

GOD, DO YOU SEE MY PAIN? +++

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Happy Easter. He is risen. Turn to the person next to you. Give him a high five and say he is risen. All right. All right. I'm going to need your help with this. I want you to think for a minute of the best TV show that had the absolute worst finale, the worst ending. And then if you remember the ending and the show and you watch the show, I just want you to raise your hand as I said.

So Seinfeld, Seinfeld was one of the best shows and then it just had a terrible ending. Who remembers Seinfeld and watch Seinfeld and remember that ending, the ending, they ended in jail and it was, it was just an awful ending. You thought, Oh really? Like you were so great all up to this point.

Um, how about Game of Thrones for those of you that watched that? And apparently, yeah, you're like heathens and this, you need this day from what I've heard. I didn't watch the show cause I like Jesus, but you know, you're fine. Cheers. Remember if you're like over 60, you remember that Cheers, Cheers just had a terrible ending.

I'm going to tell you though, the best show that had the absolute worst ending and, and it, this is just, you know, a true take and I'm right about this is How I Met Your Mother. Remember that show for those of you, I mean just a great show. Like all nine seasons, you're like, are Ted and Robin married? Is this them? This is going to be so great.

And I'm going to spoil it for you. If you're like, Oh, that's not like a great show. I want to watch it. I'm going to, I'm going to save you from nine years of just pain to be let down. Right? Because here's the deal. On the last episode, you found out that the mother had been dead the entire time. Yeah. Like I know. And you're like, Oh man, this Easter is going to stink. Like, here we go. Right?

Like, yeah. So we're sending, you know what? Doesn't it feel like Easter? Like the Jesus story might be one of those, like this great life, all these great things. And then this like let down of an ending. And here's why I say that I want you to think about it.

Like I know we all kind of come and we're excited and we're here and we have our Sunday best and we're excited for the day, but, but tomorrow, tomorrow is going to be back to normal Monday with all our hurts and our heartaches and all of our pains, all the things. And actually I want to put us into the place of the disciples and into the place of the women and in the place of humanity in the days of Jesus. And on this Sunday and think about it, right?

The women were weeping. The disciples were distraught in the upper room and all of humanity still felt helpless and hopeless. And I think we have to recognize they asked the question, where's God? And over these next six weeks, I want to invite you to come and to discover with us as well as what they've discovered of asking the question, where's God? Because life hits hard for us. And there's times where we will have life hit us hard. And we're going to ask the question, where's God in the midst of this?

And Easter is a perfect spot for us to begin to build this foundation, to say, we know where God is, even in the midst of the question of where's God in the worst parts of our lives. And so today I want to invite you as we ask that question, where's God to first know that God does see our sufferings. God sees our sufferings and he knows when we have those sufferings and every one of us will have them.

At some point in time, the death of a spouse, some have experienced a horrential and horrific suffering of the death of a child. Maybe it's economic ruin or job loss. Maybe it's discontentment in your life. Maybe it's the death of your marriage through divorce. Maybe it's disenfranchisement with a child. Maybe it's disappointment in a child. Maybe it's disappointment in our own parenting. Maybe it's not being able to have a child.

Maybe it's something that is not huge like that, but maybe it's something that's small. Maybe it's, it's the diagnosis. Maybe it's a torn calf or an ache or a pain. Maybe it's just getting older. Maybe it's a child leaving the house. And here's what happens. Even though we can all plan for those things and say, yeah, I know these things will happen when they happen. We still didn't see it coming. It still isn't like, Oh yeah, I knew that was happening. I'm fine.

It's still sucker punches us. It's still a moment where we go, where's God in the midst of this. And this has been a question for humanity since the very fall of humanity. Where's God from the garden in Genesis chapter three? When they asked, where's God? When they messed up to the desert in Exodus three, when they asked, where's God? When they were worn out to the storm in Mark chapter four, when they asked, where's God? When life's falling apart and to the cross in Matthew 27, when they asked, where's God? When everything dies. You see, when we ask this question, all of humanity has asked this question.

We also have to remember when we ask, where's God, who our God is, that our God does see our sufferings. Exodus three, seven. He says to the people who've been suffering for over 400 years, I've seen the misery of my people. I've heard them crying and read the red with me. And I am concerned about their suffering. So God sees your suffering. He sees our suffering and he's concerned about it.

It's not like God says, oh yeah, they're suffering. That's okay. They'll be fine later. Time heals all their wounds. That's not our God. He sees your suffering. He is concerned with your suffering. And so what you know about our God is when you don't feel his presence, he does feel your pain. When you don't see his power, he sees your heartache.

And when you're at your lowest, he's not up high with his back turned and saying, you'll be fine. Get over it. No, he's nearby. He's walking before you to show you the way he's walking behind you to encourage you. He's walking beside you as a friend. You see, when we ask, where's God? And we know that God sees our suffering and he's concerned about our suffering.

