

Jesus is Human Like You

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Preacher: Dave Nannery

[0 : 00] Okay, well, we don't have a nativity scene up here, but, I mean, most of us have seen a nativity scene, right? You've got one of those, I don't know, it's like a lean-to shack usually.

You've got this lean-to shack. You've got this big shining star hovering above it. You've got wise men, and they've got fancy clothes and nice gifts.

You've got shepherds. For whatever reason, the shepherds bring their sheep with them. I don't know if that's really what they did, but apparently that's what they decide to do. They bring the sheep with them. You've got a few barn animals.

There's usually a cow and a donkey and probably like a chicken somewhere. And then you've got Mary and Joseph. And then what's at the center? At the center, you've got a manger, right?

You've got this feeding trough for animals, and everyone is focused on it. All attention is directed towards a feeding trough, a manger.

[0 : 54] And nestled snugly in that manger, there is a little baby. At the center of the scene, you have baby Jesus. Now, has it ever occurred to you when you're looking at a manger scene or you're thinking about that scene, has it ever occurred to you to ask the question, why baby Jesus?

Why baby Jesus? Did Jesus have to appear as a baby? Now, it's kind of a funny thing to ask, but, you know, in a lot of ancient mythology, you know, the Greek gods, you've got sometimes the gods would take on a human form and they would arrive as fully grown people, like Athena bursting.

It was just this weird mythology of Athena bursting out of the head of Zeus, like fully grown. Just strange stuff like that, right? But that's not the way Jesus actually came to earth in history.

God didn't deposit Jesus on earth as a full grown man, as a 30 year old man ready to go off on his mission. And that's the funny thing about it is, you know, we pick up on Jesus.

Most of the gospels are about just three years in ministry when he is about 30 years old. And then the previous 30 years before that, we only get one or two little stories.

[2 : 08] So, is that all wasted time in Jesus' life? Does it matter that the Son of God entered our world as a baby? And if so, why does it matter?

Why baby Jesus? Well, I'm fully convinced that it absolutely does matter. It matters a great deal. Because first of all, this Messiah, this chosen King from God, Well, first of all, he was prophesied to be born as a baby.

He's fulfilling the words of scripture, the words of the Old Testament prophets, the promise from God. Now, we could spend time on that, but I want to spend time instead on something that's of a deep theological significance, a deep practical significance, something about Jesus beginning life as a baby.

Jesus had to be born as an infant because Jesus is human like you. Jesus is human like you. And that's why he had to be born as an infant.

Now, there's many years, many decades, even centuries of theology in our culture, what's often known as liberal theology, that's focused on trying to remove anything supernatural from God's word, trying to reduce Jesus to just merely a human being, not really God, not born of a virgin, crucified, yes, but then he stayed dead, and he wasn't resurrected back to life.

[3 : 32] That's the idea behind a lot of this liberal theology. And as a result, many faithful Christians, and perhaps some of us, have overreacted to that.

We've overreacted and become uncomfortable with the truth that Jesus is human like you. We become wary about that sort of false teaching that says Jesus was, yeah, he's a good man, maybe even a great man, maybe even a prophet, but nothing more.

But nothing more than that. He wasn't really God. And so we overreact. We rightly respond by saying, yes, Jesus Christ was and is fully God. He is God the Son.

He is the second person of the Trinity. And we tend to focus on the divine nature of Jesus Christ. We tend to fixate on that. But the problem is, I think we tend to fixate on that and almost to the point of forgetting that Jesus is human too.

We, in fact, stop thinking of Jesus as human at all anymore. We forget that he is 100% God, but also 100% man.

[4 : 39] And so what I want to reintroduce to you is this truth of Christmas, this amazing, beautiful truth of Christmas, this truth that Jesus is human like you. And I'm hoping, actually, the expectation is, here's what I'm wanting you to feel like during the sermon.

I'm hoping that at first, you're going to find this unsettling. Maybe even a little bit unsettling. But then deeply liberating. Deeply encouraging.

Deeply filling you with the hope that Christmas ought to fill you with. And a good place to begin would be the sentence that concluded the scripture passage that BK read this morning.

The sentence that closes Luke's account of Jesus' birth. That's Luke 2, verse 40. And here's what Luke writes about Jesus there. Just a simple statement.

The child, he's talking about Jesus, the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.

