

# Why Have You Forsaken Me?

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[ 0 : 00 ] for the summer. And if you have your Bible with you, I'll invite you to open it up to Psalm chapter 22. If you don't have your Bible with you, you can find one in the bottom of the seat in front of you there.

There won't be any words on the screen this morning, so it might be helpful to you to be able to follow along. So Psalm chapter 22, and I'm going to read it for us this morning. We'll jump right into the message, and then after that we'll go straight into the Lord's table afterwards.

So Psalm 22, for the director of music, to the tune of the dough of the morning, a Psalm of David. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer. By night, but I find no rest. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One. You are the one Israel praises.

And you, our ancestors, put their trust. They trusted, and you delivered them. To you, they cried out and were saved. And you, they trusted and were not put to shame.

[ 1 : 23 ] But I am a worm, and not a man. Scorned by everyone. Despised by the people. All who see me, mock me.

They hurl insults, shaking their heads. He trusts in the Lord, they say. Let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.

Yet you brought me out of the womb. You made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast. From birth, I was cast on you. From my mother's womb, you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me. Strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

Roaring lions that tear their prey. Open their mouths wide against me. I'm poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax.

[ 2 : 32 ] It has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You lay me in the dust of death.

Dogs surround me. A pack of villains encircles me. They pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display. People stare and gloat over me.

They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength. Come quickly to help me.

Deliver me from the sword. My precious life from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lions. Save me from the horns of the wild oxen. I will declare your name to my people.

In the assembly, I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him. All you descendants of Jacob, honor him. Revere him, all you descendants of Israel.

[ 3 : 41 ] For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one. He has not hidden his face from him, but has listened to his cry for help.

From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly. Before those who fear you, I will fulfill my vows. The poor will eat and be satisfied.

Those who seek the Lord will praise him. May your hearts live forever. All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord.

And all the families of the nations will bow down before him. For dominion belongs to the Lord. And he rules over the nations. All the rich of the earth will feast and worship.

All who go down to the dust will kneel before him. Those who cannot keep themselves alive.

Posterity will serve him. Future generations will be told about the Lord.

[ 4 : 45 ] They will proclaim his righteousness. Declaring to a people yet unborn. He has done it. So we'll go back to the beginning of the psalm.

And we'll start there. We learn a little bit about the psalm in the superscription. This is a psalm of David. David lived about 3,000 years ago.

About 1,000 years before Jesus was born. And this was a song that he wrote. And then gave to the director of music. Probably to be used for worship in Israel.

It even says the tune of the song. To the tune of the morning. Unfortunately, the tune, the melody, the rhythm.

All of that is lost to us today. What we have though are the lyrics. And they are God's words as well as David's words.

[ 5 : 51 ] And there's enough in the words alone to touch our hearts and our minds to the core. This psalm has two distinct parts to it, which I'm sure you notice. There's verses 1 down to 21, which is the lament part of the psalm.

That's the part where David is pouring out his heart to God in the midst of his troubles. Asking for help. And then there's the thanksgiving and worship part, which is the second part, 22 to 31.

It's like the tone just changes after the deliverance has come. And David can hardly keep it in. He just worships the Lord. And we'll get to that, Lord willing.

But let's start here at the beginning. Where does this song come from? Well, songs usually come from the heart. And this one comes from the deep anguish in the heart of David.

My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me? So far from my cries of anguish.

[ 7 : 04 ] My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer. By night. But I find no rest. Do you feel the anguish and desperation in David's heart as he says these words?

He calls out to God and he basically asks him, Why have you forgotten me? He feels as though God has abandoned him. As if God is just so far away from the trouble that he is in.

And I have been praying. And I have been asking again and again. Day after day. Night after night. But why haven't you answered me? I don't know what is going on in all your lives right now.

But if you are going through a really tough time right now. These words are a comfort. In a world where men don't cry. And it's considered awkward to, even inappropriate, to ugly cry in front of others.

To let what's in here come out in front of people. David puts it on display for the whole nation. I've been here. I've felt like this before.

