

Lamenting Loneliness: Groaning to God

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Date: 13 August 2023

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[0 : 0 0] Thank you, guys. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean, one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church. It's my joy and privilege to preach God's Word to you. If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand. We'll bring a copy over for you that you can use and that you can have. We're going to be in Psalm 22 this morning. Psalm 22. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, we are all coming this morning with carrying various burdens. Some of us in the midst of trials. Some of us grieving. But Lord, we come to you seeking to hear from your Word. And we want all that we are going through in our lives to be situated, to be placed in the context of what you have done in Jesus Christ.

Grant us today as we incline our hearts and ears to you, Lord, in Psalm 22, grant us to have such a grand vision of your love for us and of Christ's glory.

God, we can pray the depth of His love demonstrated in His suffering and death so that in all of our own pains, we can remember Christ. We can hope. We can trust. And we can groan in faith.

So Lord, help us. We need you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you are willing and able, please stand for the reading of God's Word. Psalm 22. To the choir master, according to the doe of the Don, a psalm of David. 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. In you, our fathers trusted. They trusted and you deliver them. To you, they cried and were rescued. In 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 took me from the womb. You made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

[3 : 5 3] 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 a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint.

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 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. 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 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, but 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 shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the

[5 : 57] Lord. And all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the Lord. And he rules over the nations. 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 we 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. It's God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. Last week, we began a month-long sermon series entitled Psalms of Lament. Lament. Lament is to Lament. Lament is to Lament. Lament is to mourn something, to express sorrow over something. All of us have and will experience some kind of pain and sorrows in our lives, and we have a choice to make. We can either let that painful circumstance drive us toward God in lament, or we can let it take us away from him in bitter silence.

As I mentioned in the last two weeks, 2 Corinthians 6.10, Paul says that he and Timothy, as servants of God, have been sorrowful but always rejoicing. These two things go hand in hand for the Christian. We're sorrowful on the one hand because we are honestly acknowledging the hurt and pain and brokenness in our lives and in our world, but we are also rejoicing because we trust in the goodness and sovereignty of God through it all, and we remember his promises to us. The kingdom of God is already here, but it is not yet fully here. It's been inaugurated, but it's not consummated, and that's why Lament exists in this day and age, to bridge that gap between our pain and God's promises. It gives us a language to process what's going on, and if you're thinking to yourself, maybe last week and this week, well, my life is actually pretty good right now. Well, I don't have any significant suffering in my life. Don't worry, because the Lament Psalms can still be helpful for you. Even if you're not going through a crisis or intense suffering, there's still plenty of normal griefs, day-to-day griefs and sorrows in our lives, sicknesses, inadequate finances, being misunderstood by a friend, or persistent conflict with your boyfriend or girlfriend or husband or wife. And the lessons of Lament can be applied to those more ordinary situations as well, and applying them, learning to apply them to these ordinary situations will prepare us when, in the future, we do face extraordinary hardship. And last week, we focused on the first step of Lament, turning to God, seeking the Lord. And this week, we're going to listen to what God has to say in Psalm 22, and focus in particular on the second step, which is to groan to God.

In Psalm 22, in particular, is where the psalmist laments a sense of loneliness and forsakenness. The subtitle of the psalm tells us that it's a psalm of David, which likely means that it was written by David, and it is to be played according to the tune of the Doe of the Dawn. And in this psalm, David feels scorned and forsaken by God. Some of you also know the pain of loneliness and rejection.

Maybe you feel like a worm and not a human, the way people look at you and talk down at you. But even more significantly, you know, some of you have felt forsaken by God himself.

[9 : 48] You're having trouble reconciling your present circumstances, your present unfavorable circumstances with the gracious presence of God. If you feel that God is absent or silent, this psalm is for you. It teaches us that when we feel forsaken by God, we should groan to him nonetheless in Christ, looking to Christ.

So we're going to look at the outline of the psalm in first, why have you forsaken me? To yet you are, and then be not far off, and finally praise the Lord. I'm going to cover those first two points together. And right at the beginning of the psalm in verse one, David turns to God, and then he begins immediately to groan to him. He says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

He addresses God twice. My God, my God. This is not a stock phrase like Father God that sometimes we mindlessly pepper our prayers with. I've done that. And David is here crying out to God in a deeply personal way out of sheer desperation. My God, my God. And three times in verse one to two, David cries out that way. God, you are my God, not his God or her God or their God. You are my God. I worship you.

