

Psalm 22 "The Psalm That Told Him What Was Coming"<sup>\*\*1</sup>

Main Idea: Because Jesus knew Psalm 22, He knew exactly what was going to happen to Him. He knew the horrendous experience of the cross would bring two results. Pain. And gain.

I. Because of Psalm 22, Jesus knew about the grief/pain of the cross (1-18).

What did Jesus experience on the Cross?

- A. He would experience spiritual alienation (1-5).
- B. He would experience emotional abandonment (6-11).
- C. He would experience physical anguish (12-18).

II. Because of Psalm 22, Jesus knew about the gain of the cross (19-31).

What resulted from the Cross?

- A. He knew the cross would result in deliverance (19-21).
- B. He knew the cross would result in a declaration (22-31).
  - 1. The cross produced praise and worship to God.
  - 2. The cross produced hope for mankind.

Take Inventory: Because of the prophecy of Psalm 22...

- 1. We have reason to thank Jesus.
- 2. We have reason to cherish the cross.
- 3. We have reason to face what's coming with confidence.

*Scripture Reading: Luke 19:28-48*

He knew what was coming. He knew it on Palm Sunday as He rode into Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd. But in truth, He knew it every day of His life. Why, He knew it before He entered the world as a man. Indeed, it's why He came.

Jesus knew that He was going to die, and how He was going to die. He knew the unthinkable truth about the suffering He would experience on the day He breathed His last.

None of us live with that knowledge. We don't know how or when we will finish our days on earth. And that's a good thing.

But He did. Jesus knew the cross was coming. He was reminded of it every time He read or thought about Psalm 22.

That's today's message. Jesus knew the cross was coming from Psalm 22. And He knew the resurrection was coming. That's next Sunday's message, the Lord willing, from Psalm 16.

This morning, I want to take you on a journey. We won't leave our seats, but in your mind's eye I want you to see what Jesus saw. I want to take us to the prophetic text of Psalm 22 and see the prediction Jesus Himself read concerning the way He would die on the cross.

I realize there is difference of opinion amongst biblical scholars as to the person described in Psalm 22. If you'll notice the heading you'll see that Psalm 22 is "A Psalm of David." It begins with the words in verse 1, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some feel David is describing an event that he (or someone else in his day) experienced, some horrible period of physical illness and emotional trauma. That may be true.

The problem is this. Psalm 22 sounds more like the description of an execution than an illness. And we know of no event in David's life that comes close to the magnitude of affliction described in these 31 verses.

---

\*\* Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> This message is adapted from two series at WBC in 1992 and 2002.

Whether David was initially describing himself is not the issue, for he may have been. But the New Testament makes something perfectly clear. Psalm 22 reveals vividly for us what Jesus the Messiah experienced on the cross. The New Testament cites Psalm 22 in at least 8 passages, and in each, we're told that the events described there were fulfilled in the suffering of Jesus the Lord and Savior.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers who ever lived, called Psalm 22, "The Psalm of the Cross." W. S. Plumer called it, "The gospel according to David."<sup>2</sup> Others have called it the fifth Gospel account of the crucifixion.

No wonder we sing so much about the cross. [Sing together: "In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever, till my raptured soul shall find, rest beyond the river"]

Again, because Jesus knew Psalm 22, He knew exactly what was going to happen to Him. He knew the horrendous experience of the cross would bring two results. First, grief/pain. And then, gain. Because of Psalm 22 Jesus knew about the grief/pain of the cross (verses 1-18) and about the gain of the cross (verses 19-31).

### I. Because of Psalm 22, Jesus knew about the grief/pain of the cross (1-18).

Notice the heading above verse 1. "For the Director of Music" (AV, "To the chief Musician") which indicates this was designed to be sung, as part of personal and public worship.

Then it says, "To the tune of, The Doe of the Morning" (AV, "Upon Aijeleth Shahar"). That may be a tune name, as the NIV suggests, or it may introduce the theme of the Psalm, such as "On the help at Daybreak."

David wrote this psalm to describe the most horrible experience imaginable. But even in that, the title reminds us there is hope. After the suffering, help is coming, as we'll see at the end of the psalm.

Throughout His 33 years, Jesus went often to the synagogue. And since the Scriptures were read, taught, and memorized there, Jesus knew well the words of Psalm 22. In fact, He quoted part of it from memory on the day He died.

Psalm 22 told Him what to expect. First, grief. Our Savior would suffer grief in three ways.

