) before hearing anything,
        - ii) before hearing a confession,
        - iii) before hearing a plea to be received back,
          - (1) the father fell on his son's neck and
          - (2) kissed him.

C. Fathers, we say these things about you.

#### **IV. Last month I asked you to picture the pain Mary felt**

- A. as she watched the crucifixion of her Son.
- B. As she stood at the cross,
  1. how did she endure the sight?
  2. Thirty-three and a half years previously,
    - a) a prophet had told her
    - b) that a sword would pierce her soul, and
      - (1) we can imagine how that must have been,

**34 “yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul...” (Luke**

**2.34–35).**

- (2) Did a sword likewise, pierce the soul of the Father?
  - (a) I do not mean Joseph,
    - i) although I am sure that if he had been there,
    - ii) a sword would have pierced his soul.
  - (b) I mean did a sword pierce the soul of the Father in heaven?

**V. When I see the pain Jesus experienced that day,**

- A. I cannot imagine the Father not feeling deep pain that day also.
  - 1. Truly, He must have groaned deeply in His soul.
  - 2. What did humanity do that day to the heart of the Father?
- B. Mary watched her Son suffer horribly, but
  - 1. she could not do a thing about it.
  - 2. In spite of the prophecies, you know she did not want to see this.
- C. The Father in heaven watched His Son suffer at the hands of sinful men, and
  - 1. the Father could have done something about it.
  - 2. I know that is true because of at least two things that Jesus said,
    - a) one the night before His crucifixion, and
    - b) the other while He was being crucified.

**VI. Also, remember God called David a man after His own heart? (1Sa 13.14).**

- A. If that is the case, could the Father also say of Jesus,
- B. “If only I had died in your place,” as David said of Absalom?

**Persuasion:**

**I. The Love of the Father for the Son**

**9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love” (John**

**15.9).**

A. How did Jesus love us?

1. He lived His life for us.
2. Then He gave His life for us.

B. Jesus said that He mimicked the Father's love toward Him.

1. Does that mean everything about the Father was about His Son?
2. Does that mean the Father would have given Himself for the Son?

## **II. Jesus Could Have Called for Help**

A. What I am about to read to you,

1. happened just moments after Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane,

**39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matt 26.39).**

2. He prayed that with similar words three times.

- a) How would the Father answer that prayer?
- b) Fathers, how would you want to answer that prayer?

B. Little time passed and Jesus found out the answer.

1. Judas came with officers to arrest Jesus.
2. That meant He was going to the Roman cross.

C. However, Peter would have none of that,

**51 And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt 26.51–53).**

1. Peter, don't you know the Father loves Me?
2. Do you think He is unaffected by these things?
3. If it came down to it, and
  - a) Jesus decided that He did not want to go through with it,
  - b) He could have asked the Father for deliverance, and
    - (1) the Father would have sent twelve legions of angels.
4. Jesus showed the overwhelming force
  - a) that the Father would have provided,
  - b) if Jesus had called for it.

D. This illustrates the love of the Father for the Son.

1. The Son only had to speak the word, and
2. the Father would have jumped in there and saved His Son,
  - a) saving them both from torture of the heart.
  - b) I would not have blamed either one of them.

E. That would have left us with no hope.

1. Yet, even as the Father loved Jesus, so the Father loved us,
2. as Jesus prayed just before these events,

**23 "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17.23).**

- a) Therefore, the Father let the Son suffer that day
- b) that we might be saved from our sin and condemnation.

