

Introduction

- What do you do when you reach your absolute limit physically, emotionally and spiritually?
- What do you do when you are utterly exhausted in every way and every support system has collapsed?
- At the cross of calvary, the person of Jesus reached the absolute limits of what any human can bear.
- Yet, as He hung suspended between heaven and earth, He also needed to endure something no human would ever need to endure: the wrath of His holy Father for the sins of all humanity.
- As we saw earlier in the series, we must not for a moment begin to think that Jesus was aided in enduring these things by leaning into His divinity.
- For the sins of man to be atoned for, Christ needed to suffer and die as a man.
- So — how did a real man, hanging broken, in tatters, endure such a thing?
- I believe that there was an invisible support at Golgotha — the Holy Spirit.
- Today, as we continue our series, looking at the Spirit and the person of Christ, I would like to show that Jesus did not endure Calvary as God who also happened to be a man, but as a man who did not tap into His divine privileges as God.

- He suffered as a real man, sustained by the Spirit to that moment when He breathed His final breath.
- When He reached the end of His endurance, and when every other support system fell away, the eternal Spirit was there to carry Him through.

Movement 1

- Before we can begin to understand the dynamic between Jesus and the Spirit at Golgotha, we need to come to terms with the extent of Jesus' suffering.
- After His arrest and a series of trials, Jesus was handed over to be scourged.
- Roman scourging was an excruciating ordeal, designed to cause maximum harm and humiliation.
- He will have been stripped and bound to a pillar or post, exposing His back to Roman soldiers wielding a *flagrum* or scourge, a whip-like instrument with multiple leather strands, each tipped with pieces of bone or steel, designed to tear into the flesh upon impact, ripping out sections as it was pulled loose again.
- They will have delivered repeated blows to His back, shoulders, buttocks and legs, tearing away skin, flesh and muscle as they went.
- While these floggings would vary in intensity, they would often be limited to 39 lashes. Jewish law did not permit more than 40 lashes at a time. While the Roman soldiers were not subject to Jewish law, they had come to discover that if they subjected people to more than 40, they would often not survive and could therefore not go on to the second leg of execution.
- Severely injured and weakened, Jesus was forced to carry the heavy wooden crossbeam, known as the *patibulum*, weighing approximately 30-50 kilograms, at least partway through the streets of Jerusalem. When His body

collapsed, the soldiers pressed a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, to carry it for Him.

- When He arrived at Golgotha, the upright post, called the *stipes*, would already have been in place. They would have taken it and laid it on the ground, attaching the crossbeam to the post, which typically had a socket chiseled out of it to facilitate a stable connection.
- They stripped Him naked and lay Him upon the cross. Using a combination of rope and nails, they will have fastened Him to the cross.
- The nails would have been driven not through His palms but through the tight spaces between the bones of his forearms, near the wrists, and through His feet, severing major nerves, and sending jolts of excruciating agony through his limbs. By securing the nails this way, they would ensure
 - The nails would not tear out but would support the weight of His body.
 - The nails would have naturally avoided the major arteries, preventing rapid blood loss and prolonging the victim's agony.
- They will then have lifted the cross into position, exposing Jesus to the elements and to dehydration.
- Suspending Him in this way made breathing exceedingly difficult. For each breath, He needed to push up on the nails on His feet and pull down on the nails in His wrists, scraping His lacerations against the wood. Each breath was an excruciating ordeal.
- Friends, I am not a scientist and I do not understand the laws of human biology but it is pretty clear to me that Jesus was in very bad shape. Scientists say that when the human body suffers catastrophic injury and blood loss like that which Jesus sustained, the nervous system triggers a massive adrenaline rush to keep vital organs alive. The body can hold on, but it can only do so for so long. Eventually, the reserves run out, blood pressure

falls, organs begin to starve of oxygen, the mind grows foggy, consciousness fades, and the body begins to shut down.