[5 : 45] From this verse, we learn that Jesus matured like you have matured. Jesus matured like you have matured. And we learn from this that Jesus matured in two ways.

First, Jesus matured physically. The child grew and became strong. Jesus' body matured like yours. His body matured like yours.

Luke says that he grew and became strong. And so, this is something we have to remember about Jesus. His body was unique to him. Jesus grew to a particular height. I don't know, maybe five foot six or something like that.

People were shorter back then. He had a particular and has a particular hair and eye and skin color because to this day, he still has his body.

One day when you, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you meet him in heaven, you will meet Jesus who is of a certain height with a certain hair, eye, and skin color. His nose and ears have grown into their own unique shape.

[6 : 48] You know, his hair will have a certain appearance. Maybe he's got a receding hairline. I certainly like to think so, you know. His fingerprints form a pattern of their own.

His bones and muscles and ligaments developed like any other child. Jesus underwent those same stages in brain development that you and I have gone through.

And because Jesus is human forever, he still, to this day, possesses a unique and distinct body. Jesus matured like you have matured.

His body matured like yours. And then second, Jesus matured mentally. Jesus' mind matured like yours. Luke says in verse 40 that he became filled with wisdom.

And just to drive home the point, if you scan down to verse 52, you'll see Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

[7 : 54] Jesus became wiser as he grew older, just like any other child. Jesus gained understanding of God. He gained understanding of the world God made.

He gained understanding of other people. He gained understanding of himself. He gained wisdom from life experience, just like you and I do. And you can see that in his careful observation, the practical wisdom that he has.

It shows up in his parables. Jesus no doubt gained wisdom from his parents, from other wise men and women of his hometown. But even more than this, the gospel authors, they really emphasize how much wisdom Jesus gained from his study of scriptures.

Jesus knew his Bible. The law, the prophets, the writings of the Old Testament. He knew it backwards and forwards. It's quite possible he had the whole thing memorized.

Some people of his day did. He immersed himself in God's word. He absolutely loved God's word. If you cut Jesus, he bled Bible. But he not only committed God's word to memory, he understood it in a way that many of his peers did not.

[9 : 05] He understood the story that it told, a story of salvation, of redemption, a story that pointed toward him as the son of David, as the savior sent from God, as the Messiah.

And through these, all these ordinary processes of human development, Jesus' mind matured like yours. So in these two ways, Jesus matured like you have matured, body and mind.

Now maybe, there's some things about this that are bothering you a little bit, if you're trying to think through all the implications of that. After all, the New Testament on many occasions makes it clear that Jesus is God, and we know that God is omniscient.

And that's a theological word that simply means God knows everything. Everything there is to know, God already knows. He doesn't learn. He doesn't grow in knowledge. He already knows everything. So if Jesus is God, God is omniscient, and he's utterly wise.

He already knows everything. How can Jesus grow in wisdom? Well, I think we stumble at this question because we have a serious misconception.

[10 : 15] We have a misconception about the way that Jesus lived his life during the 33 years of his earthly ministry. I want to illustrate this misconception, and I'm going to use an illustration.

I think about a quarter of you will instantly get this illustration. As for the rest of you, too bad. No, that would be terrible. I'll do, I'll do your best to hang in there, to hang in there, right?

Okay, so this is an illustration. I'm going to talk a little bit about my high school years when I used to play a lot of video games. So those of you who are familiar with, even if you know Super Mario Brothers, that's okay.

I wasn't always good at them, okay? There were some that were really difficult, and it would, you know, you'd be like, you'd be controlling this character. He's fighting powerful enemies. He's easily hurt. He could easily die.

Game over, right? And so, man, this is too hard. So what I would do is I would get on the internet and find ways to cheat. Yeah, you're, you've got a cheater in front of you, I confess.

[11 : 19] But in my defense, most of these game makers, they included cheating as a hidden feature in their games, right? It's not like, it's not like playing a board game like Monopoly, where, you know, you're not supposed to cheat, but you do anyway, right?

No, it's like, these are designed that if you want to, you can. If you entered a sequence of commands, you enter a cheat code, all of a sudden, the character you controlled would gain these superpowers. You would be invincible, or you'd have unlimited power or unlimited supplies.

Sometimes, here's what this was sometimes called. It was sometimes called playing on God mode. God mode. If you played through the game in God mode, guess what? Everything became super, super easy.

