

Psalm 22

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Date: 14 August 2022

Preacher: Chris Ammen

- [0 : 0 0] The following sermon is from Grace and Peace Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Grace and Peace is a new church that exists for the glory of God and the good of the northeast suburbs of Hamilton Place, Collegedale, and Ottawa.
- You can find help more by visiting gracepeacechurch.org. Our Father, we pray that you might open our eyes to see more of Christ, that we would feast upon him today, that we would be those who are transformed by his power, that we might see our neighbors, our family, our community the way that he sees it, with the love he has, the love that made him die for it.
- Lord, would you give us that grace? We pray in the name of Christ. Amen. Would you take a seat? I'm going to wait to have our kids come up. I want to give a couple of announcements. I want our kids to hear these announcements before we send them off to kids' worship.
- The first thing is you should have received a little insert card in your program today. If you've got a program, we were a little shy on programs today, so we've got these, but you should have received one of these cards.
- We're doing, August is our month to sign up for missional community groups. In the past, we have just assigned you to groups, and that's been great, but we'd like to give you a little bit more agency in that.
- [1 : 3 2] We'd like for you to sign up. So we're showing you who the leaders are, where they're meeting, when they're meeting, what the deal is with their group, and we want you to select into these. We just sent this out on Saturday, and already many of you have already done that, but we want all of you, all of our members, all of our regular attenders, to be a part of these groups.
- Find a group that works for you. You can do the little QR code. You can do it on the website. You can do it from the email. Speaking of emails, if you don't get our weekly email, we'd love for you to get that. You can fill out one of those welcome cards that you may have received.
- You can drop those in the offering baskets at Communion right here, and we can get you connected easily. Second thing is this. Next Sunday, we are going to be hosting what is called in our world as a Presbyterian church, an organization service.
- What that means is, until this point, we're a church plant. We were planted by a bunch of churches, and they have been overseeing us. They have been our spiritual authority and been guiding and shaping and shepherding us as a church.
- Well, we are moving out from their authority, and we are going to be ordaining and installing our own elders from this church that you voted on, and we're doing that next Sunday. It's going to be a special service.
- [2 : 5 1] We're going to have a bunch of people from all over our geographic area, other pastors and elders who are going to come and be a part of that. We are going to ordain and install three elders and two deacons.

We'll officially make me the pastor of our church, which you all voted on. If you missed that and you wanted to get out of that, you missed your boat, you missed that opportunity, I'm sorry. And we will officially declare us to be an independent body in the Presbyterian church.

And so we are going to celebrate that next week. So it'll be a fun service. There'll be a lot of things happening, a lot of different people. But we're going to celebrate that afterwards. We're going to go out to the park over here.

We've got a free lunch. We've got tacos for lunch. We've got ice cream pops. We've got a bounce house for the little ones. We've got a photo booth that's going to be really fun.

We want you to plan to come, to be here, to stay for a while, to celebrate, to fellowship with one another, especially if you are new around here and you feel like you haven't quite found your spot.

[3 : 58] But this is a great opportunity for you to get to know some people and to really build connections. This is going to be a good time for you. So I want you to do that. All right, Josh, you want to come up and let's give a little report from our trip.

So why don't you start us? All right. I've got notes because Benji's worried about me rambling, and so is Diana, my wife. But she's not in here.

I think she's with little kids. Anyway. All right. So we left on Wednesday, August 3rd, to travel to Poland with the crates for Ukraine that many of you helped pack.

We left Wednesday afternoon, arrived in Poland on Thursday morning. After we got there that evening, a bunch of other teams came in with about 60 more crates in addition to the 14 that we brought.

When we got to Poland, only 12 of our crates were there. So we were a little worried, but we worked through with the airline, and they did get delivered, and I'm sure they are in Ukraine now.

[4 : 59] So all of our crates did make it to Ukraine. So Friday is the day that they normally take the crates across the border. We loaded up Friday. They took them via like a little sprinter van.

And then Friday we also were able to work in a church. Saturday we kind of did some sightseeing stuff, and then Sunday we got to worship with the Polish church.