You have claimed me as your own, and I belong to you. But then why have you forsaken me? As if I don't belong to you? David's experience is all the more painful because God frequently describes himself as someone who will never forsake his people. So why, my God, have you forsaken me?

Why is such a heart-wrenching question? In his book, *Man's Searching for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl, who is an Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, writes about his experience in a concentration camp. And he quotes the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who I don't cite as a spiritual authority by any stretch of the imagination. But in here, he does express something that is at least partially true. Nietzsche says, he who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how.

[12 : 17] And using that quote, Viktor Frankl argues that people can endure a harrowing ordeal in prison only if they have a purpose or a future goal to look forward to. When you understand why you have to go through something, it makes it more bearable no matter how it happens. Another way to put that is knowing the purpose of something helps you to endure the matter of it. We all hate waiting, but if we know why we're waiting, what we're waiting for, it makes the waiting that much more bearable. Right? We all hate pain, for example. But if we know why we have to endure pain, if we know that it's serving some purpose, for example, helping us to lose fat, gain muscles, and be healthy, then we can endure that pain. It makes it more bearable.

Conversely, when you don't know why, it makes the pain that much more difficult to bear. And the reality is, we don't exactly know the why of all of the disappointments and the sufferings of this life. So David cries out, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? He's saying to God, when I need you most, my God, why do you seem so far away? When I most need to be heard by you, why do you turn a deaf ear to me? And the word translated groaning in verse one is not a tame word that describes this, someone who's just whimpering, you know, under their breath. In Isaiah 5, 29, Ezekiel 19, 7, and other places, the same Hebrew word describes the roaring of a lion. So imagine rather someone who is screaming for help, someone whose voice is hoarse from crying out, who grabs hold of you and demands, why, why have you forsaken me?

It might strike you as inappropriate to cry out to God so boldly, but not only in these lament songs, but also in laments found all throughout scripture, we see the saints of God expressing their sorrow sincerely and expressing their doubts and questions with heartfelt honesty.

And I mentioned this when I preached through Exodus 15 and 16, that there is an important biblical distinction between groaning and grumbling, right? We often find the saints in the Psalms and other places groaning, moaning before God or sighing as is sometimes translated. But that's distinguished from grumbling, which invariably refers to a sinful complaint. Groaning to God with your complaints is not the same thing as grumbling against God. Moaning in your grief and pain is not the same thing as murmuring in prideful resistance and rebellion. The New Testament also maintains the same distinction. Philippians 2, 14, 15 says, do all things without grumbling or disputing that you may be blameless and innocent. But Jesus opposes those who grumble, the Pharisees, the scribes, the Jews, and sometimes his own disciples who grumble against him throughout the gospels. We are supposed to groan. Romans 8, 26, that's even the Holy Spirit groans with groans that are too deep for words. And we, along with all creation, are groaning for the redemption of our bodies, as it says in Romans 8. This kind of groaning is appropriate for us.

So when you are grieving the loss of a loved one and mourning the fact that our world is broken and death still ravages God's creation, we can weep and we can groan as Jesus wept before Lazarus's tomb.

[16 : 27] When you face rejection and isolation and loneliness due to sinful people, something maybe as small but maybe significant to you as not receiving that invitation, that wedding invitation or that party invitation that you were expecting, but it never arrived. When you feel like an outcast, when you can groan, when you are saddened by your own sins, we can groan and sigh, but we must never grumble.

To groan is to grumble. To groan is to implore God. To grumble is to impeach him. Groaning is a desperate appeal to God. Grumbling is an angry protest.

Imagine groaning as raising up your arms, pleading with God, while grumbling is raising your fist at God and pointing your finger in accusation.

David understands this, and so he is groaning to God. He says in verse 2, I cry by day, but you do not answer. And by night, but I find no rest. Day and night, he's indicating that he's crying out to God all throughout the day, but there is no answer and no rest to his question why. At this point, we might expect David to move on and seek out alternative solutions, right? I mean, what's the point of continuing to dial a number where no one answers?