Difficult problems, difficult puzzles, difficult enemies. It didn't require any more thought. No effort to defeat. You were untouchable. Nothing could get to you.

On God mode, you could breeze through the game, not even break a sweat. Now, here's why I'm using that illustration. I suspect that many of us are under the impression that Jesus spent his 33 years on earth in God mode.

[12 : 28] You know, we have this idea, perhaps, and maybe we know intellectually it's true, this isn't true, but maybe we just kind of just still feel this way. We have this impression that Jesus, you know, he emerges from the womb with infinite knowledge and wisdom, and he just travels through Galilee, hop, skip, and jump.

It's full of boundless energy. Jesus is radiating power, zapping people left and right, healing, driving out demons. Satan comes at him. He dismisses the devil without a second thought.

You know, he's tempted in the wilderness. He is untouchable. Jesus breezes through life on God mode, all the way to the cross, where, okay, you know, yeah, okay, he suffers for a little bit, but then it goes right back to God mode when he is raised from the dead.

In other words, we tend to think that Jesus is always operating out of his divine nature, to the point that we forget that he is fully human as well. We fail to realize that other than, other than a few glimpses here and there, Jesus actually did not spend the 33 years of his earthly life on God mode.

There's a reason that he is, you know, the hymn, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, speaks of him as being veiled in flesh. His, his divine nature is often hidden and only emerges at certain moments very clearly.

[13 : 46] Yes, in his divine nature, Jesus possesses all knowledge. As God, Jesus Christ knows everything. But as a human being, Jesus' knowledge was limited. There's actually scripture.

If you want to take a look at later, Mark 13, verse 32, Jesus talks about that. There's some things that he doesn't know as a human being. His knowledge increased as he grew up. Somehow in one person, and this is just one of those paradoxes of the Christian faith, one of those things that just seems like, how can this be true?

But it is. In one person, both of these things are true at the same time. Jesus, as God, his God, his divine nature knows everything. His human nature is growing and learning.

Both of these are true at the same time. Jesus was born as a human. He matured like you have matured. And this also means that Jesus suffered like you have suffered.

Jesus suffered like you have suffered. Again, Jesus didn't go through life on God mode. He didn't breathe through his whole life without a problem. Jesus experienced life as a human being.

[14 : 56] One of the ancient statements of the Christian faith, the Chalcedonian definition. It's an early description of who Jesus is as a person.

And it says that Jesus was, in all things like unto us, yet without sin. In all things like unto us, yet without sin.

In other words, Jesus, in every respect, is fully human, body and soul. He is fully human, just like you, in every way, body and soul.

So this means that Jesus has suffered like you have suffered. First, Jesus suffered weakness like you.

Jesus suffered weakness like you. Jesus is recorded as being hungry. Jesus suffered from thirst. Jesus suffered from weariness after long journeys along dusty roads under the hot sun.

[15 : 57] Jesus would collapse into a deep sleep after a long day of teaching crowds of people. These are all ways in which human beings, in which you and I are weak.

We just don't have unlimited power. We're not omnipotent like God is. And Jesus, in his human nature, was not omnipotent either. He reached the end of his energy.

He needed food. He needed water. He needed rest. He had all the needs that you and I have. Jesus is fully human. He was not untouchable.

Jesus suffered weakness like you. Second, Jesus suffered temptation like you. Jesus suffered temptation like you. I think it's worth taking a little more time to explain this.

This is a source of confusion for a lot of Christians. The better we understand this, the better we understand Jesus. Because we know, I mean, BK has been, I think just even this last Sunday, he preached about how Jesus was tempted by the devil.

[16 : 58] You can read about that in Matthew chapter four. And we know that he's supposed to have been tempted by the devil, but then we read verses like James chapter one, verse 13, when we see things like this.

Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. It couldn't be any clearer than that, right?

God cannot be tempted with evil. And Jesus is God. So sometimes we have this mindset, well, Jesus simply couldn't have been really tempted.

I mean, he was untouchable. And we start to think of his temptation as nothing but a farce. Nothing but a show. He's just skating through it on God mode. Nothing Satan says has even the least bit of appeal to him.

That's not the way that Matthew and Luke describe Jesus' experience. That's not how they describe it. Here's the first temptation Jesus faces in Matthew chapter four.

