

Good Friday Service: Psalm 22

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[0 : 00] I'm going to begin by saying, if you don't have a copy of God's Word with you this evening, there's no shame in that. In fact, people were asking me even this week, what exactly is the Good Friday gathering going to look like?

And I would say, I don't know. I'm not sure yet exactly what we're going to do. I would tell those people that I will be preaching, but they may not have known to pass that information on to you. And so we want you to have one if you would like to have one.

And so if you don't have a copy of God's Word with you, again, there's no shame in this, and you'd like one, if you'll slip your hands up. We've got Matt and Tyler around the room. They can get one to you. You can also be quick on the draw with your phones and pull open something.

Okay, nobody. Okay. All right. Very good, then. I'm going to assume that you're ready to go, and we're going to get into a text together. As we gather this evening to consider the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on the cross of Golgotha, I would like for us to consider some of Jesus' final words as He suffered on our behalf and reflect upon what may have been some of His final thoughts as He gave His life for the sake of ours.

To do so, please turn with me in your copy of God's Word to Psalm 22. Psalm 22. This psalm serves as a divine commentary on much of what Jesus uttered on the cross, as we will see that three of His statements come from this psalm.

[1 : 34] Because Jesus cites this psalm so prevalently, I believe that it is safe to assume that He was pondering this psalm as He suffered. It may not have been the only text of Scripture that He meditated upon, but it was surely one of them.

It may well have been the dominant one, and therefore can grant us some level of insight into His thoughts. The author of this psalm is King David, and no events of his life match the description found here, as many of his psalms do.

You could say, oh, we know when David wrote this particular psalm, the trouble that he was experiencing at this time, but not in this case. So it is widely agreed that this psalm is prophetic, that David was speaking of the suffering of Jesus.

In that, it alludes to five different incidents that occurred in the process of Jesus being tried and crucified. We also know that Peter, the apostle, refers to David as a prophet in Acts 2, verse 30. There he's referencing a different psalm, but he calls there David the prophet. So, as we take some time this evening to consider some of Jesus' final words, and most likely some of His final thoughts, I want to invite you to have your heart warmed by the loving kindness of God to us in the death of Jesus Christ.

[3 : 15] Before I read Psalm 22, as is my habit, I want to remind you, beloved, this is God's Word to us. It was written for His glory and for our good, and we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Psalm 22, beginning in verse 1. 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 delivered 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.

[4 : 29] 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. 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 pot shirt 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.

[5 : 36] 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.

[6 : 37] 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 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 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.

So, first, let's look at the five incidents that occurred in the process of Jesus being tried and crucified that this psalm alludes to.

I hope that you're familiar enough with the New Testament text that speaks of these things, the Gospel accounts, that you were picking up some hints of them as you moved throughout it.

[7 : 47] Now, those of you who are used to me working verse by verse through a text, beginning at verse 1 and working my way down, I'm not going to do that tonight. We're going to take it in fragments, although I will reference every bit of Psalm 22.

In fact, for a test of that, I wrote down 1 through 31 and checked them off as I was sure that I referenced it in my notes. But it'll come in a different order than 1 through 31 because it's my hope for our thinking to move from those matters which aren't unimportant, but they're less important to those matters that are more important for us this evening.

So, let's look at these five incidents that occurred. Number one, the dividing of Jesus' garments and the casting of lots.

We can read in John 19, verse 23 and 24, when the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, also His tunic.

But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be. This was to fill the Scripture which says, and here citing directly, John does Psalm 22 and verse 18.

[9 : 10] They divided my garments among them and for my clothing, they cast lots. So the soldiers did these things. So first, the dividing of Jesus' garments and the casting of lots we find in Psalm 22.

Secondly, the piercing of Jesus' hands and feet and His severe beating. Now, we only find out about the piercing of Jesus' hands and feet because of doubting Thomas.

Now, it was understood that this is the way people were crucified. Big nails put through their wrists and through their feet. But we don't know for sure this was the case with Christ except John's record again, chapter 20, verse 24, and following, where John records for us, now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples told Him, We have seen the Lord, but He said to them, Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails and place my hand into

His side, I will never believe.

Eight days later, His disciples were inside again and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then He said to Thomas, Put your finger here and see my hands and put out your hand and place it in my side.

[10:40] Do not disbelieve, but believe. And Thomas answered Him, My Lord and my God. So we see, right, that Jesus' hands were nailed through in His feet.

We know that Jesus was severely beaten from texts like Matthew 27 and the prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 52 and verse 14, As many were astonished at you, His appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and His form beyond that of the children of mankind.

