

The Innocent Sufferer

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- [0 : 00] We pray that as we're here and we gather together that your power may be evident in us, God, that we may feel your presence. And that, God, your spirit may work in our lives.
- And that as we come and put ourselves before you and put our petitions before you, God, we know that you will hear and you will respond.
- We ask all this in your name. Amen. Amen. We are in Psalm 22 this evening. So you can turn to that psalm.
- Before we read the psalm, I just want to let you know that in this passage, we will read a psalm of David. And in this, David is going to start feeling very much abandoned by God.
- And as we read the psalm, I want you to also be attuned to the aspects of Jesus' crucifixion that you see in this psalm.
- [1 : 13] As we'll see with the psalm, it's very much a prophetic element that looks ahead to the crucifixion of Jesus. And so as we are reading that this evening, I do want you to, I do want those moments as you see it to say, oh, yes.
- And we'll come back through and talk about this looking ahead to Jesus that we see here. But then also talking about the abandonment that David feels. Let me read Psalm 22 for us.
- Oh, yes.
- 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. Yet you are he who takes me from the womb.
- [2 : 34] And you made me trust you at my mother's breast. On you as 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 a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joy.
- My heart is like wax. It is melted within my breast. My strength is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue sticks to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death.
- For dogs encompass me. A company of evil doers encircles me. They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones and they stare and gloat over me.
- They divide my garments among them. For my clothing they cast lots. But you, O Lord, do not be far off. O you, my help, come quickly to my aid.
- [3 : 40] 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 horns 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. And he has not hidden his face from him. And he has heard. And when he cried to him.

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

May your hearts live forever. Remember all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. And all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the Lord.

[4 : 44] And he rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship. Before him shall bow all those who go down to the dust. Even the one who could not keep himself alive.

Posterity shall serve him. It 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. As we begin. I want us to take a look at the responses to feeling forsaken by God.

This passage opens up there in verse 1. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And as we look at this feeling of being forsaken, the responses.

We're going to see three things. And three words to help us out as we move along. Is going to be up, down, and out. So if you can remember those words.

[5 : 44] Remember forsaken. You might remember something from this as you look back. So up, down, and out. First thing that we see in the responses to feeling forsaken. The idea of up. That is the recognition of holiness that comes in verse 3.

Holiness is the idea of otherness. And in recognizing God's holiness. And recognizing the otherness of God. It moves our gaze up.

And we are able to see that God is distinct from us. God is different than us. And in seeing this otherness. This holiness of God.

We see that that develops trust on the part of the psalmist. In fact, in verses 4 and 5. The word trust is mentioned three times.

The idea of developing this trust in God. So despite being forsaken. And recognizing this holiness of God. There is a trust that comes. And the reason the trust comes.

[6 : 43] It's because God is holy. God is set apart from us. God is distinct. Next response that we see to being forsaken by God. We've seen up. And now we have seen.

Now we're going to look at down. So the idea of down. Is that when we are feeling forsaken. And notice that I use the term feeling.

Because we're not actually forsaken by God. We just feel forsaken by God. But when we feel forsaken by God. We are better able to understand.

The depth of God's character. Not necessarily the breadth of God's character. Which we can still gain from. The gaining of information. And expanding our knowledge. But understanding the depth of God's character.

And increasing the depth. Of that relationship. Especially as it comes into the idea. Of deliverance. Of understanding who God is. As someone who delivers.

[7 : 39] Versus. The psalmist. After presenting this very dire situation. And this feeling of forsaken. There in verse 21 says.

Save me from the mouth of the lion. So in the midst of this. This great feeling of forsaken. And seeing these pursuers around him.

The psalmist says. Save me from the mouth of the lion. I want you to just take a moment. And kind of have that imagery sink in. Can you imagine being hunted by a lion?

What would that feel like? Have you been to the zoo? And you perhaps see the lion? And I always marvel at just how big that is. And maybe it's passages like this.

But sometimes when I go to the zoo. And I see the lion. I think wow. What would I do if that thing was hunting me? That would not be good. Right? The lion. The lion would win.

[8 : 36] Because the lion is so much more powerful. I have no hope. So there is David. And this feeling of being hunted. He screams out to God.

Save me. Save me. And in doing so. He is able to understand God's character greater. Because from the feeling of being hunted.

From the feeling of that peril. That takes place there. The idea that his life is truly held in the balance. He recognizes that God is the one who delivers. And out of the great depth of despair.

God's deliverance seems ever more greater. So as we've looked at the idea of being forsaken at up.

Recognizing the holiness. The down. Recognizing the depth of character. There's also the out. As in the out of. In other words. We are able to see that God is able to rescue us out.

[9 : 38] Out. And so one of the things that we see is that. We see that God has been able to rescue us out.

So there in verse 21. What we have. Is that David. The psalmist. Experiencing that rescue says. You have rescued me.

From the horns of the wild oxen. And so in recognizing how God has delivered him. Out. Of the situation. The psalmist is then able to move into a time of extended praise.

And a time of recognizing who God is. So the joy that the psalmist experiences at the rescue. Really hinges on the direness of the situation that the psalm finds him in.

In the greater depth. Of being forsaken. There's a greater understanding. Out. Of which he's been delivered. And greater recognition for God. And greater gratitude for God.

[10 : 35] Now one of the things that we encounter. Is that some people. When they feel forsaken by God. They respond by forsaking God.

And perhaps in your own life. There are people you know. Or perhaps in your own life. There are seasons within your own life. In which you've looked and experienced this idea.

Of wow I felt forsaken. And as a result. The person. Or perhaps you. Have turned away from God. For that moment. And.

The thing that. This approach. Fails to realize. Is the true holiness of God. The otherness of God. God is not like us. God is distinct.