[ 8 : 19 ] You're not alone. David experienced it. Sleepless nights. Seemingly unanswered prayers. Some people might look at this cry and think it almost inappropriate to speak to God this way.

Too intimate. Too personal. Except that it's right here in the Bible. We might wonder, is he accusing God of abandonment? Or of abandonment? Or of ignoring him?

And it kind of raises the question. Has God forsaken David in this moment? Has God not been answering David's prayers? And it kind of depends on your view of the Psalms.

And how this is both the word of man and the word of God at the same time. We might come to some different conclusions. Some will say that for these words to be true. God really has forsaken David in this moment.

Perhaps because he sinned. God really isn't answering his prayers. Perhaps because he's done something. And he needs to get right with God first.

[ 9 : 28 ] Others will say, no. These words are true in the sense of, they're the thoughts that David really has in his heart. They accurately describe the feelings that he has right now.

And I think that's the right way to read this. There are a lot of things said in the Psalms that seem to convey the feeling truth, the inward thoughts of the individual, rather than the fact truth of the circumstance that that individual is in, or what's going on between him and God.

And this seems to be the conclusion that David comes to in the second part of the Psalm. Just look with me quickly to verse 24. Here at verse 24, David is praising God.

He's worshiping God, celebrating him. And then he starts calling on all the people of Israel to join him in praise. And why? David answers in verse 24.

He says, It's as though David is saying, how I felt earlier before, before the answer to my prayers came, it wasn't the reality.

[ 10 : 49 ] You hadn't hidden your face from me. All along, you were watching me. You were listening to my prayers. You were seeing me, hearing me. There's some powerful lessons here for us.

And I think the first and most obvious one is, don't be afraid, don't hesitate to just pour out your heart to God. To tell him what's going on in your heart, how you're feeling, put words to it. God can handle us being real with him, raw with him. That's lesson number one. Second, we have to know and we have to understand that sometimes God's answer, God's help, seems a long time in coming.

Feels a long time in coming. God doesn't always give us what we ask for when we want it, when we expect it. But third, probably the most powerful lesson of this whole psalm, God hasn't forgotten you.

He hasn't been hiding his face from you. If you belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ, he does not despise or scorn you or the things that you're going through.

[12:09] He doesn't think light of those things. He doesn't turn his face away from you when you're in the moment of trouble as if that's despicable. That's despicable. I don't want to look on that. He sees everything that you're going through and he hears every prayer that you pray.

He's watching and he has a purpose for those things in our lives. For those who belong to God through faith in his son Jesus, this promise holds true and cannot be broken.

Hebrews 13 verse 5, Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. It may feel sometimes like he has, but it's not true.

He is there. He sees. He hears. Moving on from there, David goes on to reflect on how God has been faithful in the past.

We see that in verses 3 to 5 and we see more of that in verses 9 and 10. And I'm just going to skip over this. We don't have time for everything here, but basically he thinks about how God has answered the prayers of his ancestors and they trusted in him and God delivered them.

[13:26] But there's kind of that conflicted tone. You did that for them, but what about me? Why not my prayers? In verses 9 and 10, it's reflecting back on his birth.

God, you're right there with me from the time I was born. You've been with me all along through my life, but it's as though he's asking, where are you now? As I face death, as I come to the end, it seems, of my life.

Some people simply don't understand the deep anguish of soul that can come from much suffering and hardship, from relationship breakdowns, chronic health troubles, from stresses and pressures too numerous to count, from traumatic things that have been witnessed or experienced, or from devastating loss.

Sometimes people will say, well, just look back at how God has been faithful in the past. And usually they mean well. Sometimes that does work.

That gets our eyes off of how we're feeling and onto God, and it changes how we feel, but sometimes it's not always true. Try as we may, we end up here with David wondering why God seems to be treating me differently from others.

[14:55] Why God seems to be treating me differently now compared to how he did earlier in my life. Let's talk about the trouble that David is in for a moment.

David describes it here in verses 6 to 8 and further on as well. He says, But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

All who see me mock me. They hurl insults, shaking their heads. What's causing all this anguish of soul? It's the way that people are treating David.

