



Questions for Reflection

1. Do you feel, or have you ever felt, abandoned by God?
2. Are you afraid to express your true feelings, emotions, and experiences to God?
3. Find some time today to sit quietly with God and express your emotions, (lament if you need to lament), and then patiently wait for God to respond.

Thursday: Abandonment

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? —

Recently, I've been watching a show on History channel called Alone. Contestants are dropped off into a remote wilderness and compete to see who can survive the longest. Alone. They film their own journey, they find their own food, and build their own shelters, all completely alone. The goal is to outlast everyone.

Contestants' knowledge of plant-based food, fishing, and bushcraft are all put to the test but contestant for contestant, every single one of them, say that the hardest thing about the challenge is having zero contact with anybody else. Think about the silence, the isolation, the loneliness.

How many people have ever felt abandoned? By friends? By family? By God? Abandoned. Completely cut off. Alone.

Jesus' cry from the cross is "*Eli Eli lema sabachthani.*" My God my God why have you forsaken me? I wonder how many of us have cried out with those same words? Maybe you feel abandoned by God.

The truth is, just because God is silent, doesn't mean he is absent. In moments where it feels like God is silent, cry out to him. Be bold. Ask tough questions. Tell God you feel abandoned. The reality is, he can take it.

Israel had a culture of lament, one where it was appropriate and even encouraged to cast your cares upon God. Jesus' own cry from the cross is a quote of the introductory verses to one such Psalm. Psalm 22.

"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help? Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. Our ancestors trusted in you, and you rescued them. They cried out to you and were saved. They trusted in you and were never disgraced." Psalm 22:1-5 (NLT)

When it feels like God is absent; lament, cry out, express your emotions to God.



I don't think I've ever been thirsty before, not like this. Jesus' request shows us his human side. Jesus the man, was thirsty. Jesus, the man, felt pain. Jesus the man, suffered in agony as he died on the cross. While Jesus, the Son of God could have "Saved himself," his love for humanity, his mission on earth, his obedience to the Father, held him on the tree.

It's easy to romanticize the story of Jesus' crucifixion. Even that word has lost its meaning today. Crucifixion was the Roman's way of controlling the empire. It was the ultimate form of capital punishment; painful, shameful, and public. It was not merciful and quick.

I Thirst. I am thirsty. I have a need. I am human.

To give a cup of water is to show the ultimate sign that your life matters. Your life is worth saving. You have value.

Jesus was given vinegar and bile. In the Romans' eyes he meant nothing. He died a criminal's death.

To us, He is everything. His death brings new life, but it's important to remember that new life is only ever possible because of Jesus' death.

Think about this today: Jesus willingly suffered and died by capital punishment because of his love for you. You are considered valuable enough to die for. You, child of God, are loved. And that has the power to change everything.

Questions for Reflection

1. Have you ever been in tremendous physical need?
2. Do you accept that you are worth dying for? Do you accept that others are worth dying for?
3. Seeing others as Jesus sees them, and us, can change our perspective. How might this change your life today? Who do you need to see differently?

Good Friday: Distress

"I am thirsty"