

# Psalm 22

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Preacher: Rev RJ Campbell

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Seeking the Lord's blessing, let us now turn to the portion of scripture that we read in the Old Testament in the book of Psalms and Psalm 22. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou thus so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring?
- O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
- Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee and were delivered. They trusted in thee and were not confounded.
- Psalm 22 is one of those passages, as Peter reminds us, in which the prophets, by the Spirit of Christ within them, testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.
- We believe that the penman of this psalm was David, but the author is Christ. Because it was by the Spirit of Christ that the psalmist, as writer, wrote these words.
- [ 1 : 3 3 ] He is led to pen those words that were to find fulfilment in Christ himself a thousand years later, as he prayed those words.
- Psalm 22 is a description of an execution and that of a crucifixion. And crucifixion was not practised in the time of the psalmist or for many centuries afterwards.
- So this must be a prophetic picture of the sufferings of Jesus as he hung on the cross, paying the penalty for our sins.
- Therefore, this psalm is prophetic and it is also messianic. The psalm leads us into the feelings and the emotions that belonged to Jesus as he hung on the cross.
- All four gospels tie the psalm to the experiences of Jesus on the cross. And there are several verses in the psalm that the gospel writers pick up on.
- [ 2 : 5 1 ] For instance, Matthew makes reference to verse 7. And in Matthew chapter 27, verse 39 to 43, we read, And they that passed by reviled him, walking their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself.
- If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests, mocking him with the scribes and elders, that he saved others, himself he cannot save.
- If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him.
- For he said, I am the Son of God. And of course, verse 18 of the psalm, They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture.
- And again, Matthew records for us in chapter 27, And they crucified him and parted his garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which were spoken by the prophet.
- [ 4 : 2 0 ] They parted my garments among them and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And Matthew and Mark highlights for us the first verse of the psalm.
- While John highlights for us the last verse of the psalm. The first verse was quoted by Jesus on the cross.

It is the fourth of the saints on the cross. When he cried out, the people did not clearly hear him. They did not understand.

When Christ cried out, Eloi, Eloi, they thought that he was calling for Elijah. And this was due to the instinctiveness of his speech.

Because you must remember that his tongue had swollen in his mouth. And according to this psalm, it was cleaving to his jaw. But it is worth for us to note that of all the saints that is recorded for us regarding the cross, that this was the only cry of sorrow that Jesus uttered from the cross.

[ 5 : 38 ] Now, as I said, John highlights for us that he also quotes at least the end part of the last verse of this psalm, where we read that he has done this.

In the Greek version of the psalm, the subterranean, it is a word tetelestai, which means it is finished. He has finished it.

And in the sixth saying of the cross, Jesus said, it is finished. So that it is certain that the whole of the psalm must have been in the mind of Jesus as he hung on the cross.

Now, it is worth for us to note that the psalm runs into two sections. The first section is from verse 1 to 21, which describes the sufferings of Jesus and his prayers as he hung on the cross.

And then from verse 22 to the end, there is, as it were, a note of victory, a note of triumph. I will declare thy name unto my brethren.

[ 6 : 57 ] In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Well, the first verse then of the psalm, and that quoted by Jesus on the cross, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, is the most moving and distressing verse in the whole psalm.

The suffering one crying out to God, asking why he has been forsaken, and asserting that God is silent.

And will you remember that this was the darling of heaven, that this was his own son, crying out to his father, asking why he has been forsaken, and asserting that God is silent.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me? And from the words of my roaring, O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.

What kind of cry was this that Jesus made? Indeed, it is the most appalling sound that ever pierced the atmosphere of this earth.

[ 8 : 36 ] In the entire Bible, there is no other sentence so difficult to explain than these words that came from the lips of our Saviour, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Charles Spurgeon stated that he did not think that the records of time, or even of eternity, contain a sentence fuller of anguish.

Here you may look, he says, as unto a vast abyss, and though you strain your eyes, and gaze till sight fails you, yet you perceive no bottom, it is measureless, unfathomable, inconceivable.

And he ends by saying, we will adore where we cannot comprehend. Well, this was the day that the sun refused to shine and shrouded the cross in thick darkness.

From 12 noon to around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, there was darkness around Golgotha. And this darkness at Golgotha was a literal darkness with a symbolic meaning.

[ 9 : 57 ] And what is the symbolic meaning of this darkness? It was the inflexible justice of God.

It was not an eclipse, because at Passover time there is a full moon, and there cannot be an eclipse with a full moon.