According to David, they're treating him in a way that makes him feel like he's less than human.

When David says, I'm a worm, I think he simply means, I'm like a despised thing in their eyes.

Subhuman. They don't even treat me with that most basic dignity and respect that we all deserve. And what are they doing to him? They're mocking him.

[16:05] They're insulting him. They're shaking their heads. Who is this? This is the people, according to David. It's all who see me. This probably took place before David became king.

There was a time where King Saul poisoned the minds of everyone in the nation against David. He was spreading slander about David. David couldn't go anywhere without feeling like he was in trouble, like people were spying on him out to get him.

And David gives an example in verse 8 of the kind of things that they're saying about him. He trusts in the Lord. Let the Lord rescue him.

Let the Lord deliver him since the Lord delights in him. So whoever these people are, it's like they see David's trouble, but they're not sympathetic at all to his circumstance.

They aren't going to do anything to help him. Just leave him. If God wants to rescue him, then let God do it. After all, he trusts in God. They mock his faith in the Lord.

[17:14] Not only that, but they mock the Lord's delight in David. Let the Lord deliver him since he delights in him. If I had to guess, I would think that these mockers probably knew about how David had been chosen by God to be the next king of Israel.

Somehow the word leaked out. Jonathan knew of it. Saul, the current king, came to know of it. And the whole people all over started to know about this. He's the favored one.

He's the one in whom God delights. The one God has chosen to be his king. But here, they're mocking him about it. They're making fun of that while David is running around desperately just trying to stay alive.

In verses 12 to 18, David describes, he goes on some more with this just talk and description of what his trouble is.

Verse 12, he says, Many bulls surround me. Strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. I guess the bulls from the region of Bashan were known to be the fattest and largest cattle in all Israel.

[18:27] And David piles on the metaphors here. He uses three different kinds of animals. Strong bulls, roaring lions that tear their prey, open their mouths wide against me.

Verse 13. And then in verse 16, Dogs surround me. All of these referring to the same group of people. And in verse 16, he describes them as men.

He says, A pack of villains encircles me. The reason David, I think, describes them using these three different kinds of animals. I mean, this is a song.

This is poetry. This is full of metaphor. This is how things feel. I mean, think about each one of these animals. They're dangerous. Think about the last time you saw somebody trying to ride a bull on TV or at a rodeo.

I mean, those things are dangerous. And here David's saying, I feel like I'm surrounded. By many of them. Like they're encircling me. Like I'm about to be trampled.

[19:31] Gored. Like lions that are roaring at me. All around me. Ready to tear their prey. Ready to rip me to shreds. Or like dogs.

Hunting in a pack. Closing in on me. Ready to gnaw into me and thirsty for my blood.

And in the midst of this, we get more from David about how he feels. Verse 14. He says, I'm poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax. It is melted within me. Again, we have to remember that this is poetry. I think we know it when we hear some of these words, but maybe we're not sure. David is not telling us that his blood pumping muscle has actually turned to wax. This is metaphor.

[20:32] He's saying, my courage, my confidence, it's melting away. I'm afraid. It's melting away just like, just like wax does before a flame.

Similarly, with his bones being out of joint, being poured out like water, these are all metaphors describing how he feels. Now, some of these aren't as easy to understand.

There's a huge gap here in culture. There's a huge gap in time. And then there's a huge gap in language. And so, some of these things we kind of wonder, what exactly does he mean with these metaphors?

But all of them describe the anguish, the fear, the emptiness, the dryness that David feels.

At the end of verse 15, he says, you lay me in the dust of death. Like God, in your sovereign working of things, you've brought me to the end. This is it.

[21:30] The writing's on the wall. And David goes on. We see a little more of this in verses 17 and 18. David describes just how exposed he feels.

All my bones are on display. People stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. Again, metaphor.

Like a man who has been stripped naked of his clothes, I feel exposed. Everybody's staring at me with contempt everywhere I go. There was one time a guy who helped David out when he was fleeing from Saul.

He was a priest. And a whole lot of priests were killed because of that one act of kindness. So you have to know that David was considered an untouchable.