I'll talk a little bit more about that. And then Monday morning, first thing, we got up and left super early, and then we're back Monday afternoon, evening. So the crate, like the process, I didn't really understand even after watching the videos exactly what went on.

We took the crates to Poland. They picked us up at the airport, took them to like a holding warehouse, and then the crates were actually then trucked to Lviv, where they were unpacked, repackaged, and then the church in Lviv sends those out to pastors and various other Ukrainian folks who then distribute them on the front lines and to people in the towns where they're needed the most.

So the video that we sent out this week, there's a warehouse with really gray walls and people pushing a cart. If you saw that, that's actually in Lviv, not Poland, where I thought I was going to see it.

[6 : 19] So anyway. But most of the fighting is going on the east in Ukraine. There's not a ton of fighting in the west.

So really those supplies are most needed in the east, and that's how they're getting all of the supplies to the east. So it was evident from when we first got there that the missionaries to Ukraine were super happy to see us.

It's one thing to send money. It's one thing to send supplies. But to send people who show up across the world and want to help, I mean, I think that that was a big impact. And then also, you know, it was expressed a number of times from Ukrainians in Krakow, Poland, where we were, just how great it was to know that the churches in America were sending and cared about the people of Ukraine.

Not just in the churches, but it allowed the people in the churches to then provide these things to non-church folks in Ukraine and say, hey, this is from God's people in the United States.

So Benji and I had asked for other things to do while we were there to help as much as we could. We did get the opportunity to help the church in Poland. They had an apartment that they had rented and had housed a lot of Ukrainian refugees.

[7 : 41] So we basically took beds and moved around and tried to clean up that apartment and prepared it to receive a bunch of pamphlets that have been written about God's word.

So some John Piper pamphlets, some other things that the Polish church is stockpiling, is going to then give to the Ukrainian church. They were in Ukraine and Russian. And then they're going to send those out throughout Ukraine to people everywhere, just telling them about God's word.

So we helped basically move a bunch of boxes full of these pamphlets on Friday morning. The Polish church on Sunday probably was the highlight because we went in expecting to not have a clue what was being said, you know, because I did go through some pretty intense duolingo in Polish beforehand.

Leah is still better than me at Polish. But when we arrived, there were three bulletins, one in Polish, one in Ukrainian, and then one in English, which was a shock.

And really, one of the guys in the Polish church said, this is a Polish church plant, but it's turned into an international church. So the service was in Polish, Ukrainian, English.

[9 : 01] Um, we met some missionaries from, um, Brazil who were there who only spoke Portuguese. Um, they kind of struggled through the service in English.

Um, there were, there were, the pastor who did the service was a Finnish guy who, his third language was English, and he did the service in English, which was then translated into Polish and Ukrainian.

So just a crazy, crazy service. And, um, I think the coolest thing was the song Majesty.

Um, it's a hymn that I grew up with, but to hear that in all of those languages was just... It was really cool.

Um, all right. So thank you, thank you, thank you. Um, thank you for purchasing supplies. Thank you for loading the supplies. I know Ansley did a ton of work.

[10 : 02] Pat her on the back. Um, so thanks for supporting the trip financially. Thanks for praying for us. I got several text messages from people who, who are praying for us along the way.

Um, and, you know, I don't know if you know this, but Grace and Peace does support, uh, missionaries to Ukraine. And we got to meet with those folks. And, um, I just, being over there and seeing kind of the people and not just the, not just us giving money and it going, but seeing the people, um, was really cool.

And I hope that this can be kind of the next step in our relationship with that Ukrainian church or the Polish church, um, uh, going forward. So thank you again.

I encourage you, if you get the opportunity, go to Poland, go to Ukraine, and then I'll turn it over to Benji. Um, so after our worship service, they had lunch because, you know, the church is a family.

And, uh, and they did lunch almost every Sunday. And I sat down and ended up, um, sitting across the table from this family, uh, Yuri and Ulya, who are, um, Ukrainian.

[11 : 13] They've got four kids. So they're from the far northeast of the country, a city called Kharkiv, which you've probably seen in the news. If you're watching, the Russians are, that, that city is one of the cities that is getting fought over a lot.

