

At the Cross and Beyond

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Bible Text: Psalm 22
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The Apostle Paul expressed the desire of every true believer in Philippians 3 when he spoke of his desire to know the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection," and here's the phrase for this evening, "and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." Christ suffered for us on the cross. Our salvation came at a great personal cost to him and Psalm 22 introduces us to that cost in a way that perhaps is unique in all of Scripture when you follow it and trace it all the way through.

Psalm 22 is an uncanny prophecy of the crucifixion of our Lord and it is an immensely important passage of Scripture. Psalm 22 does more than foreshadow the events of the crucifixion, however, this colossal Psalm actually takes us inside the mind of Christ while he was suffering for us and removing sin from our account. As you read this Psalm, a Psalm that was written by David, it does not tell us an experience; it does not encapsulate an experience that parallels anything that you see in the life of David elsewhere in Scripture. It's far too detailed, far too direct, about its application to Christ and we believe that David wrote this Psalm perhaps out of some shadow of an experience that he had but in this Psalm in a particular way, David was writing as a prophet, foretelling things that were yet to come.

I'd like you to look at the book of Acts 2 for just a moment so that you have a sense of that. Acts 2:29 just to have a sense of the role that the author of this Psalm played in the Canon of Scripture. Peter, when he is speaking of David, said this in Acts 2:29, he said, "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendents on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay." I call that passage to your attention simply so that you have the sense, the mindset, that David was writing at times not only

about his own personal experience but he was writing as a prophet who was looking into the distant future speaking of Christ, speaking of the sufferings of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. And it's important for us to realize that when we step back 3,000 years from today and read what David was writing to have a proper sense of perspective on exactly what he was doing and here in Psalm 22, David was writing primarily as a prophet. Perhaps in the words that we have read already, David was somehow speaking of a time of suffering that he had, maybe speaking in poetic terms, but what we find as we study this Psalm is that the things that he wrote 1,000 years earlier were literally fulfilled in the life of Christ and particularly in the crucifixion of Christ. It's a spectacular Psalm. It's a Psalm that for the tenderhearted believer is enough to make you weep. It is enough, by far, to humble us in the presence of Christ when we realize what it is that he did for us and what it was like for him to suffer on our behalf on the cross.

Charles Spurgeon said about Psalm 22, "Before us we have a description both of the darkness and of the glory of the cross. The sufferings of Christ and the glory which shall follow. Oh, for grace to draw near and to see this great sight. We should read reverently putting off our shoes from our feet as Moses did at the burning bush. If there be holy ground anywhere in Scripture, it is in this Psalm." Coming from Spurgeon who wrote the Treasury of David on all 150 Psalms, that's quite a statement to isolate Psalm 22 with such words as that, to say that if any place in Scripture there is holy ground it is here in Psalm 22. So in saying these things, I'm just trying to prepare your mind and to develop in you a sense of expectation and a sense of reverence as we approach God's word here this evening.

This Psalm hinges in the middle of what we've read. In the first 18 verses, you really see a cry of lamentation that reflects what Christ was going through on the cross. In verses 19 to 21, there is a prayer. Then in 22 down through verse 31, you see an exaltation of praise. You see both the humiliation and the exaltation of Christ in this Psalm and we're going to break it down in 3 basic parts here this evening realizing that we are primarily looking at what Christ endured for us on the cross of Calvary. So first of all here in the first 18 verses, we're going to look at what we're going to call the problem of Christ's suffering. The problem in the sense that he was in trouble. He was in distress. There was pressure upon his soul as he went to Calvary.

Now, as this Psalm opens, David is working through some intense feelings of abandonment as enemies are closing in on him and I'll move back and forth between saying David and Christ because they are really just identified here in this Psalm. David is just the figure, the forerunner of Christ in this Psalm and everything about this Psalm is pointing prophetically to Christ. So in Psalm 22:1, it opens up and you see a man in distress. You see a man who is suffering in his soul and he cries out in verse 1,

1 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. 2 O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; And by night, but I have no rest.