It leads us that we can be real with God and our laments can become also trust. So this past year in January, King of Kings grew to a third campus where we began a campus out in Fremont. And that campus is amazing. We actually merged with the church. And I got to tell you, I love the people that God has united us with in Fremont. They have an amazing heart and they have a heart that beats the DNA of King of Kings.

They are willing to do anything short of sin to reach those who don't know Jesus. They are courageous in saying need some help and we want to become a different church. And more importantly, I love that their heart beats the same heart of God. They want to make heaven fuller. They want to make the kingdom stronger. They want to make lives greater.

And I want to share with you about one of the people at King of Kings Fremont. She shared her testimony with us just a few weeks ago. Her name is Chris. And Chris, a few years ago had woken up and she started to have headaches and it would never go away with no matter how much aspirin she would take, it wouldn't go away. And then after a few weeks of just the constant headache, her vision started to blur.

And then as she was talking to some friends, she was saying some things that she wasn't thinking. And she saw a doctor and they ran some tests and the news came back and they told her, you have a mass in your brain. It is a tumor. You have brain cancer. And she said, I went to where's God? Why would you allow this? What is happening? And I asked the questions of how long will I live? What is going on? I've been faithful. Why, why, why?

And through great doctors, through great nurses, through a church community that surrounded her with prayer and with care and through amazing medicine and care, Chris became cancer free. And she is a cancer survivor of brain cancer. And she went on with her ministry and her life and serving and doing all the things that she loved as a grandma and as a friend.

And then she woke up one day with a headache and it felt just like the other one. And she then got blurred vision and stalled speech. She went back and she told the doctor and he ran the test, but she knew how they come back. And they said to her, Chris, I'm so sorry. You do have a brain cancer again. And she thought again, all the medicine, all the heart, all the appointments, all the stuff, all the community and the community surrounded her and people prayed for her and they watched over her and the doctors cared for her and they did more than they could imagine.

And then to the shock of the doctors for a second time, Chris defeated cancer and she is cancer free, right? And she's staring at testimony. And then she says in the midst of it, she says, but in November of 2024, I got a headache again and I got blurred vision. And two weeks ago, the doctors confirmed what I already know. I'm going to fight brain cancer for a third time.

And though I'm tired, though, I don't know why I keep getting this. What I do know is that I will be surrounded by my church. I will be surrounded by my community. I will have great doctors and nurses, and I know my Lord and my savior, and I will defeat cancer, whether it's in this life or that life, because Jesus has already won. And her, her testimony is one of trust.

And so, Chris, we are with you. We stand with you. We pray with you. And we know that cancer is already done. You have already won. And let me tell you what I love about Chris. Chris reminds me of the great King David. She's a great warrior like the King David in Psalm 13. King David begins that Psalm saying, how long Lord, will you forget me forever?

Now we read that in the Bible and we read that with that voice. How long Lord, will you forget me forever? Let me probably read, say that to you in the way that David might've actually prayed that.

How long God, are you going to forget me forever? David is angry. He's angry at God. He's in despair. He's hurting. He's distraught.

This is not a prayer of kindness to God. This is a prayer of anger. I don't know what you're doing. Where are you? And this is the David who is the King who had the heart after God. But here's what I love about David as well as Chris. His lament at the very end of Psalm 13 turns to trust when he prays, but I trust in your unfailing love, God.

And that's the reminder for us. First of all, I want to tell you, if you, if you are in a deep valley, a dark place today, I tell this to everyone that is walking through tough times. If you have a relationship with God, please give him all your emotions. He is your father. You are his child, which means you don't have to hold anything back with him.

It is okay to be angry with God. It is okay to have disappointment in God. It is okay to have despair with God. If you can't do that, you don't have a relationship with him. He desires for you to be you with him. But in the midst of our shouts and tears and bouts of despair, we know that we can do that. And honestly, if the great King David can do that, so can you, so can me.

But let us never stay in despair. Like King David, he quickly moved from despair to trust, from lament to trust. And we do as well. Don't stay in despair. Your heart must move to trust in God. And hear me say this. Are you listening? Hear me right now. Ready? Even when you can't see his hand, you can trust his heart.

God's heart is for you. His heart beats for you. He loves you. He formed and he fashioned you. He wants nothing but the best for you. That's the God you have. And so we can move from that lament to that trust. And when we ask, where is God? We know he sees our sufferings and that we're in relationship with him and we can give him our full selves and trust in him for where he's going.

Because we also know this Easter, that Easter is a reminder for us that Jesus sees our pain and he calls us by name. Jesus sees our pain and he calls us by name. Maybe some of you came today and you are in that deep valley. You're hurting. You're hurting so bad. It's all you're consumed with, the hurt and the heartache.

But I can say this to all of us in the room today. Every one of us will be in that deep pain. It's just a matter of when. All of us will have that time where we shout, where are you, God? Don't forget the women came to the tomb in grief and despair and heartache.