And they're bombing that city every day. There was, as of last week, this was some of the official numbers coming out of Ukraine. 2,000 buildings had been bombed in Kharkiv, where this family's from.

Of those 2,000, 880, so, I'm sorry, 1880, almost all the buildings are residential buildings. This is not military targets.

The other buildings are schools, hospitals, uh, other infrastructure things. The sense that the Ukrainians have is that the Russians are not trying to achieve some sort of geopolitical, you know, thing that we talk about sometimes here in America.

These big strategic things, 100-year things. No, they're trying to extinguish a people and a culture and a place. And so for this particular family, so this family, along with their, their church in Kharkiv, which is a sizable church, probably bigger than our church, has evacuated the entire church to a city in the West, about half of those people are spread all over the world.

[12 : 32] What's amazing is that because of the technology now that we're all using, that church is able to gather at multiple times during the week to pray for one another. On Sunday, they live stream.

And this family has now arrived in, in Krakow, Poland, and they're trying to make a life. They've got four kids who are now going to school. There's, there's like 400,000 new children in Krakow alone who are Ukrainian children who are now entering the school system this August, that they're all trying to figure out.

They have, their, their language skills are not great. He was a sommelier at a nice restaurant in Kharkiv. He's like, I don't speak Polish. So he's doing some manual labor.

He works for the church a little bit. She cuts hair. The church is paying for their apartment right now. And, you know, it is, it is amazing to see both the tragedy, the very real tragedy that people are living with, but also the very real way that God's church in particular places is meeting the needs of God's people.

And not just God's people, but multiple people. The pastor of that church in Kharkiv, so he leads worship at his church in the West on Sundays. They load up a van with supplies like that we sent over.

[13 : 46] He loads up a van and he drives it across Ukraine to Kharkiv to people who were homebound, who couldn't leave, to the friends and the neighbors and the family members of people in the church.

Many of them are not Christians. And he goes and he brings them supplies and he distributes them for three or four days and then drives back across the country to do church again. It's amazing to see how God is at work.

And I think for us, you know, it feels like it may not be that big of a thing for us. But for the people who are living this day to day to know that they are not forgotten in this big world, they're not forgotten, is a huge, huge service to them.

So I'm going to lead us just in a time of prayer about that and other things in our world. So would you just join me? Our God, we recognize that like Psalm 33 says, that we're not saved by our great strength.

We don't have the strength to combat all of these forces. We sent 14 crates and that was a massive thing for our church and yet it feels like a drop in the bucket because people are hurting.

[14 : 57] And so we pray, Lord, that you would be our strength. You would be the strength in the midst of our weakness. You would overwhelm us with your presence in the midst of all of our difficulties.

And so we pray for the church in Ukraine, that they would be empowered to serve, that you would give them resources and energy and wisdom and safety, that you would help them.

We know, Lord, that your church flourishes when it is in trouble because they can only rely on you. And we pray that they might flourish in such a way that they might actually be the ones to teach us what it looks like to follow Jesus.

We want to follow them, not the other way around. Lord, we pray for the missionaries and the pastors who are sacrificing so much. Pray for the church in Poland as they receive these refugees and care for them.

Lord, we pray for the weak who are in our own church, those who are sick and recovering from surgeries, from people who are in the hospital, people who are dealing with all sorts of things.

[16 : 05] We pray that you would strengthen them, their physical health. Lord, we join with our city as our city has struggled. We've had a lot of shootings recently in our city.

Lord, we pray against the violence that we see. We don't know why this is happening, but Lord, we pray that you would reduce the conflict and the violence.

We pray that you would give law enforcement great wisdom and strength to use their power with justice and wisdom and effectiveness in our city.

And Lord, that you would give us a peaceful city that people are allowed to flourish in. Lord, we pray for our teachers and educators and our administrators and our students as they are heading back to school in some already starting, some starting over the next week or two.

Lord, we pray that you would empower them, that this would be a time of real growth and maturity and maturing for them. Lord, be with them, strengthen them, especially our teachers.