### **III. The Unanswered Question of Jesus**

- A. I have often meditated upon the painful words of Jesus
- B. after six hours on that brutal cross,

**45 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all**

**the land. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matt 27.45–46).**

1. What did Jesus experience?
  2. What torment filled His heart?
  3. He loved the Father beyond any measuring device that we could invent.
  4. He knew the Father loved Him,
    - a) which prompted this question.
    - b) Jesus knew the academic answer, but
      - (1) the pain and agony ripping through His soul
      - (2) caused Him to cry out.
- C. If Jesus felt this pain because of His love for the Father,
1. did not the Father have the same pain from the separation, because
  2. of His love for His Son?
    - a) How much did the Father want to answer Jesus straight from Heaven?
    - b) How much did the Father want to end it all?
- D. They both kept the goal in mind,
1. which I’m sure is what enabled them to continue to do what they did.
  2. Yet, you know that they still experienced immense pain.
    - a) The Holy Spirit preserved these words in Scripture,
    - b) that we might know their unbelievable pain, and
      - (1) that we might know it was for us.
      - (2) The Father allowed this to happen to His Son
        - (a) that the Father might adopt us
        - (b) as His sons and daughters.
          - i) How much does the Father love us?

ii) What does He feel for us?

#### IV. What Did the Father Feel?

A. What did the Father feel as Jesus prayed in the Garden?

1. Luke said this about Jesus in the Garden,

**44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22.44).**

2. Was the Father in agony?

- a) What Jesus felt toward the Father,
- b) the Father felt toward Jesus.

B. What did the Father feel as Judas betrayed Jesus?

- 1. Judas had been a friend of Jesus.
- 2. The Father was willing to accept Judas
  - a) just like any of us.
  - b) Therefore, the Father had to have felt pain over the betrayal.

C. What did the Father feel as Peter let Jesus down?

- 1. After the third denial,
- 2. Jesus looked at Peter.
  - a) Did the Father also look at Peter?
  - b) What Jesus felt, the Father had to have felt.

D. What did the Father feel as the Jews mistreated Jesus?

- 1. You know the Father was not pleased.
- 2. The Father could have sent those angels because of His love for Jesus.

E. What did the Father feel as the Romans mistreated Jesus?

- 1. With the Romans, the brutality intensified.
- 2. The Father was fully aware of all that the Romans did.

F. What did the Father feel as the world rejected Jesus?

1. After all, for whom did the Father send Jesus to the Earth?
2. Remember what Jesus said,

**16 “For God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3.16).**

- a) Yet, there was the world
- b) arresting, beating, spitting upon, falsely charging, scourging, and crucifying His Son.

G. What did the Father feel when Jesus cried out to Him?

1. We know from the arrest,
2. that the Father would have sent angels to save Jesus.
  - a) That would be the case at the crucifixion also.
  - b) Psalm 2 prophesied of what the Father would be feeling,

**4b The Lord shall hold them in derision.  
5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,  
And distress them in His deep displeasure  
(Psa 2.4b–5)**

3. Psalm 22.1 prophesied that Jesus would cry out to the Father, “My God...”
  - a) Later in the Psalm, the Bible prophesied of more Jesus would say,

**19 But You, O Lord, do not be far from Me;  
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!  
20 Deliver Me from the sword,  
My precious life from the power of the dog.  
21ab Save Me from the lion’s mouth  
And from the horns of the wild oxen!  
(Psa 22.19–21ab)**

- b) Did the Father hear that plea?

- (1) There were two ways to be delivered from the crucifixion.
  - (a) First, to come down from the cross miraculously.
  - (b) Second, to die.
- (2) Notice suddenly, the last line of verse 21 says this,

**21c You have answered Me.**  
**(Psa 22.21c)**

- (a) Then the rest of the Psalm changes dramatically, because
- (b) it shows the resurrection.

H. What kind of restraint did the Father exercise during all these events?

### **Exhortation:**

**I. If you had been the Father that day, what would you have done?**

**II. This shows the love of the Father for both Jesus and us.**

A. He knows what it is to suffer.

B. He knows the pain of having a child suffer beyond imagination.

**III. Why did the Father allow Himself to suffer as He did?**

A. It was about you.

B. He loves you.

1. Do you love Him?

2. How much pain did the Father experience that day?

a) Go home today and think for the rest of the week

b) that He allowed Himself to suffer horrendous anguish of spirit for you.

(1) He wants you in His family.

(2) How can you stay away from a Father of this nature?