We know this because as the scripture was read to us earlier, now Mary stood outside the tomb crying, crying, grieving. I want to worship God. I want to hold him one last time. I want to, I want to grieve that he's dead. And when she sees the tomb is empty, she sees the angels and she's asking, where is my Lord?

How can I grieve and how can I give him a proper burial if his body has been taken? And the angels who she doesn't recognize say, why are you grieving? Why are you looking for the dead amongst the living? And she thinks it's a gardener. And she says, sir, wherever you've placed him, just tell me, just tell me, let me have compassion upon me. Let me go and let me grieve and let me give him a proper burial.

And at that moment, the one who she thinks is a gardener is the resurrected Lord Jesus. And Jesus says to her, Mary, he has seen her pain and he calls her by name. And she knows it's Jesus. She knows it's Jesus. And, and this is a reminder for us that God knows your pain. And he knows your name.

And I really want to invite you today. I want to invite you today that in the midst of whatever pain you are going through, or you may go through, tune out all the noise around you. Tune it out. Tune out all the noise that tells you that God doesn't see your suffering, that God doesn't know you, that God doesn't hear your prayers, that God isn't caring.

Tune out all that noise and listen for his voice. Listen for him to call you by name, because he knows your pain. Because Easter is the constant reassurance to us. There's always hope. There's hope within us that fills us with his presence.

Now, I want to show you an example of how we walk around in this world. You see, there's Easter people and there's not Easter people. And the world around us, they suffer just like us. All of humanity has suffering, whatever it may be. But the world around us and those who are without the Easter hope, they fill themselves with anything to just bury the pain, to just get them through it, to just fill the hole that's a cavern that's inside of themselves.

Oh, we look the same together. But they fill themselves with food or with drinking or with alcohol or whatever it may be. Or they fill themselves with busyness and work. They fill themselves with all sorts of things, with anger and resentment, whatever it may be, hoping that it just makes them feel a little bit better.

And maybe for a short time it does. But the truth of the matter is that when you fill yourself with things that aren't filled with true hope and life, just simply to cope, you're going to fall short and it's going to fail.

But today, as an Easter person, I want you and I to remember and to know that we don't fill ourselves with what the world fills us with. We fill ourselves with the hope of Jesus Christ, the hope of the truth that he has risen from the grave and that he has overcome our despair and our discouragement.

He has overcome our hurts and our heartaches. And when you and I are filled with hope, we get to rise above all the things that we're trying to fill ourselves with and get the stand victorious with Jesus over that.

And so I want to ask you today, what are you filled with? Are you filled in the midst of despair and discouragement with ways to cope that will fall short? Or are you filled with the way of hope with Jesus Christ? Because you and I, we know where's God. We know where he is. He has risen and he is victorious for us.

He has risen from the grave and he gives us that. And we know the ending that is to come. Now I'm going to share with you the best TV show that had the greatest ending. And honestly, you can't disagree because I'm right. It's The Office. One of the greatest shows ever with one of the greatest endings ever.

At the very end, we get to see that Jim and Pam are married and they have two kids and they live in Austin, Texas. And we get to see Dwight and Angela married. And Dwight is the regional manager. And Michael comes back and reunites with all his friends. And the reunion is beautiful.

Friends, this is Easter for you and for me. We are reminded that the ending of the story is really this great beginning. That Christ is coming again and there will be reunion with all who've gone before us. Because what we know is that Easter, when it feels like it's the end of the story, God's actually just getting started with his glory.

And that's the good news because you and I know this today. God values you and loves you too much to leave you in your despair and your disappointment as your destiny. Instead, he gives you his victory and makes it your eternity.

And so we can ask and say, where's God? And we should. But here's what we know. When we ask, where's God in the garden? He's right there. And he doesn't say, what did you do? He says, where are you? To come to you.

When we ask, where's God in the desert? His silence isn't rejection. It's preparation for you to go farther.

When we ask, where's God in the midst of the storm? It's not allowing the chaos because he can't control it. It's a reminder that he's calm because he's protecting you and he's providing you through it.

When we ask where God is at the cross, we know he was abandoned so that you never will be.

And finally, when we say, where's God at the empty tomb to what looks like the end? We know that this is actually the beginning of everything to be made new. That's where God is for you and for me.

And so today, even when you feel forgotten, you're seen. Even when you feel lost, Jesus is near. Even when you mourn, the Lion of Judah is alive and his roar is for you all the more.

So right now, I want you to get up on your feet and I want you to open up your eyes because here's the truth. There is no body in the grave. Hope is filled. Christ has won. Satan is done. Amen.

And today, today, as we sing, shout and praise to our risen and victorious King, I want you during this last song to sing about there's no body in the grave, to come forward to the stage, get into the aisles, sing and shout and praise the Lord evermore because Christ is risen. He's risen indeed. Hallelujah. Amen. Amen. And amen. Let's sing, shout and praise. Come on, get up and let's go.