[17 : 12] Give them energy and creativity and love for their students to be your means of seeing these students grow. So Lord, we bless them and we pray that you'd be with them.

Lord, be our strength and weakness, we ask in the name of Christ. Amen. Amen. All right. I'm going to just dismiss our kids to the back and not gather them up.

So kids, you can be dismissed to kids' worship. Meet Miss Hannah in the back. And you can have as many questions as you want for Mr. Josh after the service.

All right. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Psalm 22. This will be our last week in the Psalms.

You know, I was thinking this morning as I was driving in here, I was thinking, I wonder what these people are going to be carrying with them as they come in today.

[18 : 14] Like, I wonder what conflict is going on inside their hearts. I wonder what family stresses they're dealing with.

I wonder, I wonder what job and money and financial stresses that they're dealing with. I'm just curious. I'm curious what Jesus is going to do this morning.

How he's going to meet you in those places of struggle. You know, I did an informal poll this summer. Don't ask me how I do these things.

Hundreds of people responded. And I'm serious. I said, have you experienced disappointment this summer? It's a simple question, yes or no. 70% said yes.

The other 30% lied. I just think, how human is it to struggle?

[19 : 12] How human is it to struggle? And yet, we come here every Sunday to hear God's word, to be refreshed and renewed in his word, to be reminded of who we are and what Jesus has done for us.

That's what we do when we come to God's word. We come as people pleading that Jesus would revive us. And so, as we come to Psalm 22, let's come with the eyes of faith, asking God to once again give us the gift of belief in Jesus Christ.

Let me pray for us. our Father, as we turn and open to your scriptures this morning, we find in them the only source of life that we have. You have said that you're the bread of life.

You've said that you're the living water, the one whose well does not run dry, the one who promises to give us all things because we are your children. We are your heirs.

We are saints, as Benji said earlier. Would you show us again this week in your Bible why we are called that, why we are loved?

[20 : 17] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Psalm 22, starting in verse 1, this is a long one so y'all buckle up. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer. And by night, but I find no rest.

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel, and you our fathers trusted. They trusted, and you delivered them to you.

To you they cried and were rescued, and you they trusted and were not put to shame. But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

All who see me mock me. They make mouths at me. They wag their heads. He trusts in the Lord. Let him deliver him. Let him rescue him, for he delights in him.

[21 : 16] Yet you are he who took me from the womb. You made me trust at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth.

And from my mother's womb you have been my God. Be not far from me, for trouble is near and there is none to help. Many bulls encompass me. Strong bulls of Bashan surround me.

They open wide their mouths at me. Like ravening and roaring lion, I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax that is melted within my breast.

My strength is dried up like a pot shirt. My tongue sticks to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass me. A company of evildoers encircles me. They have pierced my hands and feet.

I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them. And for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O Lord, do not be far off.

[22 : 14] O you, my help, come quickly to my aid. Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. Save me from the mouth of the lion. You have rescued me from the horn of the wild oxen.

I will tell of your name to my brothers. In the midst of the congregation I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him. All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him and stand in awe of him.

All you offspring of Israel, for he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted. He has not hidden his face from him, but he has heard when he cried to him.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation. My vows I will perform before those who fear him. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied. Those who seek him will praise the Lord.

May your hearts live forever. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nation shall worship before you. for kingship belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.

[23 : 14] All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship. Before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive.

Posterity shall serve him. Shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation. They shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn that he has done it.

You know, one of the most accomplished scholars in the Psalms says that this is one of the hardest Psalms to understand. This is one of the most difficult passages in all of the Old Testament to understand.

And it's for this reason. Of any of the people in the Old Testament, we know David the best. Maybe Moses is second, maybe Abraham, but we know so much about David's life.

And yet, there is not a single historical moment that you can point to in David's life that corresponds with Psalm 22. Right? What is happening in Psalm 22?

[24 : 22] Verses 6 and 8. He is out in public. People are jeering him. Verse 17, they are gloating and scorning him. Verse 15, he is dying of thirst. Verse 16, he is pierced by a sword.