You don't have anything to do with him or else you'll be in big trouble with Saul here. Now we don't know for sure, but possibly Saul had put out bounties, hired mercenaries to help go after him.

[ 22 : 39 ] That's kind of the sense we maybe get with verse 18 that there's a competition almost here. We want to get his clothes. We want to have the spoils. The clothes were often considered the spoils of killing someone, getting them.

And this is the infamous son of Jesse. Now some people have a difficult time reading this as a real situation of David's life. So they might suggest that well David didn't actually go through any of this. He was just kind of speaking about Jesus by the Spirit and didn't really know what he was talking about. I don't think that's right. I think even though it's difficult maybe to imagine how this could have been David's song, David's cry in the midst of his story or we might not know what time of his life this points to.

I think the key here though is realizing that David is speaking with poetic language. He's speaking with metaphor. He's not actually surrounded by canines. His enemies are human. They're closing in on him like a pack of dogs surround their prey. He's probably not tied up for execution and naked with every bone on display. I mean we have to read this for the kind of writing that it is.

[ 23 : 58 ] It's poetry. He's feeling utterly exposed. People are looking at him with the same kind of content that they would look at a naked criminal that's being led off to execution. In verse 16 David says they pierce my hands and my feet.

And again here some people look at this and they just go straight to the cross. They assume that this can't have any possible reality in the life of David. But again it's probably that we're just so familiar with the fulfillment and how this was done to Jesus that we take that meaning and we push it back into the text.

Now certainly God intended to foreshadow and speak of the way that his son would die. There's no doubt about that. But there's other possibilities here for how this had some meaning in the life of David.

We might look down to verse 20 where David says deliver me from the sword. Perhaps some of these men that were on the prowl for David looking for him chasing him hunting him we don't know maybe David even had some skirmishes with some of them and had been wounded on occasion and just barely escaped with his life.

Or another possibility David describes them like animals with teeth lions eager to tear the prey.

[ 25 : 19 ] Verse 16 dogs surround me a pack of villains encircles me they pierce my hands and my feet pierce with what? With their teeth perhaps. That these men are just eager to bite hand and foot ready to devour him possibly that David was wounded on occasion.

So these are utterly desperate times for David. He feels as though his end is near and God hasn't been answering his prayers. What does David do in the midst of all this?

He just keeps on calling out to God. He keeps on asking for God's deliverance. Verse 19 But you Lord do not be far from me. You are my strength come quickly to help me deliver me from the sword my precious life from the power of the dogs.

This is one of the biggest themes in all the Psalms. Whenever we're in trouble what should we do? Call out to God. Ask for his help.

Now we come to the second part part two. In verse 22 the tone of this whole thing just changes instantly. I will declare your name to my people.

[ 26 : 39 ] In the assembly I will praise you. David is not lamenting anymore. He is in worship mode now. I'm going to tell everybody about my God.

I'm going to praise him before everybody. And then in verse 23 he starts calling on everyone to worship the Lord with him. I love that.

You who fear the Lord praise him. And we're just kind of left wondering at this point what just happened here? what changed so drastically? One minute David's crying out to God for deliverance from imminent death and the next minute he's the worship leader of all Israel.

That's actually the story of David in a nutshell. Something massive changed. And David hints at it in verse 24. Why praise him?

Why honor him? Why revere God? Why am I now eager to declare the name of my God to everyone? For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one.

[ 27 : 46 ] He has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. This is like the pinnacle moment of the psalm. God did deliver David from all his troubles.

He answered David's prayers. His enemies didn't get the best of him after all. They closed in, perhaps even wounded him. They taunted him. They gloated over him. But David cried out to God and God answered. And it was then that David realized this truth. All along God had not forgotten him. God had made that promise right from the beginning when he was anointed.

He would be king. God had not forsaken him. He wasn't hiding his face from him. And David's suffering was itself precious and meaningful and had a purpose.

Now David doesn't tell us about that great deliverance but the historical books of the Bible do. They tell how God rescued David time and time and time again from all his enemies in Israel, later establishing him as king on Israel's throne.