[18 : 01] Tell me if you think this sounds like a guy skating through on God mode. Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

And the tempter came and said to him, If you are the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. But he answered, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Notice how Matthew emphasizes here the humanity of Jesus. After fasting forty days and forty nights, how would you feel?

What's that? Hungry? You think so? Anyone else agree with that? Maybe a little bit hungry? Okay. Mark? Yes. Looking forward to some burgers and pizza, no doubt.

He would be hungry. That's a cute way of saying, you know, this is like probably the biggest understatement at all of the Bible. He would have been driven out of his mind by hunger.

[19 : 16] Right? This is, you know, when you're that hungry, every desert stone looks like a big old Christmas turkey. Right? You know, sprouting legs and gobbling and walking around. And you're driven out of your mind. Satan appeals to his very human sense of hunger, to this deep, urgent need.

And Satan's like, hey, you need to meet this need. You need to turn one of these, you know, just at least one of these stones into loaves of bread. Maybe they look like loaves of bread to you right now.

You need to turn into an actual loaf of bread. And when Jesus responds to Satan, he quotes scripture. Remember, Jesus bleeds Bible, right? You caught him and he bleeds scripture.

And he quotes scripture that reads, man shall not live by bread alone. Who is he thinking of himself as? As? A man.

A human being. Remember, Jesus is 100% God, 100% man. He has a divine nature and a human nature together in one person. His divine nature can never be tempted by evil, and yet here we see that his human nature can indeed be tempted by evil.

[20 : 24] I'm going to say something that sounds, might sound really wrong at first. Jesus as God and his divine nature was certainly not able to sin. Now this is something that some others would disagree with, but it does seem that Jesus as man in his human nature was able to sin, was capable.

So his temptation was real. Now how can I say this? Well apart from the way that Matthew and Luke portray this temptation, we're also reminded by the apostle Paul that Jesus was the last Adam.

That's what he calls him in 1 Corinthians 15 and something similar in Romans chapter 5. He's the last Adam. Just as the first Adam was originally pure, good, without sin, yet able to choose sin.

So the second Adam is pure and good and without sin, yet able to choose sin. The difference is the second Adam did not. This second Adam did not face these temptations in God mode.

He didn't dismiss them with ease. He faced these temptations and he wasn't in this ideal garden paradise where everything is set up perfectly and everything is laid up black and white.

[21 : 36] Don't eat from that tree. Couldn't be more clear than that. Jesus faces these temptations in the worst possible circumstances. A starving, weary human being.

His trial is even greater than the first Adam's trial. Here's how Wayne Grudem explains it. He says that Jesus had come to obey God perfectly in our place and to do so as a man.

This meant that he had to obey in his human strength alone. If he had called upon his divine powers to make the temptation easier for himself, then he would not have obeyed God fully as a man.

The temptation was to use his divine power to cheat a bit on the requirements, make obedience somewhat easier. But Jesus, unlike Adam and Eve, refused to eat what appeared to be good and necessary for him, choosing rather to obey the command of his heavenly father.

This is what brings that whole, our whole series in spiritual warfare together into this perfect example of the spiritual warrior, Jesus Christ, engaging in spiritual warfare. Here's how he handled these temptations as a human being.

[22 : 45] Jesus never turned inward into the infinite strength of his divine nature. You know, Satan's like, if you're the son of God, turn inward, find that strength in yourself.

Satan sounds a lot like a pep talk guy right here, right? You know, you've got it in yourself. You can do it. Well, I believe in you, Jesus. You know, you can turn inward and find that. And Jesus didn't.

He refused. And he didn't even turn outward towards any other man. He certainly didn't turn outwards towards Satan and the strength he could offer. Jesus turned neither inward nor did he turn outward. He turned upward.

He turned upward. Matthew tells us that he was led up by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. He continued to rely on the Holy Spirit as he was tempted.

Satan urged him to turn inward into his own ability as the Son of God in every temptation, in every act of spiritual warfare. Satan was seeking to drive a wedge between Jesus and God.

[23 : 47] He wanted to drive a wedge there and Jesus refused to let that happen. Jesus replied that he lived by every word that comes from the mouth of God. He lived by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Jesus refused to turn inward. His first response at every temptation, his very first response was to turn upward to his Father, to rely on his word.