But David doesn't do that. When our experience seems to be at odds with our theology, it can be tempting simply to dispense with our theology. But that gives too much weight to our subjective experience and our ability to make sense of that experience, both of which are fallible and have been affected by sin. So in this psalm, David does not let his present sufferings append everything he knows to be true about God from the past. He does not let his present circumstances and what he's feeling at the moment, explode everything that he knows and believes about God. He holds on to it.

[18 : 56] That's why we find the word yet in verse 3. In every lament in scripture, there's always a pivot point, a turning point where the believer goes from groaning about his dire circumstances toward God to remembering God's character. And this is where scripture goes far deeper than Nietzsche.

Because for the Christian, even when we don't know the why of the situation, we can cling to what we know about the who. The one who knows who God is can endure even when he knows not why he is suffering.

So there's a shift from verses 1 to 2 where in first person personal pronouns, like I, my, and me predominated in verses 1 to 2, but in verses 3 to 5, the second person pronoun, you, predominates.

David shifts his attention from what he is going through to who God is. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. He remembers that God is holy, meaning he is set apart from us. He's different from us. He's unlike us sinful human beings. We are fickle, but God is constant. He is faithful. He's unchanging. We are weak, but God is strong. He is mighty to save.

We are unrighteous, but God is righteous. So the fact that God is holy, he's unlike us, he's set apart from us, is the basis for the psalmist's hope and confidence. And God is enthroned on the praises of Israel. Because of who God is and what he has done throughout history, the praises of Israel are so many and so lavish that it forms a metaphorical throne for God. That's how great God is.

[20 : 54] So that's a basis for David's confidence. And then in verses 4 to 5, he recalls how his forefathers trusted in God. He says, in you our fathers trusted. They trusted and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued. In you they trusted and were not put to shame. Even though at the moment, David feels like his God has forsaken him, he recalls that God is also the God of his forefathers, and they trusted God and God delivered them. Three times he repeats the word trusted for emphasis.

It's almost as if David's exhorting himself, reminding himself to trust God as once his forefathers did. Though my present experience might not fit with this, I remember that those who trusted in God in the past were not put to shame. They were not disappointed, but they were vindicated and rewarded.

But David's remembrance does not make his doubts and struggles vanish immediately. There is this dialectic throughout verses 1 to 10, a back and forth argument David has with himself from despair to hope, from living by sight to living by faith.

And so we're back to David's present sufferings and struggles in verses 6 to 8. 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 delights in him. The Hebrew word translated as trust here is not the same one as one that we saw in verses 1 to 2, but it means literally to roll over, to rotate over. It's referring to how David has essentially rolled himself over to God's disposal. He has cast himself upon God saying, I have nothing I can do of my own. I'm at completely at your disposal, surrendered, help me. And as David remembers that he himself has been trusting God as his forefathers did, but that he has not yet been delivered, this becomes a sore spot for him. And precisely because he has not yet been delivered, his enemies are actually mocking David for his trust in God. They are pursing their lips in scornful disdain and they're wagging their heads and dismissive condescension. Ha! He says he trusts in the Lord. Boys, look at this fool. He thinks that God will deliver him. Let's see what this God does if he really delights in him. While God seems to be silent, his enemies are loud in their derision and they're not treating him like a fellow human being. They are treating him like a worm, a scummy worm that wiggles around in the dirt and gets stepped on by everybody walking around.

Have you ever been mocked for your trust in God? Have you refrained from indulging in drunkenness at a night out at the bar with your coworkers?

[24 : 22] Or rebuffed the sexual advances of a flirtatious neighbor? Or you refused to cheat on your exam along with your friends and then you got mocked for it?

You self-righteous prude? You holier than thou? Good eat to shoes? You actually believe that there is a bearded old man up in the sky?

Never mind that the Bible never describes God that way. When my father was an electronics engineer in Korea before he retired early to become a pastor, the boss of his company branch took him out and he took his team out for a night at the bar for drinks.

At that time in Korea, I think this is probably still the case, but at that time it was particularly pronounced that drinking was a huge societal problem. Many men in particular would get drunk all the time, would not neglect their household responsibilities as fathers and husbands.