Verse 17, he is emaciated. So much so that you can see his bones. You can count his bones. What is happening to David? His garments are being divided up amongst people.

This is a public execution. When was David ever up for public execution? The answer is never. He never was.

Which makes Psalm 22 unbelievably difficult to interpret. The Psalms also note that this is completely out of character for David. Right? Everywhere else in the Bible, when David is confronted with an enemy, when he's confronted with adversity, David fights back.

Right? David and Goliath. David calls on God for help, sometimes, and God comes and helps him. That's David's MO. That's what he does.

[25 : 27] But here, he just kind of appears to be taken in and not fighting back. The third mystery in this Psalm is the absence of God's reply.

Almost everywhere in the Psalms, when David cries for help, there's then some implication that God has heard his cry and has answered back in some physical or verbal or showing himself to David in some way.

But there is no indication here, although David praises God, that there is any reply from God for his pain. And still, in verse 22, David speaks with confidence.

He says, I will be delivered. And later in verse 27, that his deliverance will not only be for him, but it will be a blessing to all nations, to all generations will receive this.

Why? David. He says he's going to be executed and that his life will be a blessing to all nations. And then he goes further.

[26 : 32] He has the audacity even to go down in verse 30 and 31 and say that this is not just going to happen for this generation, but all generations. How could this possibly be true?

It's because Psalm 22 didn't ever happen to David. It never happened to him. But it happened to somebody.

When we get to Acts chapter 2, Peter gives us the answer. Peter says that David was a prophet of old who was given divine insight into what was to come, into what was to unfold in history.

And David was then to experience enormous suffering in his own life, but to point ultimately to the one who would suffer for us, the coming Messiah.

Psalms 22 is about Jesus. And so this morning we're going to look at a couple of things because it's so important. On the cross, Jesus declared these words.

[27 : 42] This very first verse in Psalm 22, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Right? And so in that culture what you would do is you would quote the first line of a scripture.

And basically what you were saying when you quoted the first line of it was you were saying this whole thing is true now. Like this whole thing is true about me. So Jesus is saying this whole psalm is actually me.

This whole thing that you've read and understood is actually about my life. And so he's saying you won't understand Psalm 22 without me. And so let's learn more about him.

We're going to learn here about the depth of Jesus' suffering. How deeply he suffered for his people. We're also going to learn about the depth of Jesus' faithfulness for his people.

And finally we're going to look at what this actually means for our life. First, the depth of his suffering. One of the keys to understanding this is that first line. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[28 : 46] If we look at Jesus' life, this is an absolute departure from the way things have been. Right? Jesus has consistently said throughout his life, me, I, and the Father, we are one. We have been one throughout all eternity and now all of a sudden at Jesus' crucifixion he says, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why have you left me? C.S. Lewis says in his reflections on the Psalms that the most excruciating, painful part of Jesus' crucifixion was not necessarily physical, it was not necessarily even emotional, but it was that there was silence.

He was tortured in a way that few of us could imagine. He called out for his Father and his Father did not call back. Jesus faced abandonment on the cross.

He says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Did you notice that as you read the crucifixion account, Jesus doesn't say, my back, my back, when he gets whipped.

He doesn't say, my head, my head, when his skull gets crushed. He doesn't say, my hands, my hands, when they get pierced. But he says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[30 : 10] Some of us in here, we've lost money. Some of us have lost health, either long term or temporarily. We've all experienced loss to some degree.

We've all experienced disappointment. That's why 30% of people lied to my survey. But there is a loss that Jesus took that none of us have ever come close to.

His Father, whom he created the world with, was all of a sudden separated from him on the cross. They were united.

Their relationship was untainted, unspoiled, unfragmented. And all of a sudden, it was torn apart. The pain that Jesus endured for you and for me was unbelievable.

Second, let's look at the depth of his faithfulness. In our most desperate moments, sometimes we say things that we hope nobody will remember. Right?

[31 : 12] Sometimes some choice language. Jesus' choice language happens to be one of covenant faithfulness. my God, my God.