That's how a human being like you and me endures real, intense temptation and emerges triumphant. As a human being, Jesus depended fully and perfectly on God.

He lived by his every word. Here's a helpful way to think of how it is that Jesus could be tempted. Think of it as though you're driving along Highway 99 and you're driving down to Vancouver.

How do you make that whole journey without driving off a cliff into house sound? How do you do it? Anyone have any ideas? Has anyone made that journey all the way to Vancouver and not driven off a cliff into house sound?

[24 : 56] Anyone done that? All right, so if you've done it, how do you do it? Something about a steering wheel? I heard someone say something along those lines. Okay, yeah, right?

You turn the steering wheel. You use the steering wheel of your car. You stay on the road. You know that even if you fail to follow the road, if you forget to turn the steering wheel for some reason, there's still a guardrail, right?

There's still a guardrail that's going to keep you from going over the edge. Jesus' divine nature, it's like a guardrail. It's going to keep him from ever sinning. It's this backstop that's never going to let that happen.

But Jesus never even brushes against the guardrail. Jesus never even needs the guardrail because he has fully resisted the temptation as a man in his human nature.

As a human being, Jesus turns upward to God for strength. Jesus is like the guy who drives down Highway 99 and he's always turning the wheel right. He's always staying in the lane. The guardrail isn't even needed even though it is there.

[26 : 01] Jesus wages spiritual warfare as a man. He overcomes sin and temptation entirely as a human being. The second Adam succeeded where the first Adam had failed. This is your champion.

This is Jesus Christ. He illustrated this most beautifully of all in his final and greatest temptation. The night before Jesus was crucified, Jesus prayed alone in the Garden of Gethsemane.

It was the beginning of a time that he called the power of darkness. There in Gethsemane, Jesus struggled against the greatest temptation of his life. The temptation to avoid the cross.

Temptation to avoid the cross. Back in Matthew chapter 16, his disciple Peter had tried to sway him from this path and here's what Jesus had responded with.

He said, get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man. Jesus sees Satan behind Peter's words.

[27 : 05] Jesus sees Satan as tempting him and now Jesus is facing the same temptation again. The devil is after him again and this is what he told his disciples in Luke chapter 22.

Pray that you may not enter into temptation. Why does he say that? Because they're being tempted and so is he. In this last and greatest temptation, we read that Jesus turned upward to God.

Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done.

You could spend hours and hours thinking and pondering what that means. Jesus was facing this temptation out of his human nature. Jesus was not cheating.

Jesus was not doing it on God mode. Jesus was suffering temptation just like you. And he never broke. He never once gave in not even an inch.

[28 : 11] I want us to stop for a moment. Consider the implications of that for us. Jesus suffered temptation like you. He overcame temptation in times of overwhelming physical and emotional distress.

Jesus did this as a human being. And you know what that means? That means that you can do it too if you turn upward as Jesus did.

That's the whole point of all the armor of God, right? That you are turning upward, relying on the strength of God, relying on his spirit, relying on him and what he has done for you.

We've heard so, so many rationalizations for sin against God and I've used a few of these myself. It's too hard. I had to give in.

So and so makes me act this way. That's just the way my family does it. I need this for my mental health. I'm too lonely.

[29 : 13] I have to have this. I'm not getting the support I need. You can't expect me to do the right thing. I was born this way. God will forgive me.

What if Jesus had used one of those lines? What if Jesus had given in to temptation? What if he'd used one of those rationalizations to make stones into bread or throw himself off the temple or fall down and worship Satan or walk away from the cross?

What would become of your salvation? And if you can turn upward to the same God that Jesus turned to, then you can overcome temptation just like he did.

There is no rationalization and there is no excuse. And you might respond, oh yes, but he's God. I've heard that one. You can't expect me to be like Jesus. He's God.

as if Jesus handled everything on God mode. If you say that, you're speaking like a fool as though Jesus wasn't a man at all. Brothers and sisters, Jesus did not endure temptation on God mode.

[30 : 23] He suffered as a man. He suffered temptation like you. He shed his blood in obedience to his father. And that's why we read in Hebrews chapter 12, consider him, look to him, consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or faint hearted in your struggle against sin.

You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. Why? Because Jesus did. You must turn upward as he did. You capture every feeling, every experience, every thought before you ever voice them to others, before you ever voice your feelings or experiences or thoughts to even yourself.

