



God is infinitely happy: Do you mind?

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Have you considered how happy God must be?

He lives in ecstasy and uninterrupted well-being because he is the fountain of Life itself. Everything that causes unhappiness has no part in God. He does not sin. He has no body to be sick or have mental illness. He is Power itself and so there is no problem his infinite mind has not already solved. He enjoys perfect love in the Trinity of his relational being. God is infinitely happy. This is why the Bible says, “Blessed be God....”

Perhaps you have a niggling concern as you read this. What about the scriptural witness to God’s grief, his wrath against injustice, his compassion for orphans, and ultimately his passion on the cross? Could this Divine Happiness feel my pain? Or is God wearing the ultimate set of noise-cancelling headphones?

I think we can say both that God is infinitely happy and that he feels our pain better than even we can. How is that possible? Try this analogy from psychology that might help.

One day your friend comes to you sobbing with the devastating news that her husband is cheating. Hearing this shocking news is hugely demanding on you as a friend. How will you respond? Can you truly enter her pain? What can you say?

Let’s make this more interesting: What if twenty years ago your spouse cheated, but instead of facing it, you had just bottled the rage and gone on with life? Suddenly, now all your unhealed rage comes whooshing back as you listen to your friend. The question is: Will that whoosh of your own pain help you listen to her and truly be there for her? No, it will not.

At one level perhaps the two of you could find consolation in both being in the same misery. But your ability to truly attend to her in a selfless way, to really enter her pain is hampered by how her story triggers your own pain. This is why training in psychotherapy demands that counsellors first do the hard work of dealing with their own past baggage. A therapist who is triggered listening to someone else’s story cannot be there for that person. Her own pain keeps her from listening.

This analogy helps us understand why an infinitely happy God is such good news to a world in pain. God has no baggage. Nothing triggers him. He is always in the best imaginable space to hear our prayers and enter our pain. He knows and feels our pain. As the hymn says, “He took my sins and my sorrows / He made them his very own” (“My Savior’s Love” by Chas H. Gabriel). But it’s our pain he is feeling, not his own.

That’s why we call it love.

This is supremely true of Jesus on the cross. This is not God solving his own problems—he has none. This is God entering our suffering, taking on our sin and wretchedness. As the same hymn says, “He had no tears for his own griefs / But sweat drops of blood for mine.”

And God’s happiness, his infinite liveliness is so invincible and infectious that even drinking down our cursed venom to the point of death could not finally stifle the power of his joy. In the resurrection, the explosive, infinite happiness of God obliterates death by the sheer dynamism of divine love.

God knows our pain better than we do and yet feels nothing but joy when he thinks of our future with him.