- At that point, mental grit no longer matters. Willpower cannot override organ failure. The body simply quits, and the patient slips into an unconsciousness and death.
- By any normal human standards, a man with the massive injuries and blood loss that Jesus had sustained would have been slipping away. His system was failing. Yet, He remained fully conscious. He spoke words of mercy. He cared for His mother. He prayed for His executioners.
- How?
- It wasn't adrenaline. It also wasn't Jesus leaning into His deity.
- I believe it was the invisible support of the Spirit of God, Who sustained Jesus beyond every known biological limit.
- If the Son of God needed to rely on the Holy Spirit to carry Him, why do we think we can endure our own trials with sheer determination and grit?

Movement 2

- This brings us to one of the most mysterious periods of time in all of history.
- At the sixth hour, darkness covered the land. Then, at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
- Significantly, Jesus does not die at this moment.
- There are some who were standing around who interpreted this as a call for Elijah. One of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, placed it on a reed and offered it to Jesus to drink. Others then call for Him to be left alone, to see if Elijah would respond.

- Jesus cries out again, and yields up His spirit.
- So, there is a period of time that lapses between Jesus proclamation of His abandonment and His death.
- There was a period of time where Jesus' agony changed gears. He had experienced the worst that humans could do. Now, on top of that, He needed to experience the fullness of the wrath of the Father.
- In His human consciousness, Jesus experienced the full, horrific reality of judicial abandonment.
- He felt the Father turn His face away as the guilt of the world was laid upon Him.
- Now, we need to understand that the Father's "turning away" is the experience of the human consciousness of the Son under the weight of imputed sin, not a rupture in the eternal Trinity.
- But what I find to be fascinating is that while we often think about the dynamic between the Father and the Son at that moment, we seldom ask a crucial question: where was the Holy Spirit in that moment?

Movement 3

- The Scriptures give us only one small window into this moment.
- That window comes in [Hebrews 9:11-15](#).

Hebrews 9:11-13 NKJV

¹¹ But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal

redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,

Hebrews 9:14–15 NKJV

¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

- Friends, let's take a moment to consider what the writer of Hebrews is telling us.
- He is saying that Jesus was the ultimate High Priest.
- In the OT, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would wash himself, put on holy garments, and do something no-one else was permitted to do. He would pass through a thick curtain that separated the rest of the world from the holy of holies, bringing the blood of a bull and a goat to sprinkle on the mercy seat for the sins of the nation.
- And here is the paradox of Golgotha. Jesus is the High Priest, performing this liturgy not just for the people of Israel but for the whole world. But He is more than the High Priest. He is also the sacrifice.
- Now we must stop and think about the practicalities of this for a second:
- How can this man, whose body is battered and who is on the brink of unconsciousness and death, perform this supreme work of a High Priest, using his own body as the sacrifice?
- We cannot really know.

- All we know is that the author of Hebrews says that He did so *through the power of the eternal Spirit!*
 - In other words, the Holy Spirit was the divine agent empowering this suffering High Priest to finish the work.
 - He was the eternal bond that held the glorious act of redemption together.
 - Praise be to His name!
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- As we come to a close, let's take a few moments to notice how Jesus died.
 - Victims of crucifixion usually slipped away into a trauma-induced coma and died.
 - But Jesus did not merely slip away. When the work was complete, He summoned a final, Spirit-empowered surge of strength—pushing Himself up on those severed feet, bearing down on the nails in His wrists, breathing deep into His lungs, and uttering a triumphant declaration:
 - “*Tetelestai!*” or, “It is finished!”
 - This, friends, was a speech act of the ultimate High Priest of reality-altering proportions.
 - He proclaimed that the offering was complete and without defect and that it had been accepted.
 - These words carried such a weight of significance, there were physical consequences.
 - There were earthquakes.
 - Rocks split open.
 - People emerged from their graves.
 - But most significantly, the veil of the temple was torn in two.

- The High Priest had not just done his job for another year. He had done it for all time, so that all could enjoy the privilege of stepping into the holy of holies for fellowship with the Father.
- What do you do when you reach your absolute limit?
- If you have come to faith in Jesus, the same Spirit who sustained Jesus at Golgotha now lives in you.
- When you hit your absolute limit, when your strength gives out, and when you feel like you have nothing left to offer, you do not have to rely on your own grit.
- The Spirit who carried Christ can carry you today.