This darkness was supernatural. This was divine intervention into the ordinary course of nature.

This darkness must be attributed to the sovereign intervention of God. Probably the darkness indicated the presence of God in judgment.

The late Professor Roderick Finlayson helps us to appreciate this aspect when he says, it was very significant that when the extreme sacrifice was about to be offered, God stretched out his hand and threw a curtain over the face of the sun.

[ 11 : 16 ] It was obviously the direct intervention of God, not as an expression of sorrow, not a garment of mourning cast over the world.

Rather does it express the imposing of judgment upon the lonely outcast sufferer. That darkness was to him the true expression of the curse.

The three hours of external darkness mirrored an increasing period of darkness that was in the Saviour's soul.

This darkness is focused upon the middle cross on which the light of the world is now one shrouded in darkness.

A darkness that must have puzzled those in the land left, those who were around the cross, those who were in the land, they must have been puzzled by this darkness, possibly terrified by this darkness.

[ 12 : 35 ] Possibly there was a silence around Golgotha during these three hours of darkness. the previous evening, when predicting the flight of his disciples, Jesus had said to them, Behold, the hour is coming.

Indeed, it has come when you will be scattered each to his own home and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.

But here comes a point. And he was now aware of a sense of abandonment, not merely from his disciples, but he was aware of a sense of abandonment by his Father.

Jesus has entered the presence of the judge of all the earth who cannot look upon sin with pleasure, even when that sin is carried by his sinless Son.

Jesus, as a sin-bearer, is now made sin. And so he enters the place of judgment. And he discovers that it was a terrible location to be found in.

[ 14 : 00 ] He has discovered that it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

That it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And this forsakenness was not imagined.

It was real. It was something he had never known. This was all new to Jesus. He saw the coming storm.

He saw the cup. He saw the hour of darkness. But inside that hour of darkness, inside that cup, was this new thing, abandonment by his Father.

And you ask, how could this happen? How could one person of the Trinity turn us back on another member of the Trinity?

[ 15 : 03 ] Well, we must be mindful of the unique relationship in which he stood to the Father.

Jesus is related to God on two levels. One level was his eternal relationship with the Father and with the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.

In the Trinity. And in that relationship, he exists eternally in the full fellowship and in the interaction of the Trinity.

the Trinity. But he stands related to God on another level. He has become the servant son.

He has become the mediator. And he could say, my father is greater than I. And as the servant son, he has united to his person human nature.

[ 16 : 11 ] The nature that belonged to those that he came to save. He is one person, but he's got two natures.

He's got a divine nature and he has a human nature. On the first level, he exists eternally in the full fellowship and interaction of the Trinity.

If that fellowship is disrupted, it means that there is a rupture in the Godhead and that cannot be. The Father loved the Son throughout each stage of his earthly life and on the cross.

There was no estrangement as far as their involvement in the Trinity is concerned. However, on the second level, it was possible for him to lose awareness of his Father's presence because his human nature was not divine.

One commentator says, God the Father deserted his Son's human nature and even this in a limited though a real and agonising sense.

[ 17 : 35 ] But we must remember at the same time that this human nature belonged to a divine person. One person, two natures. forsaking was not merely in the sense that Jesus only felt forsaken in a way like believers may at times feel forsaken although they are not because he has promised, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

remember how in the Old Testament that is illustrated for us in the book of Isaiah when the church said that you had been forsaken and the Lord said, how can I forsake you?

Does a mother forsake her suckling child? Though they may forsake, yet I will not forsake you. Upon the palms of my hand you are engraved.

your walls are continually before me. You may feel forsaken but you're not. You cannot be forsaken. I have promised I will never leave you nor forsake you.

But at times the church people may feel that they are forsaken although they are not. But in this case this was more than just a feeling.

[ 19 : 01 ] This was a real forsaking in that the father withdrew from his son all sense of divine consolation and love of fellowship and joy.

It was a real forsaking. But we must remember it was not a separation. At the same moment as he was being forsaken God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

in this forsakenness it is the father in covenant with him that forsakes him. The father in covenant with him that forsakes him.

It is the servant's son that is forsaken. The father dealing with his son as the servant and the surety of his people.

The people that he came to save. Perhaps we should pause here for a moment and see how great the love of God for us was and how great was the price that Jesus was willing to pay to save us from our deserved damnation.