And because of that, Christians in Korea made a convictional stance and said, we as Christians will not drink alcohol. So many Christians to this day in Korea still don't drink any alcohol.

[25 : 43] And my dad was one of those people and this became a problem because he went to the bar and then the boss told him to motion him to come. And that means I want you to pour me a drink.

And so you're supposed to kneel and you pour him a drink. And then he's going to pour you a drink. And you're supposed to down that and receive that right away.

And because it's such a hierarchical culture and a communal culture, to refuse that is like career suicide because you're offending your superior.

You're dissing him in a way when you refuse to take his drink. And so my dad was offered the drink and then he respectfully set it aside, said he can't drink it because of his Christian convictions.

And then the boss just flew out in rage and railed against him and said, you think that you're a Christian? I have many Christians working for me and they all take a drink when I give 10,000 to take a drink.

[26 : 49] And you think that you're better than them? And you will never get promoted under my watch. That was one of the worst days of my dad's professional career.

And my mom, I remember her sharing about how he came home and he just was totally dejected. And in God's sense of humor and in God's kindness and vindication, within a year that branch company boss got fired by the boss at the Capitol, the big boss.

And then my dad got promoted before all of his coworkers. And we were the only ones that got shipped out to the U.S. to continue his work and a sister company in Seattle while all the other people lost their jobs eventually when the company closed.

So, I mean, just God's care for his people. And, but this is, but it doesn't always end up like that, right? It doesn't always end up with a happy ending like that. David here has not yet seen that vindication and he's being reviled for his faith and trust in God.

You think God will save you? You think God can help you? Are you willing to be treated like a worm and not like a man for Jesus' sake?

[28 : 11] Are you willing to endure people mocking you and making mouths at you and wagging their heads at you for Jesus' sake? Will you trust in the Lord when you are scorned and despised by those around you?

Still awaiting his vindication, David once again pivots to remembering who God is in verses 9 to 10. Yet you are he who took me from the womb. You made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

On you I was cast from my birth. And from my mother's womb you have been my God. David's remembering that God has been with him from before he was born.

Even when he was still in his mother's womb, God was there to care for him. God was there to watch over him. You have been my God and I have been raised to worship you and to trust in you from my childhood.

You are the God of my youth. Who else can I turn to? Pastor Mark Vrogab writes in his book, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, that the psalmist's complaints are not cul-de-sacs of sorrow, but bridges that lead him to God's character.

- [29 : 26] We're not supposed to keep going around and around in the cul-de-sacs of sorrow, but eventually we need to cross that bridge between our pain and God's promises by faith. Yes, God, I feel forsaken by you right now, but I remember that you are the God of my forefathers. You are the God of my youth. I have always trusted in you and I will again trust you.
- And that's what David does. Having turned toward God and grown to him and having remembered God's character, he now boldly appeals to God to act on his behalf in verses 11 to 21.
- And we find the main theme of David's appeal in verse 11, which is repeated again in verse 19. Be not far from me. This has been David's primary concern from the beginning. When you cried out to God, why are you so far from saving me? People's rejections, suffering, physical hardship.
- [30 : 30] It's all bearable. If you know God is with you, he's near. But it's hard when you feel that he's far. And so his main cry is, God, be not far from me.
- Be with me in the midst of my struggle. And note the contrast in verses 11 to 12. 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. God seems far, but what is near? The troubles. The troubles feel very near.
- There is none to help. He feels utterly alone. None to help. But there are many who are attacking him. Many detractors. Many assailants.
- Who surround him, in fact. Encompass him completely. David's like a sheep that has been cut off from the flock. Who's bleeding helplessly by himself.
- [31 : 29] And surrounded by a pack of ravenous wolves. And David himself uses this imagery, this animal metaphors, to describe his situation. He says in verses 12 to 13. Many bulls encompass me.
- Strong bulls of Bashan surround me. They open wide their mouths at me like a ravening and roaring lion. Bashan was a country within the land that God had promised to the Israelites.
- That stretched from Gilead to the south and Mount Hermon in the north. And it was known for producing the fattest and the largest cattle in the area. And so imagine, like, you don't imagine, like, six small cows.
- Like, imagine big, plump bulls, wild oxen. And when the Israelites entered the promised land, the kingdom of Bashan, led by their king, Og, actually opposed the Israelites and fought against them.
- And Og is described as the descendant of the Rephaim, a race of giants that seem to be related to, and at least maybe include, the Nephilim mentioned in Genesis 6, 4.
- [32 : 34] And that's a highly debated verse. And we don't know exactly who they are. It's possible that these are kind of mighty men of old that came to exist because of demons, demons, angelic beings, demons having, impregnating or basically having relationships with human women.
- That's what Genesis 6, 4 seems to suggest. Although there's different interpretations of that that you guys are welcome to seek out. Regardless of your interpretation of that, because of this background, Bashan's historical background, it's used in scripture often as a symbol of resistance against God.
- So in Psalm 68, 15 to 16, the mountain of Bashan is described as looking with hatred at Mount Zion, which is God's chosen dwelling place, his mountain.