God is holy. God is set apart. God is perfect. And we are not. God is perfect. God is perfect. But when people feel forsaken by God. And respond by forsaking God. This reflects. What I would describe.

[11 : 33] As a quid pro quo. Approach to our relationship with God. The idea of a quid pro quo. Is a this for that. You do this. And I do that.

It's kind of a bit of a contract. And that works out well. With the repair. Individual who comes to your house. And you say. I give you this amount of sum. And you repair. This object for me.

With God. Quid pro quo. Is not appropriate. Because we don't do things for God. So that God will do things back. And this quid pro quo approach.

What it actually does. Is reveal that. Our desire to serve God. Was self-serving. Not God-serving. Because when we focus upon. Serving God alone. Then we're not doing things for God.

So that we get. Something back. Now I want us to take a look. And look at this psalm. As it parallels the story of Jesus on the cross.

[12 : 31] So there are a number of references that. As we look at this account. We will see. That are fulfilled. When Jesus is put upon the cross.

In his time of crucifixion. We're just going to work through. Five of those. That as I was looking at. I was able to see. Five that just came very easily. Looking towards that.

The first that we're going to see. Is in verse one. My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? Those are the exact words of Jesus. When he was on the cross.

My God. My God. While. Why have you forsaken me? One of the things I want us to know. Is that. We. While we. Might feel forsaken by God.

We are not. Jesus. However. Was forsaken by God. God did turn his back upon Jesus.

[13 : 28] And when we think of. The horror of the cross. And certainly there are physical elements. That were terrible. Simply the nature of. A brutal crucifixion.

A brutal execution. Jesus being forsaken by God. I think is the most haunting part. Of that crucifixion. When Jesus who has had.

Perfect fellowship with God. From eternity past. Into eternity future. But there for that moment. And God is not there.

His father is not there. My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? Jesus was truly forsaken by God. But because Jesus was forsaken by God. We never need to be.

Because Jesus. Was able to stand before God. And God turned away from him. So that we might have perfect relationship with God. So that we might have that.

[14 : 27] Relationship with God. That continues on. Verse 7. Another reflection towards the crucifixion. Says all who see me mock me. And as you read the story of.

Jesus. Jesus. During those. That final day. We see that. People. Ruthlessly mocked him. The next thing I want us to see.

The third. Is. When the mockers say here. And the psalmist. Records in verse 8. Here is that. The mockers. As the David the psalmist writes.

But we'll see. It's exactly what Jesus experienced. And the mockers say. He trusts in the Lord. Let him deliver him. Let him rescue him. For he delights in him. Now I'm going to read a passage to you from.

Matthew 27. 43. Which is said to Jesus. As he is on the cross. He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now. If he desires him. Word for word.

[15 : 31] Fourth thing. Verse 16. Says they have pierced my hands and feet. The very nature of the crucifixion. Is that they pierce a person's hands and feet.

Fifth thing I want you to see. As we look. Once again. At how this. Psalm. Parallels. The story of Jesus on the cross. There in verse 18.

The psalmist writes. That they divide my garments among them. And for my clothing. They cast lots. And once again. We find. That exact thing.

Happening to Jesus. There in Matthew 27. Again. Verse 35. And when they crucified him. They divided his. That being Jesus. They divided his garments among him.

By casting lots. So as we see with the psalm. We certainly see. This look. Towards. Jesus. Being upon the cross.

[16 : 28] But. As. We are reminded. Jesus went to the cross. Not. Because. Of his own sin. But because of ours. And. He has taken our sin. Upon himself. And he has experienced.

Being forsaken by God. So that we do not have to. And the. The resurrection. That Jesus had. Is because the grave. Had no power over him.

Death came upon him. But death. Looked upon his sinless life. And had no claim. And just as us. When we. Put our faith in Jesus Christ. And we choose to follow him. Likewise.

We have the power over him. The power to live life. Eternally. As we come to conclusion. So while we may feel forsaken.

As the psalmist did. Or perhaps in the. The person of Jesus. This person who is truly forsaken. By God. There is a purpose to it all. And in verse 27 and 28.

[17 : 27] Of this psalm. We see the purpose. Purpose. Being brought there. Let me read. Verses 27 and 28. For us. All the ends of the earth. Shall remember. And turn to the Lord.

And all the families. Of the nations. Shall worship before you. For kingship. Belongs to the Lord. And he rules. Over the nations. There is a time.

When all things. Will be brought. Under God's control. And the sin. That ravishes this world. Will ultimately. Be defeated. There is a time.

That we can look forward. To. When the culmination. Of all things. And life eternally. Begins with God. A life. Of perfection. A life without sin. No sorrow.

No crying. As is described. When the former things. Have passed away. So perhaps. That means. For a season. We might feel forsaken. By God. But for the ultimate purpose.

[18 : 27] God has a plan. God has a plan. And we may not understand. That plan. Maybe like Jesus. We do understand the plan. But it still hurts. But we see that.

All things work. For a purpose. For God. And so that all. May turn to God. And that we may. Worship God. Because God. Is ultimately king. As verse 28 says.

And he rules. Over. The nations. Let me pray for us. God. We do come before you. And are grateful. For the great saving act.

Of your son Jesus. God. Who gave his life. So that we might have. Perfect fellowship. With you. God. I just pray for us. Who are here. That the.

The importance. Of that event. God will not. Slit past us. That we will be reminded. Of your great sacrifice. God. A sacrifice. So that.

[19 : 21] We might have. A complete. And restored. Relationship. With you. God. We ask. This evening now. As we move into a time. Of prayer.

And singing. That we would just continue. To put our minds. And our hearts. And our souls before you. We ask all this in your name. Amen.