These 2 verses are describing a sense of alienation, a sense of the abandonment, and it's not a lack of faith that is speaking here and that's very important for us to see. This is faith speaking in the depth of unspeakable sorrow. You see the faith by the personal pronoun, "My God." My God. My God. So he's speaking to God, speaking to the Mighty One, and claiming him as his own but he's finding that his experience is different from that which one would expect from belonging to a most holy and high and gracious God. There was something about his experience that was almost disorienting. Something about his experience that led to a sense of separation from the God that he knew was there.

And as the Psalm is written, enemies are closing in. Christ himself spoke these words in Aramaic from the cross. Look over at Matthew 27:46. We'll start at verse 45. Remember, that as we're studying this Psalm, we're entering into the very mind of Christ. We're not just reading a Bible story about facts that occurred back when. This is profoundly spiritual. It is profoundly deep. We are entering into the mind of the eternal Son of God as he was hanging on the cross. That is the very thing that we are doing as we look at this passage of Scripture. In Matthew 27:45, describing the time of the crucifixion, "Now from the sixth hour," which was approximately 12 o'clock noon in the reckoning of our time, "Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour." This is the time in which Christ was particularly receiving the impress of the wrath of God on his soul for our sins as he hung on that cross as a substitute for sinners like you and me. And what did he say at the conclusion of all that darkness and all of that separation and all of that alienation? Verse 46, "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?' That is, 'MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?'" He is at the end of that 3 hour period and he feels the weight of the judgment that he has been enduring.

What does that say about the mind of Christ? What does it say about what he was going through as he hung on that cross? Look, let me pause for a moment and just say that Psalm 22 is a good corrective force. It's a good dose of medicine for us because even as serious Bible believing, Christ loving Christians, we're so familiar with the cross that we forget what it was like for Christ and we can easily speak that Christ died on the cross for my sins and that just kind of rolls off our tongue with a little bit too much ease; with a little bit of a lack of reverence sometimes, not taking into account what it meant for Christ. But we don't want to be that way. We want to be like Paul and say, "I want to know the fellowship of his sufferings." You say to yourself, "I love Christ so much that I want to enter into, whatever extent I can, I want to enter into the fellowship of his sufferings. I want to know what that was like. I want to identify with him. I want to be united with him." And Scripture pulls back the curtain a little bit and lets us see here.

What was Christ thinking on the cross? Well, the words of Psalm 22 were on his lips and the lips speak that which fills the heart. There have been some commentators that believe that Christ maybe had recited the entire Psalm while he suffered on the cross. There is no scriptural evidence of that but Psalm 22 is so woven around the crucifixion that you see the emphasis that Scripture places on it. About 15 times, Psalm 22 is quoted in fulfillment of messianic expectations. As Christ hung on that cross giving himself over for your sins and for mine, somehow Jesus felt incalculable, immense pain resulting from the

separation from his Father as he bore the punishment for our sins. There was a pain. There was a sense of abandonment. There was a sense of alienation. This God that he had shared essence with from before time began, this Father whom he loved and who loved him as well, in the bonds of an eternal counsel of God that we cannot begin to comprehend, in a love that Christ placed supreme value on and the Father that he loved. The Father that he prayed to well here on earth. The Father that he obeyed implicitly. The Father that he would serve with every drop of his blood. Now somehow in a way that we don't pretend to be able to explain, how does the Trinity separate at a time like that? How does the Father turn away from his own Son? There are no words to describe that but there is enough for us to see that Christ felt this sense of separation from his Father and it pained him to an eternal depth that we cannot begin to plumb.

Psalm 22 was is especially appropriate on his lips. You know, it's not just that he experienced pain and the spiritual anguish of soul that came from bearing our sins. When you read through Psalm 22, it's a Psalm where he's recognizing his enemies but he's not asking for vengeance upon them. He's not praying imprecatory Psalms over them even though he was suffering unjustly. As he was there in the midst of profound suffering brought on through the human hands of wicked men, there was no sense of retaliation against them. How holy, how sacred he was. How selfless he was. As he hung on the cross, he prayed, "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing." He took care of his mother. He looked at John and said, "Behold, your mother. Woman, behold your son." He took care of his mother while they were hanging there. He turned to the thief on the cross and said, "Today you will be with me in paradise." In the midst of this unspeakable anguish, this incredible suffering, you see Christ calling out for his Father, missing that sense of fellowship, having earlier been looking out for the needs of the humans all around him.