So then David's enemies have surrounded like strong bulls of Bashan. And they're opening their mouths to devour him like a ravening and roaring lion. David compares them to still other beasts in verse 16.

For dogs encompass me. A company of evildoers encircles me. They have pierced my hands and feet. The dogs in view here are not cute chihuahuas or I don't know the many dog breeds.

[33 : 51] I think I wrote some down in beagles or Malteses. These are wild dogs, jackals, which are more like wolves than dogs as we think about them probably.

They're like a pack of hungry jackals attacking a wounded prey. And they're also called evildoers surrounding David. And they seem to be wielding some kind of sharp, pointy weapon.

Maybe a sword or something because David says they have pierced my hands and feet. David describes what's happening to him as a result of this vividly in verse 14.

I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax. It is melted within my breast. All three of these metaphors convey the same reality.

When you tilt over a bucket of water, the water doesn't just stay in the bucket. It pours out without any reservation immediately. It's emptied immediately. Similarly, bones without joints supporting them would simply collapse under its own weight.

[34 : 53] When you apply heat to wax, what happens? It just crumbles. There's no resistance. It caves in upon itself. That's what David feels like.

In other words, David is collapsing. He's being emptied out, completely drained of energy and depleted so that he can offer no resistance.

He continues in verse 15. He says, Because he knows that God can do something about his situation.

He is calling God to account and appealing to him to intervene. David continues in verses 17 to 18. 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. I was wondering what it means that I can count all my bones.

[36 : 18] And then my family were eating fish last night. And after we had eaten all the flesh, I looked at it and I realized, oh, wow, I can count all the bones.

When I can count all my bones. I think it's an expression of just how emaciated and weary and gaunt he has become through all his suffering and pains.

And he said, you can count all my bones. It seems his nakedness is exposed.

Note that David is not dead yet.

He's still alive. He's still alive and kicking. Maybe barely so, but he's alive. And yet, even before he is dead, his enemies act like he's already dead.

[37 : 17] Like it's a foregone conclusion and they start dividing up his clothes. Well, he's gone. He doesn't have any use for that. So let's divide up his clothes for ourselves. The situation can't be more dire.

So David once again returns to his main plea in verse 19. But you, oh Lord, do not be far off or you, my help, come quickly to my aid. So in verses 12 to 18, David compared those who were attacking him to bulls, lions, dogs, and evildoers with some kind of piercing weapon.

And now in verses 20 to 21, in reverse order, David summarizes the plight he is in. 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. So he's again crying out to God. But notice this radical shift in perspective in that last sentence in verse 21.

Notice the change in tense. David goes from saying, deliver my soul, save me, both of which are present imperatives, to saying you have rescued me.

[38 : 30] It's a perfect tense, which is supposed to indicate something that has already happened. But David's still in the midst of the same prayer.

This is an expression of David's faith-filled confidence that God will indeed rescue him. So in the same way, his enemies are dividing his clothing as if his death is a foregone conclusion.

David is now saying, you have delivered me. You have rescued me. As if that's a foregone conclusion because of his confidence in God.

And fittingly, it's from this shift, after this shift, there isn't a single word of lament in Psalm 22. Psalm, the prayer of David is superseded by the praise of David, starting in verse 22.

