



# 'Do We Know How Much He Went Through'

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**P**resident Brigham Young asked the human family this question: "Can all the wisdom of the world devise means by which we can be redeemed, and return to the presence of our Father and Elder Brother, and dwell with holy angels and celestial beings? No, it is beyond the power and wisdom of the inhabitants of the earth...to prepare or create a sacrifice that will pay this divine debt. But God provided it, and his Son has paid it." (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941, p.59)

In order to answer this weighty question, for the next few minutes, I would like to discuss how much our Savior really went through. We need to comprehend how much our Lord, Jesus Christ, went through spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally from the time of the Last Supper in the upper room until His Holy resurrection.

He took eleven of His apostles to the Garden of Gethsemane. All eleven felt inexpressible depression as they crossed the Kedron Valley and entered into the garden.

The Savior entered alone into the valley of the shadow of death -- the Garden of Gethsemane. Our Lord felt and knew that the awful and uncomprehended hour of His deepest humiliation had finally arrived. His torture of physical pain and the poignancy of mental anguish was unbelievable.

The Lord told eight of the apostles, "...Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder" (Matthew 23:36) and told them, "...pray that ye enter not into temptation." (Matthew 26:41) Then the Lord took Peter, James, and John, the leading Brethren, further and began to be enveloped by deep sorrow.

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me."  
(Matthew 26:38)

He went farther to a stone's cast distance and fell on His face and prayed:

"Abba, Father, all things [are] possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Mark 14:36)

His earnest and impassioned supplication must have been heard by at least one of these three Brethren. He came back and Jesus found them sleeping. Jesus addressed Peter who a short time ago had loudly expressed his readiness to follow the Lord, even to prison and death, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40)

Speaking of His suffering, King Benjamin foresaw this most overwhelming moment:

"And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, *even more than man can suffer*, except it be unto death; for behold blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people." (Mosiah 3:7, emphasis added)

Brother McConkie said, "There is not language known to mortals that can tell what agony and suffering was his while in the garden." (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, Vol. 4, p 126-127.)

In his book, "The life of Christ," Frederic Farrar expressed of the Savior:

"... He had to brace His body, to nerve His soul, to calm His Spirit by prayer and solitude to meet that hour in which all that is evil in the power of evil should wreak its worst upon the Innocent and Holy." (Frederic Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, 575)

He faced that hour alone. No human eyes witnessed, except through the twilight and shadow, the depth of His suffering. It was uncomprehended by the finite mind. Elder James E. Talmage writes:

He struggled and groaned under a burden such as no other being who has lived on earth might even conceive as possible. *It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from ever pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing.* (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 613)

The Savior went back a second time, pleading in agony:

“O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”

(Matthew 26:42)

He came back a second time to His apostles, and found them sleeping, “...for their eyes were heavy.” (Matthew 26:43) Joseph Smith translation, “...neither knew they what to answer him.” (JST Mark 14:40) The Lord charged them to watch again, and the third time He went to His lonely vigil and individual struggle. He implored His Father with the same words of yearning entreaty. He came to the disciples, and the apostles were again sleeping. Matthew describes, “And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh He to His disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.” (Matthew 26:44-45)

Joseph Smith added his thought and translated, “And after they had slept... .” (JST Matthew 26:43) The Savior came back a third time and allowed them to rest for a time and kindly watched them sleep. He must have prayed earnestly again while they were sleeping. “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.” (Luke 22:43) “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke 22:44) Little did these men realize or understand the Lord’s agony and the eternal and lasting impact of His suffering on the human family.

Amulek testifies:

“And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal.”

(Alma 34:14)

These sacred hours of redemptive work for each one of us, to all the human family, even the whole universe, were caused by his sacred and redeeming and atoning blood. His suffering was beyond imagination. His grief was beyond comprehension. His pain was beyond utterance. His struggle was beyond endurance. He felt a horror of great darkness.

His endurance of this exquisite pain caused a medical condition known as hemohydrosis or haematrosis, which is exceedingly rare. This bloody sweat was caused because he was taking on all of the sins of the whole human family, both on this side and on the other side of the veil. He faced a state of loneliness, agony, disappointment, denial, desertion, extreme mental and physical, even emotional stress which caused him fear on fear.

President John Taylor testified:

“As the Son of Man, He endured all that it was possible for flesh and blood to endure; as the Son of God He triumphed over all... .” (The Mediation and the Atonement, Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882, p. 151)

Our earth was chosen as the place where the Savior was born. The Lord Himself came to this special small planet earth to redeem the whole universe. And “worlds without number have I created.” (Moses 1:33) Jesus took all the sins of all the children of our Father in Heaven upon himself. That is why it was beyond our imagination and understanding.

His prayer was in infinite reverence. His strong crying to His Holy Father and those tears which He shed were not rejected. You and I cannot intrude too closely into this scene, it was so sacred that no footstep may penetrate.

As we contemplate this sacred and solemn occasion, maybe like those disciples, our senses are confused and our perceptions are not clear. As we reverently meditate the sacred mission of our holy Savior in our lives, we too, sometimes, are half awake, half oppressed by our daily lives like an irresistible weight of troubled slumber.