What kind of magnificent soul are we looking into when we consider the nature of Christ? Where is any parallel in human history of a man that perfect, that great, that selfless who suffered so much though he was innocent of any wrongdoing of his own? No wonder Isaiah could say in Isaiah 53:7 that he was like a lamb led to slaughter. He was silent before the shearers as he interceded for sinners. He did not protest against his suffering, it was what he was sent from heaven to do. So what was it like? As we look in as much as we can into the very soul of Christ as he was hanging on the cross for us? We see an innocent man suffering to a degree that we will never understand. We see a selfless, generous, gracious man looking out for those who were gathered around his cross: some of his enemies, his family, a new friend that would that day be with him in paradise. Do you see why Spurgeon called it holy ground?

We're talking about the central focus of the redemption of the human race and we see what the God-man was like as he brought that redemption to pass and he did it alone. He was alone. He was alone only with your sin and mine and the punishment that it required. Alone with our sin. Alone, as it were, with the vitriolic hatred of his enemies mocking him and enjoying the spectacle of his seeming loss. And what did he do in that time? Look at verse 3. It says,

3 Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel. 4
In You our fathers trusted; They trusted and You delivered them. 5 To
You they cried out and were delivered; In You they trusted and were not
disappointed.

In the midst of his suffering, he recalled the holiness of God. He acknowledged that God had delivered his people in the past. Perhaps as we read Scripture, we remember the accounts of God delivering Noah, delivering Abraham, delivering Joseph, delivering Moses in the midst of all of their unjust suffering. He brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt and through those events, manifested the fact that when God's people trust him, their trust was never in vain. He never failed their trust. He never disappointed them. Scripture says that, "He who believes in Him will not be disappointed." Christ lays hold of that on the cross and it renews his trust in his Father and consciously vindicates the holiness and character of the Father even as he is suffering alone on the cross for us.

As he's laying this out in the gentle, generous, gracious nature of his spirit, in the perfection of his holy heart, as he is in a most pure and simple, simple meaning undivided, in a most undivided way, trusting in his Father, what is the response of the men that are around him? They treated him like a worm. Look at verses 6 through 8. He says,

6 But I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the
people. 7 All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they
wag the head, saying, 8 "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver
him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

They are mocking him at the cross and so Jesus in his innocence, alone with our sin, as if that weren't enough, he was hated. He was unwanted. He was mocked as he hung, as it were, between earth and heaven on our behalf. He was trusting in God like no one ever did before or after and yet in the midst of the purity of his trust, his enemies taunted him.

Look at Matthew 27 where we see this passage played out in the literal life of Christ on the cross. This is enough to make you ashamed of sharing humanity with these people. Matthew 27, let's look at verse 38 just to set the context for you. "At that time," Matthew 27:38, "At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left." Perhaps the most degraded display of sinful humanity ever recorded in the history of time we see in verse 39, "And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying, 'He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET GOD RESCUE Him now, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM; for He said, "I am the Son of God.'" The picture of the wagging of the head and the separating of the lips it's as though they were pulling their lips apart and sticking their tongues out at him. So degraded was there mocking, it's like they were a school kid sticking their tongues out,

separating their lips, somehow wagging their head in a way that was the ultimate in utter derision against the holy Son of God. Jesus said, you know, he could have called down legions of angels to defend him at that point but refused.

How solitary was his isolation and how solitary was the love and the commitment that he had to us to carry through to the fulfillment of our redemption. To the perfect obedience of his Father. Do you see why Spurgeon called this passage holy ground? Listen, in our unredeemed state, we were completely like those who mocked him. We did not share in any manner in this holy character of Christ. We were totally like those who mocked and rejected him. Their sin was illustrative of our own and in the moment of time, in those hours of time where there was no external circumstance which would speak to vindicate his trust in God, Christ continued on trusting him despite the mocking, despite the separation, despite the anguish of his soul. He continued on trusting and refused to come down.