[ 20 : 34 ] We were the ones who deserved to be forsaken. And yet here we find that God in his love made this provision for us in his son and that the son was willing to pay the price of being abandoned by his father of being judged by his father for the damnation that we deserved.

He received our damnation. Remember that what was happening on the cross was the damnation that I deserved and that you deserved if you're trusting in Christ tonight was imputed to him.

it was damnation and it was nothing short of damnation. It was the hell of his people that Jesus suffered on the cross.

He went out into outer darkness. He satisfied the divine justice and no one will ever be able to satisfy divine justice.

That's why hell is eternal. If there was a moment, if there was a time for those in hell that they would satisfy divine justice, hell would go.

[ 22 : 07 ] But there isn't. They shall burn in hell in hell throughout eternity and never bring satisfaction to the justice of God.

But here is one. Here is the servant son. Here is the God man hanging on the cross and he receives the damnation of his people and he brings satisfaction to the justice of God.

Why? So that I and you can escape. So that I and you can escape. No wonder the writer to the Hebrews cries out, how shall we escape if we neglect this great salvation?

salvation? In other words, he is saying to us, there is no way of escape if we neglect this great salvation brought about by Christ on the cross of Golgotha.

Well, what then does forsakenness mean in the experience of the Son? It is God the Father in covenant dealing with God the Son as servant.

[ 23 : 33 ] God in covenant as judge dealing with the Son as servant, dealing with him on account of the sins of his people. We must remember that suffering and death was not made inevitable by Jesus taking our nature unto himself.

That did not mean that inevitably he would suffer and die. What made death and suffering inevitable was not by taking our nature but by God in our nature taking our sin.

Therefore he had to meet with suffering and death. death. How did the person of Christ endure this divine abandonment?

Well the answer seems to be by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit prepared a body for him. The Holy Spirit enabled him to grow as a human.

The Holy Spirit descended on him at his baptism to empower him for his public ministry enabled him to perform miracles and upheld him in his sufferings and death.

[ 24 : 56 ] The Spirit who had never left him for a moment who dwelt with him in all his earthly life who perfected him in his act of obedience now sustained him in his passive obedience.

Even unique relationship but a covenant relationship in which the son is a servant to the father. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Why art thou so far from helping me? And from the words of my roaring, O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.

one commentator says this, that here is the possibility that the saying could be translated like this, why have you left me for so long?

And he goes on to write, why have you left me so long to face the deep and furious wrath of God? Even for an instance would cause the most profound fear.

[ 26 : 09 ] But Jesus' suffering was not over in a minute, or two, or ten. Oh, when would it end?

Could there be any more weight of sin? Could there be get more wrath of God? And hour after hour it went on. The dark weight of sin and the deep wrath of God poured over Jesus in wave after wave.

And Jesus at last cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why must this suffering go on for so long?

Oh God, my God, will you ever bring it to an end? And that reference to the wrath of God gives us the full explanation of the saviour's cry.

On the cross he paid the penalty for sin by enduring the wrath of God as the substitute for sinners. Was he there as your substitute?

[ 27 : 19 ] Did he suffer your damnation? Did he pay the penalty for your sin? He offered himself willingly as a substitute and God dealt with him as if he had himself committed those sins.

the Bible goes very bold and he says he was made sin for us. He became the sacrifice for sin.

He became the ultimate sacrifice for sin. He became the Lamb of God. He came as servant to save us from death.

and he meant death in all aspects that comes into our experience as a result of sin. He meant with physical death, the separation of body and soul.

He meant with spiritual death, which is the place where there's no awareness of blessing or favour or love or grace or the goodness of God.

[ 28 : 28 ] He meant with eternal death. The place of the curse, the place which is punishment. Jesus met with death in all its awfulness and all its aspects physical, spiritual and eternal.

Adam was denied access to the tree of life by the cherubim with the flaming sword. And all the Old Testament blood could not satisfy the sword.

There was even the cherubim on the veil protecting the holy place into which only the high priest of Israel could enter on the day of atonement and that not without blood.

But here on the cross we have our great high priest. We have the ultimate sacrifice for sin. And the moment that the sword entered his soul he experienced forsakenness.

He experienced our damnation. He experienced what our sins deserved. He experienced the hell of his people. He experienced our punishment.

[ 29 : 52 ] It is interesting is it not that that experience was not with an absent God. That experience was in God's presence.

Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth. And then comes that point that we spoke of in the psalm, which marks the moment when the sufferer on the cross finds his communion with God restored.