Can you see His face upon the ground? Can you hear his voice wailing? Can you see His finger nails scratching the bark of the olive tree, because it is so painful? Can you hear His murmurous and broken agonizing voice? His utterance of atoning cries pierces our souls. Do we feel His deep everlasting atoning love that He has for us? Are we ever grateful for His redeeming blood? Do we express our deep humility of reverence to His redeeming love? Do we show our humble adoration for His mercy? Are our souls penetrated by His eternal grace?

During His ministry, He commanded the winds and the sea. They obeyed Him. In His glorious pre-mortal life, He created the extensive universe, with innumerable stars and galaxies. He created all life—beautiful lilies and all living creatures. Why must He go through this? Can you see His anguish and the great drops of atoning blood which were shed from Him?

Under the dark shadows of olive trees you may not see Him clearly, but can you see the angel helping Him? (See Luke 22:43) Can you see this angel supporting the failing strength of our Lord? This angel, supporting Him to rise from those prayers? For almost four hours through the agonized failings of His heart. His fearful amazement and also horror of darkness brought Him almost down to the grave.

I myself cannot even scarcely talk about His painful suffering and offering without shame and sorrow. So I cannot speak lightly of the price He paid for us. To discuss His crucifixion is so deep and profound. I am confused at His mercy. It is so sacred. It is so meaningful. This is such a solemn matter that it requires a sublime and holy spirit to feel His redemptive act for each one of us.

Eighteen centuries later, the Savior in describing His agony to the Prophet Joseph, remembered the pain as though it had been experienced yesterday:

“...how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for

all, that they might not suffer if they would repent... Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink. Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:15-19).

As the Hymn so beautifully expresses:

His precious blood he freely spilt;  
His life he freely gave,  
A sinless sacrifice for guilt,  
A dying world to save (Hymn No. 195, verse 2)

His atoning blood ransoms us whole. His atoning utterance cleanses our broken hearts and makes them contrite. His blood and His eternal offering at the sacred altar in the garden and on the cross purifies and sanctifies our souls. His pure love now ransoms all.

His compassionate act will purify us under only one condition. That is we must LOVE Him. We must SERVE Him. We must OFFER our absolute commitment to Him. We must follow Him obediently with all of our might, mind, and strength.

His redeeming power affects us when we partake of His sacred emblems, the foundation of the living waters. Let us partake of the sacrament of everlasting love from Him daily. (See 1 Nephi 11:25) Let us sing the “song of redeeming love.” before the Lord everyday (see Alma 26:13)

Almost 83 years before Christ on this American continent, Alma testified to the people of Gideon of the Savior’s mission:

“And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind...he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people...he will take upon him death...loose the bands of death...and...take upon him their infirmities, that *his bowels may be filled with mercy.*” (Alma 7:12, emphasis added)

Imagine, in the center of the universe, our loving and kind Heavenly Father must have wiped His holy tears. Imagine the great gratitude of the Father for His Son’s willingness to give himself for all of the Father’s children. The Father could have sent multitudes of the hosts of heaven to rescue His Son from that awful situation. But our Father must have closed His eyes in those final moments in order that you and I and other sons and daughters could have hope.

Judas betrayed Him. He brought Him to the high priests, soldiers and a great multitude with swords and staves. (Matthew 26:46-56,14-15,21, Mark 14:8, 14:10-11, 14:18, Luke 22:3-6)

The chief priests could not find any fault from the Lord, however the whole council falsely witnessed against Him to put to death. The Lord kept His peace. Finally, the Lord

testified, “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” (Matthew 26:59-68) The verdict on this trial was “...blasphemy and guilty of death.” (Matthew 26:65-66) They spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

“Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?” (Matthew 26:67-68)

“And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? (John 18:22)

Pilate could not find good reason to hold Him and was about to release the Lord. The people cried, “Let Him be crucified.” (Matthew 27:22) “Crucify him.” (Mark 15:13)

Pilate, after extensive questions to our Lord, said, “...I find no fault in this man.” (Luke 23:4) And when Pilate found that He was from Galilee, he sent the Lord to Herod.

There also the chief priests vehemently accused the Lord. In this trial, Herod with his men mocked and arrayed the Lord in a gorgeous robe. He sent the Lord back to Pilate.

Again Pilate could not find sound reasons to keep the Lord, but the people cried more loudly, “Let Him be crucified.” (Matthew 27:22) “Crucify Him.” (Mark 15:13) “His blood be on us, and on our children.” (Matthew 27:25) They stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe and a platted crown of thorns upon His head. Soldiers bowing their knees before Him, mocked Him. (Matthew 27:27-28, Mark 15:20) The soldiers treated Him roughly.

For scourging, the Savior was stripped of his upper clothing. It is presumed his hands were tied to an upright post and the back, buttocks, and legs were flogged. Usually the whipping was performed by two soldiers, or one alternating positions. This scourging was so severe that sometimes the victim came to a stage of collapse or death.

Scourging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution. The usual instrument was a short or long whip composed of several single or braided leatherthongs in which small diamond-shaped pieces of iron, or shattered sheep bone were tied at intervals on both sides.