And David invites others to join him. That brings us to the final step of lament, to trust or to wait with expectant hope. David praises God and tells of God's name to others in the congregation of worshipers because for, it says in verse 24, he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted.

[39 : 47] And he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard when he cried to him. Once again, this is a declaration of his faith. Even though David has not yet heard an answer from God, as it says in verse 2, he nevertheless believes that God has heard and has responded to his cry.

And there's a contrast between verse 24 and verse 6. Remember what the people did to David in verse 6. He said he was scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

It's the same word. He was despised, treated like a worm and not a man. But here, David says that God has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted.

This is so comforting for me personally. It is often the tendency of sinful men to trample down those who are already broken down and brought low.

To jeer and point fingers. To poke at people when they are too weak or humiliated to do anything about it. It's like a piranha.

[40 : 54] Smell it. We're tasting blood and attacking. It gives them an ego boost to step on others. Isn't this why, if we're honest with ourselves, that we hesitate to tell others of our sins, of our weaknesses, of our failings?

Deep inside, we feel shame and we fear their judgment and rejection. But this passage reminds us that our God is not like that.

We know from Psalm 51, 17 that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious. When we are brought low, when we, out of our brokenness and pain, are groaning to him, other people might look down on us and jeer at us and mock us.

But our God will not despise us. He will not abhor our affliction. He will not hide his face from us. Though men might regard us as worms, our God will regard us as humans created in his own image.

[42 : 13] Our heavenly Father will regard us as his own precious children. So knowing this, David says to God in verse 25, from you comes my praise in the great congregation.

By this, David doesn't mean that God is praising him in the congregation. Rather, he's saying that God provides the reason for David's praise and worship of him. Because God regards him with compassion and faithfully answers his prayers, David will praise God in the great congregation.

And then he proceeds to encourage his fellow worshipers the same way in verse 26. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied. Those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever.

That's a very interesting blessing. May your hearts live forever. Early in verse 14, David reported that his heart was like wax. That it melted within his breast.

This is a prayer and a blessing to the opposite effect. May your hearts live forever. May you not be disheartened. May you not lose heart.

[43 : 24] May you not lose hope. May you not ever despair. May you not lose heart. And that's been my prayer for you. Leading up to this sermon, but for this whole series.

That you would not lose heart in the midst of your pain. In the midst of your suffering. That you would not lose heart. But that your heart would live forever. Because, brothers and sisters, we, as Christians, have even more reasons than David himself did to not lose heart, but to continue to trust in the Lord.

Verses 27 to 31, David prophetically anticipates a day when 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. He rules over the nations. He's anticipating a time when not only the Jews, not only the Israelites in the land, the Canaan, but people from all nation, tribe, and tongue.

Not just Jews, but Gentiles. People from the ends of the earth will all worship God. And when did that happen? It happened when Jesus came. Not only that, David says, both the living and the dead, all will go down to the dust.

[44 : 50] Even the one who could not keep himself alive will worship God. When do people receive eternal life? When are the dead raised in the resurrection?

It also comes with Jesus. Jesus is the one who ultimately fulfills these verses. Because he came to us in human form and died on the cross for our sins.

And then he rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father. That's why this psalm is fulfilled. Many of you have probably already noticed as we were reading initially that this psalm bears striking resemblance to the words of Jesus during his crucifixion.

And that's because the quotes, Jesus quotes many parts of this psalm directly. And because during his death, the gospel writers use words, the verses of this psalm to make sense of Jesus' death and suffering.

It's for good reason that some Christians throughout church history have dubbed this psalm the fifth gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Psalm 22.

[45 : 58] Some people call it the gospel according to David. Hebrews 2, 12 to 13 explicitly states that this psalm is referring ultimately to Jesus. In verse 7, David said, And it says in Matthew 27, 39 that when Jesus was hanging on the cross, quote, This is an allusion to Psalm 22.

In verse 8, the people mocked David's trust in God, saying, Similarly, in Matthew 27, 43, the onlookers at Jesus' crucifixion mocked Jesus, saying, He trusts in God.