So here he is, our glorious Lord, humiliated in front of his enemies, speaking not a word in his own defense. No one else speaking a word in his defense unto the thief spoke up a little later and utterly looking like a man rejected and forsaken even by the God that he claimed to trust. That's a little picture of what it was like for our Christ on the cross. That's a little picture. That's a little window into the price that was paid for your salvation. And yet in the midst of that, Psalm 22 shows that Christ modeled a persistent trust. Look back at Psalm 22 again in verse 9. Psalm 22:9 as we continue looking at the problem of the suffering, the nature of the suffering, the severity of the suffering of Christ. Psalm 22:9, he says,

9 Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;

He says, "Despite this rejection that is going on around me and the way that they sneer at me, I remember who you are, my Father. You are he who brought me forth from the womb."

You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. 10 Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb.

Notice again that he says, this Psalm opened up, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" This wasn't the first time that he had ever thought that or said that. Here in this verse we see that he was thinking of the Father as "My God" from the very beginning of his earthly life, the beginning of his incarnation. "My God, My God, My God." It is written throughout the Psalm. And in that trust and from that position of trust, there is a spirit of prayer that comes forth in verse 11.

11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near; For there is none to help.

Be not far from me expresses the urgency in this sense of the abandonment and the separation. "Oh, the sorrow is particularly intense now! Don't be far from me in the midst of my hour of my greatest needs. I need help now!" And he goes on and he describes his

enemies like strong animals, using metaphors to describe them like strong animals that were surrounding him for the kill. Verse 12,

12 Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.

Then we go on and we see,

13 They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

His physical strength is dissipating as the hour of death draws near. The intensity of his thirst even is spoken of in this passage. You remember from the Gospel of John, he said from the cross, "I thirst." Here's the Maker of heaven and earth, the one who separated the heavens from the earth, the one who created the oceans, who controls the skies and controls the rain and he says, "I am thirsty." How deep is the humiliation? How deep is the self-sacrifice that would give him over to a suffering like that? Remember, beloved, remember that Jesus said in John 10, "No one takes my life away from me. I lay it down of my own accord. I do this voluntarily." What kind of man does that for those who hate him?

Verse 15,

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded me;

Dogs at that time were not the friendly domesticated animals that we know as dogs today. They were wild, savage scavengers. So you have these evil, wicked men crucifying him. Calling out, mocking him. Having spat on him. Having crushed the crown of his head with the crown of thorns. Mocking him. Beating him. Blindfolding him. And in a stunning prophecy of the crucifixion in verse 16...this Psalm was written centuries before crucifixion was invented as a form of capital punishment. Verse 16,

They pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; 18 They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

Look over at John 19:23, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus," you're seeing the fulfillment of Psalm 22 recorded 1,000 years later. 1,000 years later, you know, 1,000 years for us was like 400 years before Columbus came and discovered the Americas. That's how long time past. That's how profound Scripture is. That's how perfectly God sees the future. It's how much he controls the future that he can speak and 1,000 years later his word is fulfilled to perfection in every detail so much in this Psalm. John 19:23, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments

and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. So they said to one another," these Roman soldiers fulfilling the prophecies without even knowing it, just going about their normal business and yet fulfilling the hand of what God prophesied. "So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be'; this was to fulfill the Scripture: 'THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS.' Therefore the soldiers did these things."

So the dislocated bones, thirst, the pierced hands and feet, the division of clothing. It all came to pass during the suffering of our Lord.