And again, we find this in Psalm 22, verse 16 and 17. The psalmist says, For dogs encompass me, a company of evil doers encircles me.

They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones. The flesh is ripped off my body. They stare and gloat over me.

Third, the mocking of the soldiers. In Mark 15, verse 16 and following, we read, And the soldiers led Him away inside the palace.

[11:58] That is the governor's headquarters. And they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed Him in a purple cloak. And twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on Him.

And they began to salute Him. Hail, King of the Jews! And they were striking His head with a reed and spitting on Him and kneeling down in homage to Him.

When they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the purple cloak and put His own clothes on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him. And then Luke adds in Luke 22, verse 63 and following, Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him as they beat Him.

They also blindfolded Him and kept asking Him, Prophecy! Who is it that struck you? And they said many other things against Him, blaspheming Him.

And so, Jesus became a mockery, an object of derision and sport for the Roman battalion. The Creator of all the universe became a laughingstock to those whom He created.

[13:12] And we see this in Psalm 22, verses 6 and 7. A psalmist wrote, 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. Fourth, we see the mocking of the bystanders and religious leaders.

So not just the Roman guard. Matthew 27, verse 39 says, And those who passed by derided Him, wagging their heads, which was a sign of that disapproval.

Psalm 22, verse 7 and 8, All those who see me mock me. That's fascinating. Let's go back again.

Psalm 22, verse 7 and 8. Without the polka music this time, please. All who see me mock me. They make mouths at me. They wag their heads.

[14:19] He trusts in the Lord. This is the speaking of derision. Let Him deliver him. Let Him rescue him, for He delights in him.

In Luke 23, verse 35 and following, Luke records, And the people stood by. So everyone who's passing by, according to Matthew, is mocking Jesus.

Here Luke says, And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at Him, saying, He saved others. Let Him save Himself.

If He is the Christ of God, His chosen one. The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up and offering Him sour wine and saying, If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself.

There was also an inscription over Him, This is the King of the Jews. Now, we'll read in just a moment a bit of interesting text in John chapter 19.

[15:19] Most of us know that there was this sign placed over Jesus' head that declared Him the King of the Jews. The religious leaders did not want such a sign to exist above Him.

It was this very claim that they were crucifying Him for. And so, as this claim stood above Him, they had to stand around and make light of it.

They had to say, Oh, here's the proof that He's not who He claimed to be or that this sign waves over Him because He can't save Himself from the cross.

In John chapter 19, verse 19 and following, we read this, Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. Everybody could read it.

[16:19] So the chief priest of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write, The King of the Jews, but rather, this man said, I am the King of the Jews.

And then Pilate answered, and I don't know if it's because Pilate was beginning to believe or if Pilate just was tired of placating them, but he answered, What I have written, I have written. So this statement stood over Christ as He hanged there and died. And the people had to make light of it to justify His murder.

Fifth, the fifth incident we see in Psalm 22 is the mocking of the criminals. Those that hung on His left and His right. Matthew 27 and verse 44.

And the robbers, plural, the robbers who were crucified with Him also reviled Him in the same way. Luke tells us that one of these robbers came to believe that Jesus was the Christ in Luke 23, verse 39 and following.

[17:26] Luke records this, one of the criminals who were hanged railed at Him saying, Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us. But the other, now believing, rebuked Him saying, Do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?

And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong. And he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

And Jesus said to him, Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. Again, we see in Psalm 22 and in verse 8, these words of derision, He trusts in the Lord.

Let Him deliver Him. Let Him rescue Him, for He delights in Him. Jesus was even mocked by those found guilty and experiencing the same death.

In Luke 23, we find Him so willing to forgive the transgressions at whose hands He suffered. In Luke 23, 34, He utters the words, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

[18:46] He pitied the ignorance that would murder the one who came to save their souls. And we see the promise of paradise given to a repentant criminal who hung at Jesus' side.

So can you see that Psalm 22 is speaking toward this event that would happen one day? These things are going on just as Psalm 22 said that they would.

And what must have been going through the mind of our Savior as He experienced the most cruel of deaths ever employed by a nation state? This form of death was not only extremely painful, but it was meant to be a spectacle.

The condemned were placed on display in a place of prominence for all to see and to consider the cost of law-breaking. So not only is Jesus dying a painful physical death, He's being rejected at every turn by those that He's dying for.

In Psalm 22, verse 12 and 13, what must Jesus have been thinking, right? Thinking about this Psalm. We're going to see that He speaks directly from it in a moment.