You first voice them to God. You speak to God about them first just as Jesus did. Pour out your heart before him. Speak to him. Listen to his word first.

That's how Jesus overcame temptation. And so in Hebrews chapter 2, we are encouraged, because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

That's you. He is able to help you because he's been there too. And you know what? That means you have hope. You don't sin because you have to.

[31 : 44] You sin because you want to. And you have hope. You don't have to give in. In Hebrews 4, we read, we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence, confidence because you can be forgiven, confidence because your heart can be washed clean, with confidence, draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

You cannot endure temptation on your own strength, but you can turn upward just like Jesus did. Because as a human being, he turned upward to his father and that's how he overcame. That's how Jesus did spiritual warfare.

Jesus suffered like you have suffered. He suffered weakness like you. He suffered temptation like you. And third, Jesus suffered death like you.

This one perhaps should sit heavily on us this morning. Jesus suffered death like you. Think again back to Gethsemane. Here, Jesus as a man, he came face to face with the hour of his death.

[33 : 00] Jesus had known for his whole life that it was coming. But now, Jesus is looking death in the eye. It is right in front of him.

If ever a man suffered extreme stress, it was Jesus. And honestly, the stress probably would have killed him it was so bad. Except that we read in Luke chapter 22, there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him.

He needed strength to go on. It's quite possible that Jesus physically would not have made it even to the cross. The angel needed to be with him, strengthening him.

And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. An angel has to intervene to keep him going.

His anxiety is so extreme that he begins sweating blood. That's a real medical condition. Blood vessels burst. Blood emerges from your sweat glands.

[34 : 07] Even when the hours of anxiety have passed, Jesus had yet to endure many more hours of continual mocking and utter humiliation. Hours of shame and agony leading up to a crucifixion where he is crucified naked on a cross and full of you have passed by in physical agony.

The butt of all jokes abandoned by everyone that he loved and ridiculed from everyone from the governor of Judea all the way down to the lowly criminal crucified next to him.

As a man, Jesus was hanged on a cross till dead. As a man, he suffered the destruction of death and of burial in a tomb. We know that taste of death, don't we?

We felt it in our own church family this week. I was talking to some friends last night and I was just remarking, I don't know that I've ever been at a church where over the last year and a half we've encountered so many deaths, so many cancer diagnoses, so much hitting us.

Right? I've heard of worse stories but this is the worst I've experienced. We've tasted the destructive power, we've tasted the agony and the grief that it brings, we've tasted the ruin and misery that it leaves behind.

[35 : 30] you know the taste of death and we know that Jesus Christ has been there too. In his own life, Jesus encountered death long before his own.

We read of people that died and that he had then raised to life but not before weeping over their death. There are hints that Jesus' own father died somewhere sometime after he was 12.

he no longer appears in the story. Jesus seems to have taken over the family business as carpenter. He would no doubt have known many people in his hometown who would have passed away.

We know that in Hebrews 2 we see that he himself endured death. We see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

He felt it all the way down to his bones and we are further told since therefore the children, that's you and me, all followers of Jesus Christ, all children of God, since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things.

[36 : 54] That through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Jesus' suffering was real. His death was real. God can never die. In his divine nature he could never die. But Jesus, the man, in his human nature, he surely died.

He didn't fall back into God mode to avoid any of it. the author of Hebrews reflects on that eternity of agony in Gethsemane. And here's what he writes about Jesus in chapter 5.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his reverence.

He knows what it felt like. Evelyn commented to me this week just enduring her own daughter is passing away that she would never wish that on anyone.

[38 : 06] And Jesus took it on himself. He chose it. The father took it on himself to endure the death of his beloved son. the spirit formed Jesus in the womb of Mary so that he could endure that death.

God chose that same thing that we have suffered. even in the extreme anxiety of a man facing his death Jesus turned not inward into his own strength nor outward to his unreliable disciples but upward to his father.

I just want to encourage you if you're carrying that grief the very first thing you do with that grief it's easy to turn inward to be consumed with your own thinking to think and think and think and think over it to get lost in that downward spiral.

Before that spiral even starts talk with the Lord before you talk with yourself. Lament. The Psalms are a wonderful guide to teaching you how to lament how to cry out to the Lord from your heart just like Jesus did.