When the darkness that was around his soul is taken away. And he says, thou heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

Or as the ESV has it, you have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen. We can also see in this saying that hold that the hold that the suffering saviour had on the promises made to him by his father before he came.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me? And from the words of my roaring, O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearst not, and in the night season, and am not silent.

[ 31 : 29 ] When he uses this personal pronoun, my, my God, my God, he was indicating that he was trusting in God, he was trusting in the promises, he had nothing now to rest on, save his father's covenant and promise, and in his cry of anguish, his faith is made manifest, he says, my God, my God, Arthur Pink says, it was a cry of distress, but not of distrust, you also see in this saying, the extent of the love of Christ for his people, the father's gift to him, he was willing to go to the full distance in order to deliver them from perishing in order to deliver them from what their sins deserve in order to deliver them from damnation, to deliver them from hell.

Oh my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and I am silent, but thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou did deliver them, they cried unto thee, and were delivered, they trusted in thee, and were not confounded, they were not put to shame.

Now these words are not the words of complaint in the sense that he is on the cross and finding fault with God. They are not the words of complaint in that sense, as if he was saying you delivered them but you haven't delivered me, but instead they are the words of encouragement because what Jesus is doing here is reflecting and recollecting God's true character.

He says God is holy and because of this he has always shown himself to be faithful to those in the past who trusted in him.

[ 34 : 02 ] Our fathers trusted in thee. They trusted and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee and were delivered. They trusted in thee and were not confounded.

Here he is hanging on the cross suffering our damnation and here he is looking to the true character of his father to the true character of God and he is saying that he delivered the fathers when they cried unto him that God was faithful in the past to all those who trusted in him and that is an encouragement for him.

It is as if Jesus is thinking will he not therefore be faithful to me and deliver me though at this moment I am forsaken I am abandoned yet will he not be faithful to me and deliver me as he did the fathers.

You see when we are going through hard times and trials sometimes it may be difficult for us to grasp the promises of God and sometimes we fail to be mindful of the deliverance and mercies which we ourselves have experienced in the past but it is always good an advantage for us to meditate on the experience of others to be acquainted with the experience of tried and advanced believers James in exhorting believers to be patient or to endure until the coming of the Lord listen to what he says take my brethren the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction and of patience behold we count them happy which endured you have heard of the patience of job and have seen the end of the

Lord that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercies and that is exactly what Jesus is doing here on the cross he is recollecting is reflecting back on how God how he delighted in the fathers and how he delivered the fathers and that is an encouragement for him James writes this to encourage believers and here we have the example of Jesus who encourages himself with reflecting on God's providences with the fathers of the past as I cry to thee and trust it in thee it is as Jesus is saying I am also crying to thee and I am also trusting in thee although at this moment I feel I am abandoned

[ 37 : 14 ] I'm not only feeling abandoned I am abandoned I am forsaken and this forsakenness is real as you judge the sins of my people as you judge the sins of those that you gave me in covenant I am abandoned but I am crying to thee my God my God why hast thou forsaken me why art thou far from helping me and from the words of my roaring I cry in the day time but thou hearst not in the night season and I am not silent but I trust in thee they were not put to shame as to their expectation and surely as the fathers were not put to shame I will not be put to shame conscious of that forsakenness and under the darkness of which he was now hanging upon the cross he justifies his father's absence from him he was made sin and

God is holy he is of pure eye then to look upon iniquity and so here we find Jesus on the cross and he out what he felt and he is sure that what he is suffering is the right suffering and what he is suffering is correct he is not complaining against the suffering he is not complaining against the forsakenness he says you are holy you are a pure eye than to look upon sin and I have been made sin I have been made the sin offering the sins of the people I am going to save has been imputed to me and therefore you are just in the sufferings that I am suffering you are just in the forsakenness that I am going through this is right suffering the suffering is correct the father and the holy spirit with whom his spirit always enjoyed full and conscious communion was now absent but thou art holy all was darkness all was silence he prayed but there was no answer he cried but there was no reply and yet during the storm we have a triumph of faith my

God my God my God it is personal the servant never lost faith and he came back he came back from the land of outer darkness the suffering was over he said it is finished father into thine hands I commit my spirit he came back and it is to him that God can truly say well done thou good and faithful servant if he says that to his people if he says that to his adopted sons truly he can say it to his son his beloved son as the darkness faded away from Golgotha heaven could hear the echoes of these words of the father well done thou good and faithful servant although his providence was so dark nevertheless he knew that the heart of his father had not changed towards him although he was absent at