Loving his Father even as his Father turned from him, even as he felt abandoned. Tim Keller notes this. He says that when Jesus says, my God, my God, it highlights the depth of both his love and his faithfulness.

In one breath, he is saying, my God. In another breath, he is saying, why have you forsaken me? It shows the depth of his suffering, his faithfulness, his suffering right there together.

Simultaneously, his holiness and his compassion together in one person. When you put these two things together, you begin to get a picture of God. God is not distant.

He's not disconnected from your reality. He is experiencing and has experienced far worse than you have. He is far from disinterested in you. in your pain.

[32 : 20] He actually has experienced something very similar. And that is what makes him what our hearts long for the most. Lewis goes on in his writings about the psalm to say that the biggest theme, the theme that our hearts long for the most is that of the rescuer.

All of us long for somebody to rescue us. And what a rescuer does is he goes from a place of safety where he is, he's fine. He's good. And he gives something of himself to save you, to rescue you.

If somebody puts himself at great risk, that is the ultimate love. That is what Jesus does for us. That is what the cross of Jesus Christ is.

He was safe and put himself in a place of danger for you. The Father abandoned Jesus so that Jesus would never have to abandon you.

That verse, that passage that we read earlier in Isaiah, that is the picture where Jesus comes to destroy our enemies so that he can be near to his people.

[33 : 26] He'll destroy the enemies that we have, that we experience every day. And the cross in this way reorients our lives. Right? You don't have to get up in the morning and think, what can I do today to make Jesus happy?

What can I do today to please him? What can I do to be accepted by the Father? But the gospel reorients it. It says, no, actually Jesus is your rescuer. He came from the place of safety to rescue you so that the truth of the gospel is to be accepted by the Father.

You have to admit not that you are becoming like Jesus, but that you never will be like him. You'll actually never be like Jesus. You will never suffer the death that he suffered.

You will never be separated from your Father like he was. And when this begins to seep down into your heart and your life, that is what begins to change you and mold you into the person of God.

It softens you. We carry around this hard exterior, at least I do, of, hold the world at bay. And it's only the gospel that says, I can be broken.

[34 : 37] I don't have to have it all together. I don't have to be this thing that I imagine myself to be. I can simply be God's child.

And he has said that he loves me just like that, that he rescued me. Son, do not forget how I rescued you, how I came from a place of safety to lead you to victory.

That brings us to our final point. What does this mean for you? How do you feel when you're around other people? I'm just going to let you into my emotional life here for a minute.

We're just going to have a little private counseling session for Chris. This is like, if we're on a dance floor, this is like the corner of the dance floor that I hang out in, okay, emotionally. And maybe you do too.

Maybe I'll have more people over here in my corner of the dance floor here in a moment. But I feel fear all the time. There is always something that makes me feel afraid.

[35 : 41] Maybe it's something I've said or something I've done that just kind of keeps replaying over and over. Maybe it's some situation that I find myself in. Maybe it's some set of circumstances that I don't know how I'm going to get out of or how I'm going to overcome that or how I'm going to fix a mistake that I made.

And what I do when I get back into those corners of, you know, am I going to prove myself? Is I feel shame. I feel an immense amount of shame.

And my shame takes me one of two ways. But it always takes me in one direction to control. I want to control whatever it is that's causing me fear. And I want to control it in one of two ways.

I either want to say, I am nothing. I don't deserve anything. I am so small and insignificant. Woe is me.

And the other side of me wants to show you how competent I am and how amazing I am and how great I am at life. I want to be so good that you just don't even see any of my faults.

[36 : 46] And I go back and forth between those all day long. All day long, this is what Chris does. Fear, I'm either going to become small or I'm going to show you how awesome I am. And it's only the gospel that could ever break that paradigm for me.

Because in Jesus Christ, who we have is somebody who is both holy and loving. Right? If Jesus is only loving but he's not holy, that's not him.

If he's only holy, if he's only loving or if he's only one of those, he's got to be both of them together. Because what happens here when Jesus goes and dies for me, takes the punishment that I deserve, is that it shows me two things.