#### **A. He would experience spiritual alienation (1-5).**

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?

<sup>2</sup> My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.

<sup>5</sup> To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

Notice the intensity and urgency of these first words! "My God! My God!" And then the 2-part question: Why God have You turned Your back on me? Why God are You not doing anything to help me?

---

<sup>2</sup> Plumer, p. 286.

Most of us can identify with these words. We've all, at one time or another, felt abandoned by God, forgotten, all alone. We've wondered why God seemed so distant, so disinterested in our plight.

But listen. No one ever experienced alienation like the One who traveled the harsh journey to that cruel hill outside of Jerusalem 2000 years ago.

See: Mt 27:45ff V 45 "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth until the 9th". Why was there darkness? Because God the Father turned His holy face away from His only Son. Why? Because in those three hours, the spotless Lamb of God became a curse for us.

Galatians 3:13 "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree."

Romans 5:8 "But God commended His love toward us in this. Christ died for us." In those three eternal hours, a transfer occurred. Jesus never sinned, but our sins and the sins of all who would believe on Him were laid upon Him. He took our place.

"He who knew no sin became sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21).

So at the cross, something happened to the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. The incarnate Son of God experienced spiritual alienation from His Father on the cross.

How do we know that? Listen to what He cried. In Matthew 27:46 "Eli, Eli lama sabachthani." What's that? It's Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke on earth. It's also Psalm 22:1. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

"Why? Why?" Know this. This is not the cry of impatience or despair. It's not the cry of a sinful rebel raising a clenched fist to God. It's the cry of a lost child who can't understand why his father left him, and who longs to see his father's face again, as Spurgeon puts it.

One tradition (unreliable?) says that while hanging on the cross, Jesus started at Ps 22:1 and repeated the Psalms that followed unto He reached Ps 31:5 and died. Ps 31:5 says, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit."

Whether He repeated them audibly is doubtful. But He had them in mind, for He had come to fulfill all the Scriptures.

When Jesus recited the first verse of Ps 22 on the cross, He revealed His identification with the entire Psalm.

V 2 "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not..."

What made the spiritual alienation even worse was when our Lord rehearsed what His Father had done for every other child of His. That's in verses 3-5, "... THEY cried and were DELIVERED."

When Moses cried, God answered. When Samson cried, God answered. When David cried, God answered. When God's own Son, Jesus Christ, cried, there was no answer. Only dreadful silence. Psalm 22 predicted He would hang there all alone.

And He did. He experienced the grief of spiritual alienation. Secondly...

**B. He would experience emotional abandonment (6-11).**

Remember verse 5, "THEY cried." And God "DELIVERED." Contrast this. Verse 6 (AV), "BUT I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised by people."

The spiritual alienation was terrible. Then there was also the emotional abandonment. Who abandoned Jesus? Who despised Him?

According to verse 6, "the people." The religious leaders, the mob of Jews, the soldiers. He was treated as a "worm." An object. Something you kick around and smash and that's powerless to prevent the aggression.

Listen to our Lord describe the emotional abandonment He felt, in verses 7-11.  
"All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.  
<sup>8</sup>"He trusts in the Lord," they say,  
"let the Lord rescue him.  
Let him deliver him,  
since he delights in him."

<sup>9</sup>Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.

<sup>10</sup>From birth I was cast on you;  
from my mother's womb you have been my God.

<sup>11</sup>Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.

"All they who see my laugh (7)...there is NONE to help (11)."

Jesus endured unimaginable rejection. He was treated as less than a man, a worm. A powerless, downtrodden worm. But the lowest blow of all inflicted by His aggressors is revealed in verse 8. What did the people say about Jesus?

"He trusted in God! Let God deliver Him!!"

Do you remember the taunts Jesus received from the chief priests? Matthew 27:42 "He saved others; himself he cannot save!" Matthew 27:43 "He trusted in God; let him deliver Him now, if he will have Him! for He said, I am the Son of God."

Do you know what this means, my friend? Some of you here today are hurting. Perhaps your pain is physical, or emotional. Know this. We have a Savior who can identify with our hurt and pain.

Hebrews 2:18 "In that He has suffered being tempted, He is able to help..."

When Jesus read Psalm 22, He was reminded of what was coming. The grief of the cross. He would experience spiritual alienation. And He would experience emotional abandonment. And this.

### **C. He would experience physical anguish (12-18).**

The description in verses 12-18 is graphic and vivid. It takes the reader right to the scene of a first century Roman execution.

"Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

<sup>13</sup>Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.

<sup>14</sup>I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax;  
it has melted within me.

<sup>15</sup>My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

<sup>16</sup> Dogs surround me,  
 a pack of villains encircles me;  
 they pierce<sup>[e]</sup> my hands and my feet.  
<sup>17</sup> All my bones are on display;  
 people stare and gloat over me.  
<sup>18</sup> They divide my clothes among them  
 and cast lots for my garment.

As He read these words our Lord saw in detail what He would endure on the cross. I found 15 cases of groundless, inhumane abuse.

1. Personal Humiliation (6)
2. Personal Rejection by the very people He had created (6)
3. Intense Ridicule (7-8)
4. Attack against His character (12-13)
5. They gaped at Him (13)--vicious verbal attacks (see Job 16:10)
6. Emaciated flesh (14 "poured out like water")
7. Bones out of joint (14)
8. Circulatory Shock--Heart like wax (14)--fluid build up in lungs and pericardium (the sac surrounding the heart)
9. His Vitality sapped (15 "strength dried up")
10. Dehydrated from loss of fluids--His Tongue stuck to His jaws (15)
11. Confronted Death's Door (15)--

Key: Victims of crucifixion died as the result of suffocation, shock, and congestive heart failure.

12. Dogs compassed Him (16)
  13. Pierced Hands and Feet (17)
  14. Bare bones; flesh torn away from body (17)
  15. They gambled for His clothes (18)-Made a GAME out of Execution
- Spurgeon said (in *The Treasury of David*, p 330), "He who gave His blood to cleanse us gave His garments to clothe us!"

What horrendous abuse! Jesus' critics are described as: v 12 "bulls of Bashan" (located east of Sea of Galilee), v 13 "ravening and roaring lion", v 16 "dogs" (not a domesticated friend either, but like a pack of ravenous, mad dogs).

You can't help but be moved by reading Psalm 22. So think how the Lord Jesus felt every time He read or heard read Psalm 22. Psalm 22 presents in all its horrid detail, the cruel form of capital punishment practiced by the Romans. Death by Crucifixion.<sup>3</sup>

Sing: "Jesus Paid It All"

Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen to Him. Because He knew Psalm 22, He knew the horrendous experience the cross would bring. First, pain. Unthinkable pain. Think of Psalm 22 as a photograph of our Lord's saddest hours.

I am so thankful the psalm doesn't stop there. It speaks of a second result. First, pain. And then gain.

## II. Because of Psalm 22, Jesus knew about the gain of the cross (19-31).

---

<sup>3</sup> See *Journal of American Medical Association*, 3/21/86

Verse 19 begins, "But," a strong contrast, sort of the fulcrum of Psalm 22. From verse 1 to verse 18 the scene has been heavy and hopeless. There was no other way. The cross had to precede the crown. The suffering had to come before the glory. The grief and pain before the gain.

But as Jesus read Psalm 22, He saw the light become to shine in verse 19. He knew the gain would come. And it did!

What gain did Jesus know would result from the cross? Two great results. . .

**A. He knew the cross would result in deliverance (19-21).**

<sup>19</sup> But you, Lord, do not be far from me.

You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

<sup>20</sup> Deliver me from the sword,

my precious life from the power of the dogs.

<sup>21</sup> Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;

save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

Here's the first gain. The cross would result in deliverance! Even on the cross, our Lord knew deliverance was coming, that His Father would rescue Him.

Psalm 16:10 "Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay."

Hebrews 12:2 "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

But that's not all Jesus saw. His deliverance would result in a second gain.

**B. He knew the cross would result in a declaration (22-31).**

Listen to verses 22-26.

<sup>22</sup> I will declare your name to my people;  
in the assembly I will praise you.

<sup>23</sup> You who fear the Lord, praise him!

All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!

Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

<sup>24</sup> For he has not despised or scorned  
the suffering of the afflicted one;

he has not hidden his face from him  
but has listened to his cry for help.

<sup>25</sup> From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.

<sup>26</sup> The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek the Lord will praise him—  
may your hearts live forever!

The cross was no accident. It was the focal point of God's predetermined plan. God revealed that plan in David's day, 1000 years prior to the actual execution of the Son of Man.

So as Jesus read Psalm 22 He saw the declaration He Himself would make. Verse 22, "I will declare your name to my people." The cross would not be the end. It would lead to the following, two outcomes.