Golgotha yet he was his beloved son and he remained his beloved son and Jesus knew that although the father was absent that the heart of his father had never changed towards him that he was still the beloved son has he not given us here as it were an example to follow isn't Jesus here like Jacob of old when he said I will not let thee go except thou bless me and here is Jesus and in these words of the cross he is saying the same I will not let thee go except thou bless me our fathers trusted in thee they trusted and thou didst deliver them they cried unto thee and were delivered they trusted in thee and were not confounded and I'm not going to let go until this fellowship and communion is restored

Jesus bore the punishment lovingly and as he tasted it in his soul all the presence of an angry soul the presence of an angry God the moment that Christ Jesus came into that awful contact with the justice of God well if you are a believer tonight remember what your sins brought upon the son of God remember the price that was paid for your redemption and never forget it the price that was paid so that you would be saved born by the son of God as he hung on the cross of Golgotha the forsakeness so that you would not be forsaken the damnation so that you would not experience damnation outer darkness so that you would not experience outer darkness never forget my friend the cost of your salvation you know

[ 43 : 46 ] I don't know how you may be feeling at this moment but I am sometimes and often disappointed with myself because I cannot understand the hardness of my heart when I reflect upon the suffering saviour on the cross of Golgotha I can't understand the hardness of my heart as I look into the eyes of my saviour on Golgotha and see their forsakeness see their damnation him bearing it in my room and in my place and this is not a story this is real this is real you know sometimes I fear that we may read the Bible and look at the experience of Christ as we read a book of fiction a make believe this is not a make believe this is not fiction this is fact there was a man called

Jesus who was the son of God and he hung on a cross and he received damnation and hell for his people there was such a man it's not fiction it's fact and how can we be so hardened in our hearts that it doesn't melt our hearts to think of what the son of God has done of thinking of the provision that God has made in his love and mercy for me and you and my dear unbelieving friend my Christless friend here tonight if the son of God was astonished at the experience of enduring God's wrath how do you think that you can cope with the same wrath in an endless lost eternity how do those of us who do not trust in

Jesus how do we hope to cope with that same wrath in an endless lost eternity if the agony of divine punishment and divine damnation caused the sinless son of God to cry out after three hours how do you expect to cope with it on your own in that endless lost eternity no wonder the Bible gives us such a graphic picture where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth weeping and gnashing of teeth or remember that the penalty for sin has been paid and if you want to receive the benefit from the payment you will need to trust in Jesus



Christ you will need to commit yourself to Jesus Christ abandon yourself to Jesus Christ you need to come and depend on him alone and why will you not do so even at this very moment just you not into love to Christ how can we look at all this and not have that yearning desire in our heart to trust in this man Jesus Christ to follow this man Jesus Christ to live for this man to Jesus Christ how can we not say like the hymn writer love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all friend look to Golgotha look to the middle cross and never lose sight of it of what Jesus the son of God suffered and went through for the salvation of all those who will trust and commit themselves unto him are you one of them are you one of them can you look at the cross of Golgotha and say there he was hanging for me there he stood for me there on the cross he received what I deserved he received what I deserved and he gave to me what I did not deserve he took my sin and he gave me his righteousness he took my damnation and he gave me salvation he took what I deserved and gave to me what I didn't deserve what love what grace what mercy how fearful my friend to trample upon such love such grace and such mercy and if you leave tonight still Christless still turning your back on him still turning your back on the cross of Golgotha that's exactly what you're doing trampling upon his grace and his love and his mercy and how fearful it will be for you if you come having not changed and standing before him on the day of judgment and him saying to you what more could I have done for your salvation

I went to the cross I met with your hell I met with your damnation but you did not trust me you did not commit yourself to me you just trampled upon it all now depart from me depart from me I gave you plenty of opportunity I gave you plenty of opportunity to come and to rest in me but you would not come so now depart because that is what you have chosen you chose it under the preaching of the gospel you chose it for many years I gave you the gospel I urged you I invited you I commanded you to come and you would not come well have your desire now you departed then well depart now oh my friend what an awful sentence and why should it be yours when tonight he is saying to you come come unto me come to me and find redemption come to me and find salvation come to me and receive the salvation of your soul why are you going to let that opportunity pass why are you going to let the feast of love pass you by and accept the feast of damnation instead you know you would say well only a mad person would do that well my friend watch in case you're condemning yourself watch in case you're bringing the sentence of condemnation upon yourself may the lord bless our thoughts let us pray