

He's Been There

SHORT MESSAGE:

Several years ago, I was reading an article written by the Army officer who investigated the Mi Lie massacre in Vietnam. Reports came in of old men, women, and children shot in cold blood.

The investigator hoped the reports were lies. They weren't.

In preparing to interview the men -- witnesses and participants of the events -- he made a decision as to how he would appear: In full dress uniform; with all of his medals displayed. One of his medals was especially significant -- it showed that he had been in combat.

Soldiers respect that medal. It meant he'd experienced the terror of bullets ripping past his ear. Known the pain of picking up pieces of flesh that was a buddy an hour ago.

Here was an officer who knew, first hand, what combat was all about.

The men looked at him and at that medal -- and some of them told the truth.

I sometimes think of that officer as I approach God's throne.

For Jesus Christ has been in the trenches. Big time. The writer of Hebrews, puts it this way:

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - - yet without sin. [So], let us approach the throne of grace with confidence."¹

Jesus Christ has seen it all; felt it all.

From Thursday through Friday, what did he feel?

Dread, Fear and Grief.

Love. For his disciples and even His persecutors.

Betrayal and Abandonment.

Defiance and Anger.

Physical and emotional pain.

¹ Heb. 4:15-16.

Humiliation.

Anquish.

Pity and Need.

But there were also these:

Confidence. Hope and Victory. "It is finished!"

For Jesus was confident that God would receive Him. That when he prayed: "Thy will be done" it would be. That His death would be a stepping stone to God's glory.

Although men would step on Him to get there.

He felt the Hope and Victory. That in his pain, he would draw all men to himself.

When you come to him today, bring him your emotions. Bring him your heartache. Your broken dreams. Your grief. Bring him your pain and your tears.

But also, bring him your joy. Come with confidence. For you have been reborn as a child of God.

Lay every emotion down before the throne of our High Priest.

He's been there.

FULL MESSAGE:

Several years ago, I was reading an article written by the Army officer who investigated the Mi Lie massacre which occurred in Vietnam. The reports had filtered in to the Army brass that an army regiment had gunned down a defenseless village. The old men, women, and children were shot in cold blood. The investigating officer hoped the reports were lies. But he wanted the truth.

And so, while preparing to investigate the men in the regiment -- the witnesses -- he made a decision as to how he would appear before them. He would appear in full dress uniform. With all of his medals displayed.

One of those medals was especially significant -- it showed that he had been in combat. In the military, that medal commands respect. To the soldiers, it meant he'd been a grunt, too. He'd experienced the terror of bullets ripping past his ear. Known the pain of picking up pieces of flesh that was a buddy. He'd been in the trenches. An officer who knew, first hand, what combat was all about.

And as they looked at him; they looked at that medal -- and some of them told the truth.

I sometimes think of that officer as I approach God's throne.

For Jesus Christ has been in the trenches. Big time. The writer of Hebrews, puts it this way:

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet without sin. [So], let us approach the throne of grace with confidence."²

Jesus Christ has seen it all; felt it all.

From Thursday through Friday, what did he feel?

Dread and Grief. As he approached the time of his arrest.

Love. For his disciples and even His persecutors.

Betrayal. As he saw Judas lead the soldiers and Peter denied him.

Abandonment. As his best friends couldn't pray with him and he wondered if God had forsaken him.

Defiance and Anger. As he heard the blasphemy of the religious leaders who rejected him.

Pain. Physical and emotional. As he was tortured and mocked.

Humiliation. As he was paraded before the multitudes, naked except for the crown of contempt.

Pity. As he saw the woman and children he knew would die in the Roman siege.

Need. As the thirst bit into his throat.

Empathy. As he saw his mother and the woman crying beneath him.

And then other emotions. Joy. As the thief expressed the prayer of faith.

Confidence and Satisfaction. Hope and Victory. "It is finished!"

Confidence. That His God was there. That God would receive Him. That when he

² Heb. 4:15-16.

prayed: "Thy will be done" it would be. That His death would be a stepping stone to God's glory.

Although men would step on Him to get there.

Hope. That the pain, would be temporary. The victory forever.

That in his pain, he would draw all men to himself.

When you come to him today, bring him your emotions. Bring him your heartache. Your broken dreams. Your grief. Bring him your pain and your tears.

But also, bring him your joy. Bring Him your confidence, your hope, your victories.

Lay every emotion down before the throne of our High Priest.

Who was also our sacrifice.

Who knew every temptation we face. And every emotions we have. Except guilt.

And for that emotion he provided an escape. For He took the sin, the pain, the hopelessness to the tomb. Where they were overcome.

As you reach for the bread and the fruit of the vine, ponder the Sacrifice. Ponder the High Priest. The warrior. On a suicide mission. Obedient unto death.

For, in the dirty battle between Heaven and Earth, between God and Satan -- Remember this as you Remember Him.

He's been there.