The Puritan commentator, Matthew Henry, said this and I read this quote to kind of help give you a sense of how your heart should respond to these things, to condition it, to soften it, to draw it to Christ in light of everything that we have heard. Matthew Henry said this, "Let this therefore confirm our faith in him as the true Messiah and inflame our love to him as the best of friends, who loved us, and suffered all this for us." You see, it's one thing to view this suffering and this alienation that Christ went through and feel sympathy for the experience that he went through which was far deeper and far more profound than this feeble exposition of Scripture could ever do justice to, but where it bends the Christian heart toward love and affection in Christ is when we simultaneously remember that he was doing this for you and me. This was no abstract historical event disconnected from the reality of our existence. This is the crux, this is the crucible, this is where our redemption took place. And look at the price of it and look at the love of the one who laid himself down for you protesting nothing on his own behalf. Holy ground indeed.

Let me pause for a moment and just, you know, I assume that most of you are like I am. You get caught up in the circumstances of your life, of your family, get engaged in the activities that you like and do. That's fine. Some of us get caught up in the news cycle and what has it been recently in the past month? Homosexual marriage and the Confederate flag and Planned Parenthood and abortions and all of that. Listen, beloved: what I want you to see is that whatever importance we attach to those things as events in our society, what we're seeing here tonight from Psalm 22 is of infinitely greater importance, infinitely greater value. It's of much more enduring significance than all of those things and anything else you could throw into the pot with them combined because there is no one more important in the universe than Jesus Christ. There is no event in the course of human history more important than his crucifixion, his act of redemption on behalf of sinners. So shouldn't we as believers in Christ at least for a time just set all of this other stuff aside and give this act of Christ and his sufferings on our behalf, the unique prominence and the unique affection that it alone deserves? This puts everything into perspective. It puts everything into context. And for the believing heart, we see, "This is where the supremacy of my affections lie. I don't like the other stuff and I enjoy certain things in life but it's all secondary to Christ. To the magnificence of this suffering servant. To the purity of this innocent Lamb slain for sinners like me and like you. To the caring oversight of this Shepherd who was slain for his sheep." It kind of takes your breath away, doesn't it? You know, you just run out of words. Honestly, there was a sense

of dread in even beginning to exposit this Psalm because of the profound holiness of the subject matter and who am I but a man of unclean lips? Someone's got to give voice to this. Someone gets to give voice to this.

So we've seen the problem of Christ's suffering here in these first 18 verses and now we're going to pivot into our second point for this evening: the prayer in Christ's suffering. The prayer in Christ's suffering. In this desperate condition in which he found himself, Christ prays. David penned this and Christ modeled it later on as we'll see briefly. So this prayer comes in the midst of all of this mocking of his enemies, this prayer comes, "But You, O LORD," he can count his bones. They are dividing his garments. His last earthly possession is a matter of a dice game to pagan soldiers. The eternal Son of God, I can't get over this. I can't get over the fact that we're describing what happened to the eternal, holy, eternal Son of God. I can't get over it. How does he respond in the midst of that utter rejection and abandonment? Verse 19, he is still manifesting an unconditional trust in his Father. He says,

19 But You, O LORD, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance. 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, My only life from the power of the dog. 21 Save me from the lion's mouth; From the horns of the wild oxen You answer me.

So in the midst of this, he's declaring his trust in God and calling upon him and saying, "Answer me." And this prayer marks a decisive turning point in the Psalm. Beforehand, in the first 18 verses, you see an alternation between his cries of trust and a description of the suffering. Here in verses 19 through 21, as one commentator says, the alternate cries and prayers give way to praise and to a broadening of God's perfect rule.

Notice here in these 3 verses that in the midst of the suffering, there is a complete unbroken confidence. As he calls for help, he calls then on the name of the covenant name, the promise keeping name of Yahweh and says, "Hasten to my assistance." In verse 21, he says, "From the horns of the wild oxen You answer me." There is an expression, there is a spirit of confidence that God will hear his prayer; God has heard his prayer and he will not abandon him forever to the suffering despite all external appearances to the contrary.

What is he doing here except committing himself over to God and committing himself over to the care of God and saying, "You're the only one who can help me here"? Do you remember praying like that sometimes in your own experience where things were utterly impossible and you finally turned to God humbled and in the fullness of your heart saying, "You're the only one who can help me here, God"? I remember a time or 2 like that. I'm sure you do too if you've been a Christian for any length of time. And out of the depths of sorrow and the sense that there is no human help to be had here and perhaps people stronger than you had the authority and the upper hand over you and you just cried out to God in an expression of trust.