That I'm loved more than I think. I'm a child of God. I don't have to experience that toxic shame that spirals me out of control.

but I also don't have to be shameless. I don't get that privilege because God is holy. He's the one who's in charge.

[37 : 58] And it's only that that helps me deal with my fear when I see that it is God who has called me both amazing, his son, his dearly loved child. I've died for you.

But also, you can't die for yourself. You can't suffer what I've suffered. I am your God. The second thing that it shows us is that it not only transforms us generally, but also particularly in the case of our suffering.

Right? Have you ever thought about this? Where in your life have you experienced abandonment? Maybe you weren't like left on a bus somewhere. Some of you might.

I know my wife was left to church one time. So maybe you actually had that happen. But all of us have experienced some level of abandonment in our life.

Like things have not gone the way that we've thought. People have let us down. People have neglected us. Not given us all the love that they should have given us.

[39 : 05] Not given us the care that we should have. We have felt that pain of being abandoned. It's a human experience that we have. Some of us have even experienced the pain of losing somebody very, very close to us.

Lewis puts it this way. He has a lament that he wrote after his wife's death. He says this, meanwhile, where is God? He's talking about God abandoning him.

Feeling of that. It's one of the most disquieting symptoms of all my wife's death. When you are happy, so happy that you have no sense of needing him, so happy that you're tempted to feel his claims upon you are an interruption, if you remember yourself and turn to him with gratitude and praise, you will be, or so it feels, welcomed with open arms when things are going well.

but if you go to him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, what do you find? A door slammed in your face, a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside.

After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence becomes. Why is he so present, a commander in our times of prosperity and joy, and so very absent in our time of trouble?

[40 : 32] I read that this past week and thought, golly, I feel that. Golly, I feel that sense of abandonment when things go wrong.

You see, when we suffer, we have two, we often have times we have questions. And we can survive suffering without having all of our questions answered. You know, sometimes when we suffer, we experience physical and emotional pain.

And we can survive suffering with some emotional and physical pain for a while. But there is a type of suffering that is unbearable for you and me.

And that is when we suffer alone. When we suffer without companionship. When we feel abandoned. And here is where Christianity is different than every other world religion.

It takes the worst of human experiences, suffering and abandonment, and it says our central leader, our central figure experienced just that.

[41 : 41] He didn't rise above that to become transcendent over it. he entered right into it. The most painful thing.

So that a passage like Psalm 22, when you read it and you hear about tongues sticking to the inside of your mouth and this pain and emaciatedness and you say that's me.

Jesus also looks at you and says that's me too. I felt all of those things. And we get to remember that we have a God who is not distant but one who is drawn near to us who has compassion on us in our suffering.

Look to Jesus. He is our rescuer. His holiness and his love bound up in one person. Look at how David hears Jesus in this Psalm.

He says in verse three, you are holy. In verse six, our fathers trusted you. five, you did not put our fathers to shame.

[42 : 45] Nineteen, Lord, do not be far off. Come to my aid. Save me. You've rescued me. Verse 22, I will tell of your name. I will praise you. Verse 24, perhaps the most haunting of all of the Psalm.

He has not hidden his face. He has heard. On the cross, Jesus had the father's face turned from him.

so that the father can turn his face towards you. You are not alone. In your abandonment and your suffering, God has chosen to turn his face directly towards you.

Jesus cried out, my God, my God, and got no response. So that we can cry out, my God, my God, and hear the Lord say back to us, my child whom I love dearly.

Jesus abandoned the love of a lifetime so that he could love us and be our rescuer. Let me pray for us. Father, what a beautiful picture Psalm 22 is of you.

[43 : 56] It is heartbreaking, tragic in so many ways, and yet it is gospel for us. It is gospel for those of us who experience being human, who experience the pain, the abandonment of everyday life, and yet we look and we see a God who is like us in that way, who experienced all of these things and yet was without sin, went to the cross and died for us, that he can in fact be the bread of life for his children.

God, would you remind us of this good news, even as we partake of the Lord's Supper here in just a moment, that you have drawn near to us, that you have come close to your people to be their comforter and their God forever.

It's in your name that we pray, amen.