[ 28 : 58 ] And you can read about that in 1 and 2 Samuel. He did indeed become the worship leader of the nation so to speak. In the second part of the psalm here from verses 25 to 31 we hear David just praising and worshiping with all his heart declaring the worthiness of God.

And there's so much in here I think we're going to have to skip over some of it but what we notice is that it's as though David says me praising you right now is not enough.

You're worthy of more. In fact generation after generation they're going to declare your praise, your righteousness. See that in 31.

Future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness declaring to people that haven't even been born what he has done. There's this expansion. It can't just be here and now.

It's got to be down the line into the future. He is worthy of worship forever. Generation to generation. And then we also see this expansion of you know it's not just going to be worship here in Israel.

[ 30 : 12 ] It's got to be bigger than that. One day the whole world is going to praise the Lord. All the ends of the earth, verse 27, will remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nations will bow down before him for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.

This is how worthy God is of worship. He's the king says David. He's ruler of the whole world. He really does deliver those who look to him, those who seek him.

He brings them through to that place where they praise him. They give him glory. Glory. We're going to turn now to the Lord's table.

Probably some of you are wondering well how come you haven't said a word about Jesus yet in this psalm? This is the Jesus psalm. Well I've been leaving it for last. We want to hear this from David's perspective.

But one of the most cherished things about this psalm is really the way that it points, it speaks to the coming son of David down the line a thousand years later.

[ 31 : 29 ] And it's amazing if you've ever looked at this psalm before or seen this I mean you know the ways that it points to Christ. Verse 1 My God, my God why have you forsaken me?

These were the very words that Jesus cried when he was on the cross. That's a whole five or ten minutes right there just thinking about what that meant.

That some of these kinds of emotional realities were present in the very heart of Christ as he suffered in anguish on the cross. Or we could look at verse 8 and the taunts that were being made, the insults that they made against David.

Matthew 27 verses 41 in the same way the chief priests the teachers of the law and the elders mocked Jesus. Verse 43 He trusts in God.

Let God rescue him now if he wants him. For he said I'm the son of God. It's amazing a thousand years later they fulfilled the very same almost the same words they used to insult to mock Jesus the son of David the son of God as he was suffering.

[ 32 : 50 ] And there are many more. David describes how he was encircled. There they were circled around him at the cross taunting him mocking him threatening him.

David talks in verse 15 he says you lay me in the dust of death. For David it was imminent death. For Jesus it went beyond that. It was the ultimate.

He really was. Laid in the dust of death. He died at the hands of his enemies. All my bones are on display.

I think David meant it poetically metaphorically describing his feelings but it was true for Jesus. They stripped him of his clothes and put him up high where everybody could see him.

He hung there naked. He bore the scorn and the gloating of people. They stared at him with contempt. Just like here in the psalm. And they pierced my hands and feet.

[ 33 : 54 ] The one we're probably most familiar with. A thousand years earlier God declared the locations on his body where he would receive the wounds. It's amazing how this psalm foreshadows the ultimate suffering.

The suffering of the son of David. The one who died to rescue us from our guilt and from our sins. David found out when God finally did answer his prayer that he is faithful.

he hadn't forsaken him. He was delivered. For Jesus it went a little bit different. He was delivered too but not from death. Through death.

He died and then was raised back to life from the dead and he will be the king of this great kingdom that David declares and speaks of when he returns.

there will come that moment when every knee will bow every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[ 35 : 14 ] So as we come again to the table this morning I want to encourage you to take a few moments to talk to God in the quietness of your heart to reflect on that suffering that anguish that he went through for you.

confess your sins to him. Marvel at his plan of salvation that over a thousand years before he was already thinking about doing it for you.

After a few minutes of quiet we'll have Dave and Rod come and pass out the elements and if you are here and you are trusting in Jesus as the afflicted one who suffered for you then please partake with us in remembering Christ's death.

We'll wait until everybody has been served and then we'll eat and we'll drink together in unison. orilippo and Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 37 : 18 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 39 : 30 ] Let's eat and drink together again in remembrance of the love of Jesus, which took him to the cross for us.