[20:08] Verse 12 and 13 say, many bulls encompass me. Strong bulls of passion surround me. They open wide their mouths at me like a ravening and roaring lion, right?

Seeking my life. In the midst of all of David's prophecy of the coming Christ, he writes for us, carried along by the Spirit, these reprieves, like these moments of rest and reflection from all of the suffering.

And here, I think, we get the most wonderful glimpse of the mind of Christ. So try to put yourself in His place.

And we can't do this perfectly, to be sure. But considering the great horrors around Him and Him thinking about Psalm 22 and running through the writing of, inspired writing of David.

So we read in Psalm 22 verse 9 through 11, Yet, this is a wonderful word, Yet, You are He who took me from the womb.

[21:22] You made me trust You at my mother's breasts. On You was I cast from my birth and from my mother's womb. You have been my God.

Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. So we can imagine that Jesus, in this great anguish, turns to God in the writing of David in Psalm 22 and finds comfort.

Yet, You are God. The psalmist, and as I've argued, Jesus suffering greatly, looks to God the Father who was with Him from the very beginning and is, therefore, to be trusted for help, comfort, for peace, and for final deliverance.

So, we get these reprieves in the midst of Psalm 22. Now, to think about this a bit more, let's take a look at the three statements that Jesus uttered on the cross that are found in this psalm.

The first, we can read of in Matthew 27 and verse 46, also Mark 15, 34. Matthew records for us about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, sabachthani, that is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[23 : 01] At about 3 p.m. on that Friday, the sky went dark and Jesus laid down His life. The sinless for the sinful, the worthy for the unworthy, the blessed for the destitute.

John Stott once said, our sins blotted out the sunshine of His Father's face. Christ became sin on our behalf.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5, 21, for our sake He made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

That great exchange that we talk about so often as Christ followers. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before Jesus' crucifixion, He prayed, as recorded in Matthew 26, verse 39, and going a little farther, He fell on His face and prayed saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will. Now, beloved, it's important to understand that Jesus' anguish over His coming crucifixion was not due to the physical suffering He would experience.

[24 : 31] As great as it was, this was not what was causing Him to sweat blood. But rather, He was in such anguish because of the wrath of God that He was going to bear.

Jesus had in mind passages like Jeremiah 25. This is verse 15 and 16 of Jeremiah 25. Thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to Me, this would be Jeremiah, Take from My hand this cup of the wine of wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.

They shall drink it and stagger and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them.

And then verse 27, Then you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Drink, be drunk, and vomit.

Fall and rise no more because of the sword that I am sending among you. This is the type of thing that Jesus has in His mind.

He knows that He has come to be a propitiation, a replacement sacrifice for all that would trust in Him. And He is looking to this next day God's wrath being poured out on Him.

[25 : 54] And this is the cry. If there's any other way, let this cup pass from Me. God is just.

And God is unchanging. And therefore, God must punish sin. God does not deal with disobedience the way so many of us imperfect parents deal with disobedience.

Right? My grace to my children is often my laziness. I just overlook the things that they're doing.

This is not the way the just God of the universe functions.

There have been infractions and they must be paid for. If you and I were to have any hope of the forgiveness of our sin, we needed a substitute.

The sins must be paid for. Jesus came to die our death. So as He hung on that cursed tree, He bore all of the wrath for all of the sin do you and I and all those who will ever or will whoever or will ever be called by His name.

[27 : 07] God the Father turned His face away from His Son and poured infinite wrath out on Him. We see the beginning of Psalm 22 verse 1.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This is what Jesus is uttering. He is citing from. So we get a little more, a bit of an expansion when we look at Psalm 22 verse 1 and then into verse 2. The psalmist says, 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.

Can you feel, I hope you can, the expanding anguish? What's wrapped up in this phrase, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why have you turned away from me? And then, Psalm 22 gives us another reprieve and I suggest the hope that pulled Christ, the man, through this immeasurable suffering.

[28 : 19] The writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 12 too that Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before him. So, what I'm postulating and we have no clear evidence of this is that Jesus says the words, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And he's thinking about in this time, he's meditating upon, he's pondering verses 3 and 4 and 5, yet you are holy and throned on the praises of Israel.

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.

Jesus knew that he was fulfilling the will of the Father, his good Father and his will would be accomplished. The second utterance and a bit briefer in this case.

We can read in John chapter 19 verse 28. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said, and John includes the parenthetical, to fulfill the scripture, I thirst.