Well, Christ mirrored this on the cross. We happened to comment on this verse last time. When did Christ manifest this during the crucifixion? Luke 23:46, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." He hands himself over to God in a complete act of trust and then he breathed his last. He had gone through the separation and now the time for his earthly life to end had come. And even in that most desperate moment from a human perspective he says, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit. Father, I am confident that You will answer Me."

And what comes from that? The contrast in mood in verses 22 to 31 are astounding. It's overwhelming just to see the contrast of what flows from this because having seen the problem of Christ's suffering and the prayer in Christ's suffering, now in the third part of this Psalm we're going to see the praise from Christ's suffering. This is a total redirection of mood and tone and intent in what follows and what you see in this final section of the Psalm is you see an ever expanding circle of worship and praise given to the God who granted deliverance to his Son. What you see and what we're about to see here is that the Lord who suffered in isolation, that suffering gave over to praise that echoes into the future still today, that echoes in ever-expanding circles of peoples, and that that singularly great act of trust was honored by God in a way that brings glory to him and also to his Christ. The suffering yielded over to triumph of incalculable proportions and unspeakable suffering gave way to an infinite degree of praise.

Our Father honored our Savior's suffering; honored his trust in ways that we're going to see now. Verses 22 and 23, flowing from this trust as a commitment to praise.

22 I will tell of Your name to my brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

Now look how the circle starts to expand. It was individual, "I will praise You." Then he calls other God fearers around,

23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him; All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel.

In Christ, we have a brother who has brought us to the glory of God. Look over at Hebrews 2 and see how the New Testament applies these verses to what we have just read. The application that the writer of Hebrews makes, Hebrews 2:10-12, recognizing the glory of Christ. In verse 22 from Psalm 22, he said, "I will tell of Your name to my brethren," now in verse 10 of Hebrews 2, I hope you're able to stay with me here. It says, "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He," meaning Christ, "is not ashamed to call them brethren." Unbelievable. This is just incredible. "Saying, 'I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE.' And again, 'I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM.'" The outcome of the sufferings of Christ, the intention to which he was submitting himself to those sufferings

was so that he could gather together a people, gather together those that the Father had chosen before the beginning of time and to save them so completely and so utterly that he would rightly, gladly, unashamedly call people like you and me who now believe in him, brothers. This one who transcended in his humanity, this perfect man who suffered on our behalf, our sins drove him, as it were, to the cross, that one now gladly calls us brothers. Gladly receives us as intimate family and because of that, we praise his Father. We praise the name of our Lord Jesus. We are captivated by the glory and the love and the grace and the mercy that has been shown to us in our sins and we love him with all our hearts. We worship him from the depths of our being. Let goods and kindred go. This mortal life also. Nothing will take us away from that supreme affection of our heart that we reserve alone for the Lord Jesus after what he has done.

Do you know why Christ can call us brethren? It's because his Father did not abandon him at the cross, just like Jesus knew he would do. Jesus knew that he would not abandon him even though he was giving over his life and entering into death. He knew that the Father would not abandon him. He knew that the Father had not despised him as all those around him had done. Verse 24 of Psalm 22. I'll give you a moment to turn back there. "You who fear the LORD, praise Him," why? Verse 24,

24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from him; But when he cried to Him for help, He heard.

Oh, that's so sweet and precious. The Father just having poured out the wrath that should have been on us onto his Son because he loves us and wanted to redeem us and as he's pouring out wrath, undeserved wrath on his Son that it might be spared to us, in the midst of that, the Son continues to trust him and commit his spirit over to him. Well, when the wrath was spent, the Father heard that cry for help and was faithful to rush to answer.

What do we do? We worship this great God of mercy. We honor him. We recognize that he is both the object and even the source of our praise. Verse 25,

25 From You comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.

In other words, there's this picture of, "I'm making a vow to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving. I'm going to keep my commitments to thank and praise this God who has shown such great mercy." Verse 26, who will share in that? Verse 26,

26 The afflicted will eat and be satisfied;

Those poor ones, those poor in spirit, those that the world despises, they will share in the joy. They'll share in the feast. Who else will share in it?

