



MAN OF SORROWS; MAN OF COMPASSION

June 2018

*In all their distress he too was distressed,
and the angel of his presence saved them.
In his love and mercy he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them
all the days of old.*

Isaiah 63:9

Why did Isaiah refer to Jesus as a “man of sorrows?” (Isaiah 53:3) There are many ways in which he was. Some you will be familiar with. Like the great rejection he suffered which led to a most

cruel death on the cross. Rejection is one of the most painful experiences a person can go through. Jesus went through it, and—in a lesser way—so do many of us.

But Jesus suffered more than any other man that lived. He suffered in ways we could not imagine. Jesus was persecuted, he was despised, he suffered physical pain. He was scorned in many quarters: by his own family (John 7:5), by his friends (John 1:11), by his followers (John 6:64). He was mocked and ridiculed by his foes. Imagine the great sorrow all this would have brought him!

But I believe there was—and still is—another way he was “acquainted with grief”—in ways we may not have considered.

Have you ever thought how he must hurt along with us as he shows his compassion for the many kinds of pain we go through? Have you ever thought of what he must go through as he joins with us in fellowship with our suffering? Because yes, I do believe he feels along with us as we go through hard times. Even here, even today, through his compassion, he must be living in sorrow with us.

Sounds like a rather sad Jesus, doesn't it? Does sadness come to people who are compassionate? I can't fathom Jesus looking on those he came to heal without a sense of compassion and sorrow. I can't imagine looking on a suffering person with a caring spirit and expressing joy.

I am reminded of an old friend I meet now and then, someone with whom I share similar emotional battles. When I meet him and find out he's hurting, and I tell him I am as well, we feel compassion for each other. We join together in sadness. And in that sadness we share a commonality. In a strange way, there is a measure of joy in that. Is that not what sharing in Fellowship with Christ is like?

Sometimes friends comment on my frequently sad countenance. They think I should have more joy. But it's more natural for me to be serious. I think and write about a lot of serious things—like this piece I've just written.

I also believe that when a person follows Jesus, suffering will be a part of it. Compassion for others who suffer will be part of it. And, though our joy may not always show, it is there. With joy we live close to Jesus in the life he has given us.

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