[29 : 37] Now this is certainly a direct reference to Psalm 69 and verse 21 which says, again prophetic, they gave me poison for food and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

So Jesus says, I thirst so that this scripture would be fulfilled. But I think we also see it in Psalm 22. It's a little more difficult to get at but let me make the case for you briefly and then we'll move on to the third statement.

Psalm 22 verse 14 and 15. David writes, 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 pot shirt and my tongue sticks to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death.

You hear the dry and thirsty language found throughout those two verses and so Jesus utters, I thirst.

[30 : 39] finished. Thirdly, and I think most importantly, in John 19 and 30, when Jesus had received the sour wine he said, it is finished and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus, upon accomplishing the task that he became a man to accomplish uttered these simple but profound words, it is finished.

He had done all that he was sent to do when he died upon the cross. The writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3, Jesus Christ is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Beloved, this is so significant to the Hebrew hearers of the book of Hebrews because in the temple worship all of the continual ongoing ceremonial sacrifices that had to be made, blood flowed constantly from the temple and it was meant to show God's people their great need of a perfect sacrifice was meant to show them that all these sacrifices are inadequate to cover your sins.

So keep at it, Israel. Just keep making sacrifice. Keep making sacrifice. And all of the careful instruction for how the temple was to be laid out, there's a piece of furniture that does not exist in this place anywhere to sit.

[32 : 30] The priests did not sit down. They were at work constantly. They worked in shifts and they did not rest. But our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ finished the work and he sat down.

This would have been astounding to them when they heard it. To us we go, yeah, cool, he's sitting. No, he is at rest, right? He has made that full and final sacrifice.

He drank the entire cup of God's wrath. And when he finished it, he turned it over and he set it down and he said, it is finished.

A complete and perfect sacrifice for all time for those who believe in him. Now, I've been making the case that this comes from Psalm 22.

If you're tracking me, it's okay if you're not, if you're tracking me and you're being astute, you go, where is that found? Let me show you. Psalm 22, I'm going to start at verse 29 and read through 31.

[33 : 39] David says, All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship. Before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive.

Posterity shall serve him that shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation. They shall clumb and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn. And here it is, that he has done it.

And in Hebrew, this phrase could have very easily been translated for us that it is finished. It would have been very precise and faithful to the original text.

He has done it. It is finished. So, I hope, just considering Christ's death for us, you are moved to worship.

Let me give you a little more specific application, and I want to do it quickly, and here's where I'm picking up some of the verses I haven't referenced. I won't read them for the sake of time, but first, note how we're believing, and I think it's a fair belief, that Jesus Christ, as He hung on the cross, is carried through suffering by considering, He's pondering the Word of God.

[35 : 03] He's looking back to the promises of Scripture, and He's picking them up. He's meditating upon them, and He's turning that into belief. He's pondering the Word of God.

And, beloved, we are to do the same. Look to Christ and His great anguish. We have never experienced such suffering, and we never will, praise the Lord, because of Him.

But when you are going through tough times, ponder the Word of God. Secondly, we can see that Christ is praying to God for help in His time of need.

So, Psalm 22, verse 19 through 21, we see Him cry out to God. Verse 21, Save me from the mouth of the lion, and in this sure confidence, you have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen.

Cry out to God for help in times of need. Third, we see Jesus praising God for the purposes of suffering.

[36 : 15] Psalm 22, verse 2 through 5, we see Him seeing how God is working in the midst. And we know, Romans 8, that God is bringing about purpose in all of our suffering.

He's working to bring us to be like our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. So, He is pondering the Word of God. He's praying to God for help in time of need.

He's praising God for the purpose of suffering. And finally, proclaiming God's goodness to one another and to the world.

To one another, we see in Psalm 22, verses 22 through 26. I'll skip down to verse 25. From you comes my praise in the great congregation.

My vows I will perform before those who fear Him. We're to sing God's praises to one another. And praise God that Jesus has counted us, those who have placed believing faith in Him, amongst the congregation.

[37 : 25] Again, the book of Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews says in chapter 2, verse 11 and 12, for He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.

That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will tell of your name, to my brothers. In the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise.

And because Christ has purchased us, we are not ashamed to call one another brother and to share His goodness with each other. And we're also meant to do this to the world.

Again, Psalm 22, 27 and 28, 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. This good news of Jesus Christ is meant to be proclaimed to all people everywhere.

[38 : 28] So I hope, once again, that your heart has been warmed by the loving kindness of God to us in the death of Jesus Christ. Please join me in prayer, and then we're going to close in a couple of songs of praise.