Let God deliver him if he desires him. In verse 18, David noted, John 19, 23 to 24 quotes that verse and observes that the Roman soldiers took Jesus' garments and divided them among themselves into four parts.

And then, because they didn't want to have to tear the seamless, the woven tunic, while Jesus was still alive and hanging nakedly on the cross, they were casting lots to see who would get it.

And finally, in Matthew 27, 46, when Jesus was breathing his last, when his breath was expiring, Jesus called out desperately from the cross, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[47 : 33] That's Psalm 22, verse 1. What King David endured in Psalm 22 anticipates the sufferings of Christ, and it's fulfilled ultimately in the death of the new and better David, Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus was despised and rejected by men. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He knows the pain of being betrayed by a friend because he was betrayed with a kiss by one of his 12 disciples, Judas Iscariot.

Jesus knows the pain of abandonment because when he, the shepherd, was struck down on the cross, the sheep of the flock scattered, as it says in Matthew 26, 31.

So don't draw away from Christ in your pain, but draw ever closer to him in your pain, knowing that he is not unable to sympathize with your weaknesses.

Jesus knows the pain of humiliation because he humbled himself by taking on human flesh, the form of a servant, and because he subjected himself and became obedient even to death, to death on a cross.

[48 : 53] Jesus knows the pain of feeling for us, the pain of being forsaken by God.

The deeper your relationship with someone, the more painful it is to be forsaken by that person. You might get unfriended by your friend on Facebook or an acquaintance on Facebook, and that will sting a little bit.

It's not going to hurt that much. You shouldn't. But if you're backstabbed by a friend of several years, it's going to hurt a little more.

If your spouse of several decades cheats on you and abandons you for another, that's going to hurt a lot more. Imagine the pain of being the eternal son of God who for eternity past enjoyed unbroken, intimate, perfect fellowship with his father.

And he's dying on the cross. He who has never sinned, carrying the weight of our sin upon his shoulders, and absorbing in himself the fiery wrath of God the Father towards sinners, taking that all upon himself, and crying out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[51 : 02] Matthew, more than any other gospel writers, captures that sense of forsakenness. In all of the gospel of Matthew, Jesus always prays to God as my father. The only time is when he's dying on the cross.

He says, my God, my God. You can almost feel that. Distance. The sense of alienation. Of course, Jesus was not forsaken absolutely or permanently.

The father will raise him from the dead and vindicate him. And of course, it's not that the eternal trinity was severed at the cross. The son of God never ceased to be the second person of the Godhead.

However, Jesus really, truly died in his human nature. He bore the wrath of God. Isaiah 53, 10 tells us, the Lord, his father, crushed Jesus.

God, the father, put his son to grief. Acts 2, 23 tells us, Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

[52 : 13] This was the father's will. This was the father's will. This was the father's plan to crush his son. That Jesus would be forsaken. Because then and only then, we can be forgiven and rescued from death.

Here is the decisive difference between David and Jesus. David was rescued from death. Jesus was not.

Jesus died on that cross. And it is for that reason, he is the only one who can truly cry out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Jesus was forsaken so that you and I can be assured in all of our trials and sufferings and hardships that we will never be forsaken. Jesus was condemned on that cross for our sins so that you and I can know that we can always come back to him knowing that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

That's why 2 Corinthians 4, 7 to 10 is true of us. We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed.

[53 : 42] Perplexed, but not driven to despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

Do you feel like you're carrying death? Suffering pain? If we're carrying the death of Jesus in our lives, we can be assured that the life of Jesus, the resurrection life of Jesus will also be manifested in us, in our bodies and in our lives.

So remember that we are not forsaken. We will never be forsaken. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Lord, it is true that even if our father and mother forsake us, you would never forsake us.

And some of us have already experienced that. Lord, it is also true that our friends and siblings, brothers and sisters may forsake us, but you, you will never forsake us.

And some of us have already experienced that too. Lord Jesus, you are the faithful and true witness.

[55 : 25] you showed us the greatest love by laying down your life for us, your friends. And because of you and because of your spirit now indwelling and enlivening us with life, we know, Lord, that we will never be forsaken.

Help us to remember that, Father, in the midst of our trials, when we are brought low. Help us to remember that you will not forsake.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.