“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” (Isaiah 50:6)

According to the Jewish law, lashes were limited to 39-40, but we do not know how many our Lord had. But remember He not only endured scourging by leather thongs, but had a crown of thorns on His head. A wooden staff as a scepter was placed in his right hand. The soldiers spat on our Lord and Savior and struck Him on the head with the wooden staff.

The head is covered by many subtle small blood tissues and a nervous system. Wearing that thorny crown with platted thorns would cause blood to stream down from those

tissues all over the face. Not only that, the head would feel as though the brain were caught by a burning fire. It is so unbelievable the pain that would go through the entire head. You just could not bear and think and behave reasonably.

When Roman soldiers tore the robe from the Savior's back, they reopened His scourging wounds.

“...abuses physically and mentally and lack of food, water, and sleep contributed to a more and more weakened state of His strength. Even before the actual crucifixion, His physical condition was so serious and critical.” (JAMA Report, 21 March, 1986)

On this sacred altar, our Heavenly Father offered His beloved Son and His eternal offering. By His holy grace and through His redeeming blood and atoning blood – which is His sacrifice to all of us – we may return to His presence once again.

The Lord said: “To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world.” (John 18:37)

There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified,  
Who died to save us all.  
We may not know, we cannot tell,  
What pains he had to bear,  
But we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there.

There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin.  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of heav'n and let us in.  
Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved!  
And we must love him too,  
And trust in his redeeming blood,  
And try his works to do. (Hymn No. 194)

I humbly bow my head and reverently and meekly search my soul to feel His *redeeming* love ever moment. Can you see His *atoning blood* dripping like rain. His sweat that He shed in the agony of His pain on the cross on Calvary was for me. There are no words in express my love to Him. He has suffered death for you and me. I want to print in my soul His Holy face and words of love and record permanently in my ears His eternal whisperings of the words “redeeming love.” Then, I wish I shall never forget them as long as I live.

These were hours of horror, yet the Lord expressed His infinite love toward those who treated Him in this cruel way.

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. The reference, of course, is to “the soldiers who crucified him. (JST Luke 23:35)

“Others rebelled against Him and chose to walk in darkness at noon day. All these are left in the hands of divine justice and mercy.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, Vol. 4, p. 211)

Still with all He went through, our Savior was nailed to a cross and crucified. The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion, beyond the excruciating pain, comes from the weight of the Savior's body, pulling down on the outstretched arms and shoulders, which fix the intercostal muscles in an inhalation state and hinder passive exhalation. Accordingly, exhalation was diaphragmatic, and breathing was shallow.

“This form of respiration would not suffice and hypercarbia would soon result. The onset of muscle cramps or tetanic contraction, due to fatigue and hypercarbia, would respiration even hinder.” (JAMA Report, 21 Mar. 1986)

He was offered vinegar and myrrh to drink. But He refused. Brother McConkie said, “The effect of the draught was to dull the nerves, to cloud the intellect, to provide an anesthetic against some part, at least, of the lingering agonies of that dreadful death.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, Vol. 4, p. 210)

Oh, will we ever understand why and how He did it for us? Glory to God. His eternal voice comes back to my ears thousands of times until I really understand His sacred at-one-ment—to become one with Him. By His grace and mercy, we receive the honor to become one with the Father through the sacred mediator. His holy redeeming act allowed us to be with the Holy Father once again. His atonement brought to the universe the new birth—it is called holy resurrection.

Brother McConkie explains the mysteries of the atonement and resurrection as follows:

“In some way, incomprehensible to us, *Gethsemane, the cross, and the empty tomb join into one grand and eternal drama, in the course of which Jesus abolishes death, and out of which comes immortality and eternal life for the righteous.*” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, Vol. 4, p. 224, emphasis added)

Heavenly Father loves us so much. He wanted all of us together to be glorified before His presence. Because of His love, Heavenly Father offered His Eternal and Infinite Love, who is His Only Begotten Son. Why? Because Father loves us, His children, so much.

Yes, He, Himself testified:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.” (3 Nephi 9:15)

Joseph Smith testified:

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the apostles and prophets, concerning Jesus Christ that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our

religion are only appendages to it.” (History of the Church, Vol.3, Ch. 3, p. 30)

President Hinckley testifies:

“The greatest salient truth of life is that the Son of God came into our world and atoned for the sins of mankind and opened the gate by which we may go on to eternal life.” (Charlotte North Caroline Regional Conference, Priesthood Leadership Session, February 24, 1996)

I feel Joseph’s feeling as he listened to John Taylor sing “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief,” in Carthage jail:

In prison I saw him next, condemned  
To meet a traitor’s doom at morn.  
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,  
And honored him ‘mid shame and scorn.  
My friendship’s utmost zeal to try,  
He asked if I for him would die.  
The flesh was weak; my blood ran chill,  
But my free spirit cried, “I will!” (Hymn No. 29)

I reverently want to say to the Lord and offer my small token of my love to Him. The Lord knows my flesh is weak but my soul and my spirit cry, “I will and I will.”