Those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever!

So it's expanded. He said, "I will tell your name. You who fear the Lord. Oh Israel and Jacob, you come and join in in the great assembly," and it expands still further. The greatness of this Psalm transcends the suffering and the prophecies of Christ to look to the fulfillment of the fruit that it brings. Verse 27,

27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations will worship before You.

A day still coming, future to us, when all the nations gather around Christ in that coming millennium and give him the honor that finally he deserves and all the nations will recognize his righteousness and recognize his glory and will honor him and will stream to praise him. All of that flowing from that act of obedience, that active trust on the cross.

Verse 28,

28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S And He rules over the nations.

It's not just the afflicted though,

29 All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship,

There will be the poor and the afflicted. There will be people there gathered around the throne who enjoyed prosperity and the fullness of life on this sod and they'll worship too and they will join in the acknowledgment of the greatness of this God.

All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.

It's reminiscent of Philippians 2, "Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory and praise of the Father." This singular act of isolation and suffering is going to climax ultimately in a resounding triumph of praise well deserved and from isolation and rejection to the enthronement of Christ in all of his glory to the praise of God the Father. Holy ground, indeed, a Psalm like this.

Once rejected, Christ will one day be acknowledged by all and this mercy will extend into future generations. Look at verses 30 and 31,

30 Posterity will serve Him; It will be told of the Lord to the coming generation. 31 They will come and will declare His righteousness To a people who will be born, that He has performed it.

In other words, there are people yet to be born who will most certainly hear about these glories and they too will respond in worship. It's not just the present nations. It's not just the present people. There are people yet to be born who are going to join in this wonderful, magnificent course of praise. They are going to hear of these glories just like you and I have heard of them as well. And what will they hear? What will they hear?

Look at the end of verse 31, they will hear, "that He has performed it." That echoes, again, what Christ said on the cross, "It is finished. It has been done. It is accomplished," John 19:30.

So the Son of God was alone with our sin, guilt and punishment and in that forsaken, epochal moment in time, what was he doing? He did that for the redemption of the sinful human race. And what do we say in response? "All praise be to this God. Praise be to this Christ. Let the story never cease. Past generations told us, past generations delivered the story to us today and what will we do? We will tell others who will go forth and tell still others yet to be born about this glory, that this Christ who was once abandoned is now the solitary hope and praise of sinners, the solitary hope and praise of nations."

Let's bow together prayer. Take a moment to just respond in your own heart and I'll close this.

Lord Jesus, we don't even know where to begin to respond to this magnificent portion of Scripture. Our minds are practically fractured by the greatness of it all. We acknowledge our sin before you and we pray for those that are in here who do not yet know you, Father, that the way that Scripture has presented Christ would draw them to a profound repentance and faith in him that they would abandon and leave behind their sinful self in order to come to this magnificent Christ.

Father, we thank you for our suffering servant. We thank you for the innocent Lamb who was slain on our behalf. Lord Jesus, thank you seems so completely inadequate. What thanks shall I render? What words could I offer? What tears could I cry? What could I give in response to what you have done for us, what you have done for me, we say collectively and individually? Your glory is transcendent. Your selfless love is the hope of our souls. It is our highest affection. You are our grandest desire and we honor and we praise and we thank you. We thank you that in a sense even we who are believers today are within the scope of the wonder of this Psalm because we were a future generation at that time and someone came and declared your righteousness to us and by your grace now we believe and you are our brother in heaven.

We honor you and we praise you. We adore you. We lay our lives before you, for yours alone is the glory, the kingdom and the power forever. Help us to be among those who declare your righteousness to a people yet to be born and may those who have come into our assembly as young people, make it their greatest aspiration to join in the praise of Christ and to tell others so that they too would join in this worship which we find so sweet on this humid evening in a small Midwestern city in 2015. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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