

Think of a small child being abandoned by its parents, or the parents going on a vacation and leaving that child all alone at home. Think of the fear, the disorientation, the sudden loss of a protected and structured environment, the sense of dependency with no one there on whom to depend!

Think of a husband or a wife being abandoned by his or her spouse, and feeling betrayed, in some sense blameworthy, torn apart internally, and unable to invest full trust in another human being for some time.

Think of an employee experiencing serious difficulty at work, being abandoned by co-workers or colleagues, and feeling betrayed, vulnerable, and exposed, without the encouragement of a support network.

Think of an elderly parent being abandoned by his or her children in a nursing home, and feeling unwanted, useless, and unbearably lonely.

Is this what Jesus experienced on the cross? Was He utterly forsaken and abandoned and cut off from the presence of God?

Well, He was certainly forsaken by God in some sense! He cried out: "Why have you forsaken me?"

But was He cut off from the presence of God?

To lose the sense of God's presence is a terrible thing. The greatness of the loss can only be measured against the background of the experience of God's near presence.