Before you even talk with others talk with the Lord first. Talk with him. Pour out your heart express all your feelings express all your experiences hold nothing back then go talk to others then go talk to yourself.

[39 : 41] Because Jesus suffered like you have suffered and that's what he did. He suffered weakness like you he suffered temptation like you and he suffered death like you. But you know what there is a great everlasting hope in this suffering.

our hope comes because Jesus' suffering did not happen without purpose. Jesus' suffering did not happen without reason. It is not the end of the story.

We just read that Jesus suffered death so that through death he might destroy the one who has power of death that is the devil. That Jesus suffered death to deliver us from slavery to the fear of death.

You no longer need to fear death. death. We read that Jesus is now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death because of it.

We read that he was heard because of his reverence in Gethsemane. And then we can come across these strange words in Hebrews chapter 5. Although he was a son he learned obedience he learned obedience through what he suffered and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

[41 : 01] And here again we have that mystery that paradox the mystery of the God man as God Jesus was eternally already perfectly obedient to his father's will perfectly righteous perfectly holy and yet here we are told that as a man as a human being Jesus learned obedience he was made perfect perfect and how was he made perfect he learned obedience through what he suffered God intended the suffering of Jesus for his good for Jesus good God intended to make him perfectly good and holy because Jesus never once sinned but it took a lifetime of training a lifetime dependence on God to prepare Jesus for that ultimate trial of Gethsemane all the temptation all the suffering that came before was to perfect him and prepare him for that final hour it's like the difference between hands that are soft and can be torn and beat up but through experience if I play the guitar a little bit every day they build up calluses and then they can endure something that they could not endure before they were always good but now they've been made perfect and that's how Jesus was and that's how he is through his suffering

Jesus was made perfect and the same hope is there for you Jesus was made perfect like you Jesus was made perfect like you now you might hear that and say Dave well I'm not perfect I know Jesus is perfect how can he be made perfect like me well you are not presently perfect I say this from experience okay I know a few of you you aren't presently perfect but if you are a true disciple of Jesus Christ if you believe in him if you confess your sin put your faith in him believe in his life death and resurrection and trust yourself soul and body to him and follow in his footsteps on this same path he walked then you will be made perfect it is utterly certain here's what we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 so it is with the resurrection of the dead what is sown is perishable what is raised is imperishable perfect it is sown in dishonor it is raised in glory it is sown in weakness it is raised in power it is sown in natural body it is raised a spiritual body if there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body thus it is written the first man

Adam became a living being the last Adam became a life giving spirit so it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural and then the spiritual the first man was from the earth a man of dust the second man is from heaven as was the man of dust so also are those who are of dust and as is the man of heaven so also are those who are of heaven just as we have born the image of the man of dust we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven so this Jesus this last Adam this second man from heaven he was not only perfectly obedient perfectly obedient despite being able to sin but when he was raised from the dead he was raised to be imperishable full of glory and power and this Jesus has a new renewed body he has a body empowered by the

Holy Spirit that's what it means to be a spiritual body and this Jesus is no longer able to sin he has been made utterly perfect utterly resistant to sin he is now everything that the first man Adam was made to be Jesus is everything that you were made to be you were made to be like him he is that rose ever blooming he is the full flower of humanity that's why you've sometimes heard me say that Jesus is the most human being who ever lived he isn't less human than you he is more he is everything Jesus is now the perfect holy man and he is what we will one day become as human beings we will never be God like him but we will be men and women made in his image we will bear the image of the man of heaven Jesus did suffer like you have suffered he did suffer weakness and temptation and death like you but now

Jesus has been made perfect like you this is the promise of Christmas this is the seed that was planted in Bethlehem 2000 years ago we have a savior like unlike in all things like unto us yet without sin that seed of hope it was planted in humble circumstances in a manger a lowly child of two nobody parents attended by a bunch of dirty shepherds but the angel who announced the birth of Jesus to those shepherds he must have marveled as he spoke these words this will be a sign for you you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger why a baby why does this matter because it meant that Jesus would mature like you have matured it meant that

[46 : 53] Jesus would suffer like you have suffered it meant that he was pleased as man with men to dwell it meant that mild he lays his glory by born that men no more may die it meant that he was born to raise the sons of earth born to give you second birth it meant that Jesus is human like you and how could the armies of heaven do anything except glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased our father there is so much here