*1. The cross produced praise and worship to God.*

Verse 22 "... in the midst of the congregation, I will praise Thee." (quoted in Heb 2:12). Verse 23 "Ye who fear the Lord praise Him." And why? Verse 24 "For He has not ... hidden His face from Him..."

So what's going to happen after the cross? Jesus reads that He will deliver a message to His followers that will result in praise and worship to God.

And that's what happened. Remember Jesus' first instructions after His resurrection? In Matthew 28:10 (to the women), "Be not afraid; go tell my brethren..." And in John 20:17 (to Mary), "Touch me not... But go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend."

And how did His followers respond? Listen to Thomas in John 20:28, "My Lord and my God!" Listen to Peter in Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

Do you see? The cross produced praise and worship from and through Jesus' followers. They heard Jesus' declaration, and believed Him, and worshipped God, and called on others to do the same.

What about us? Is that the effect the cross is having on us?

*2. The cross produced hope for mankind.*

Notice verses 27-31.

- <sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations  
will bow down before him,  
<sup>28</sup> for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations.  
<sup>29</sup> All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.  
<sup>30</sup> Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.  
<sup>31</sup> They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!

Look carefully at verse 31. In the AV, "They shall declare His righteousness to A PEOPLE THAT SHALL BE BORN."

That's Thomas and Peter and the Acts 2 crowd in Jerusalem. And that's us too! As Jesus read the last verse of Psalm 22, He saw that the effect of His cross would result in the spread of His message to people meeting in Wheelersburg in 2017.

The cross has indeed produced hope for all mankind.

Beloved, the cross enables unrighteous people like us to become righteous in the sight of our Holy God. How? By receiving His righteousness. Verse 31 again, "They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!"

Think of it this way. While enduring the pain He read about in Psalm 22:1-21, Jesus brought about the gain He read about in Psalm 22:22-31. There on the cross, with arms outstretched, He would reach out with one hand to sinful people like us, and one hand to His righteous Father, and bring about a perfect fellowship between God and a redeemed humanity.

Look again at the contrast. Look at the darkness in the first words of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?" Then look at the brilliant light in the last words of Psalm 22, "He has done it!"

The psalm begins with a cry of alienation. It ends with a cry of victory. That's what's going to happen on the cross, said Psalm 22 to Jesus as He read it.

And so it did.

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?" Those were His words in Matthew 27:46.

And so were these. "It is finished!" in John 19:30. Not, *I* am finished. But, *It* is finished. What's finished? The pain, and the gain. The pain it took to secure the salvation of His people, and the certain gain that will result from it.

W. S. Plumer said this back in 1867, "The universal spread of the gospel is clearly revealed in verses 27-31."<sup>4</sup> And this, "We live in exciting times. While sad tidings often make our ears to tingle, yet the tide of redemption is rolling on."<sup>5</sup>

It's not uncommon to hear people say, "If there's a God, how can He send people to suffer in hell."

The question is sort of skewed, implying that there are innocent people who want to be with Him in heaven, but are refused. And that's certainly not true.

But think of it this way. If there's not a hell, what's the point of Psalm 22? Why did God record the prophecy which details the unthinkable pain His Beloved Son would endure? And why did Son willingly enter the world and endure it, all the spiritual alienation, the emotional abandonment, and the physical anguish on the cross?

Listen carefully. If there is no God, if there is no heaven to be gained, if there is no hell to be avoided, then Jesus Christ died a fool's death, in vain.

If all people are basically good, and everybody's going to heaven anyway, then Jesus Christ endured what He endured for nothing. If that's so, the cross was not only unnecessary, but ridiculous!

But they were very necessary. And so is believing in Him and in what He endured for you. Have you made it personal? Do you sing these words from your heart?

"Wounded for me, wounded for me, there on the cross, He was wounded for me. Gone my transgressions, and now I am free, all because Jesus was wounded for me!"

And how about these? "At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light, and the burden of my heart rolled away. It was there by faith I received my sight, and now I am happy all the day."

#### Take Inventory: Because of the prophecy of Psalm 22...

1. *We have reason to thank Jesus.*
2. *We have reason to cherish the cross.*
3. *We have reason to face what's coming with confidence.*

Psalm 22 wasn't the only psalm that told Jesus what was coming. So did Psalm 16, which foretold His resurrection, which we'll consider next Sunday, the Lord willing, as we gather to worship Him on Resurrection Sunday.

Communion to follow

---

<sup>4</sup> Plumer, p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> Plumer, p. 307.