

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 4/5/92
Psalm 22 "The Psalm of the Cross"

Scripture: Psalm 22

Present Series: "Seeing the Savior in the Psalms"

Psalm 110 "The Rest of the Story about Jesus"

Psalm 2 "The Son Who Is King"

Psalm 22 "Forsaken By God"

Psalm 16 "The Empty Tomb"

Intro: Sing--"Jesus Paid It All"

Illust:

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 behold the greatest event in the history of the world. I want to take you to the scene of the cross. It's not a pleasant scene. It is a treasured scene. Our text is Psalm 22.

During these 4 Sundays leading up to Easter, we are endeavoring to "See the Savior in the Psalms." Two weeks ago we beheld Psalm 110. In that Messianic Psalm, we learned that Jesus Christ is the King, the Priest, and the Ruler. Last week in Psalm 2, we learned about His Kingship.

The passage before us today is very different. For on this day our Beloved Redeemer will be unveiled before our eyes, not as the Triumphant King, but as the Suffering Savior.

I realize there is difference of opinion amongst biblical scholars as to the person described in Ps 22. If you'll notice the heading you'll see that Ps 22 is "A Psalm of David." It begins with the words in v 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. Ps 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.

Whether David was initially describing himself is not the issue. He may have been. But the NT makes one point perfectly clear. Ps 22 is the perfect passage in the OT to reveal to us what Jesus Christ experienced on the Cross. Ps 22 is cited in at least 8 passages in the NT. In each, we're told that the events described in Ps 22 were fulfilled in the suffering of Jesus Christ.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers who ever lived, called Ps 22, "The Psalm of the Cross." Others have called it the 5th Gospel account of the Crucifixion. Sing: "In the Cross, in the Cross, be my glory ever, till my raptured..."

Q: What happened on the Cross?

Proposition: Psalm 22 enables us to see the Cross of Jesus Christ from 2 vantage points. We must see both to appreciate it and our Savior fully.

- I. The Grief of the Cross (1-18)
 - What did Jesus experience on the Cross?
 - A. Spiritual Alienation (1-5)
 - B. Emotional Abandonment (6-11)
 - C. Physical Anguish (12-18)
- II. The Gain of the Cross (19-31)
 - What resulted from the Cross?
 - A. Deliverance (19-21)
 - B. Declaration (22-31)
 - 1. Praise and Worship to God
 - 2. Hope for Mankind

I. The Grief of the Cross (1-18)

Notice the heading above v 1.

"To the chief Musician"--designed to be sung; part of personal and public worship

"Upon Aijeleth Shahar"--options:

- 1. May be a Tune name (NIV "To the tune of the Doe of the Morning")
- 2. May intro the Theme of the Psm ("On the help at Daybreak")

David wrote a psalm describing the most horrible experience imaginable. Even in that, the title reminds us there is hope. Help is coming, as we'll see at the end of the Psm.

Q: What did Jesus experience on the Cross?

A: First, Grief. Our Savior suffered Grief in 3 ways. . .

A. Our Savior Suffered the Grief of Spiritual Alienation (1-5).

V 1 "My God, my God. . ."

Notice the intensity and urgency of these first words! "My God! My God!"

And then the 2-part question:

V 1 "why hast thou forsaken me..."

- 1. Why God have You turned Your back on me?
- 2. Why God are You not doing anything to help me?

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"

Q: Why was there darkness?

A: Because God the Father turned His holy face away from His only Son.

Why? Because in those 3 hours, the Spotless Lamb of God became a curse for us.

Gal 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."

Rom 5:8 "But God commended His love. . . Christ died for us."

In those 3 eternal hours, a legal transfer occurred. Jesus never sinned. But our sins were laid upon Him. He took our place. "He who knew no sin became sin for us" (II Cor 5:21).

Q: At the Cross, what happened to the relationship between God the Father and the Son?

A: It was severed. Jesus Christ experienced Spiritual Alienation on the Cross. How do we know that? Look what our Redeemer cried...

Mt 27:46 "Eli, Eli lama sabachthani"

What's that? It's Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke on earth. It's also Ps 22:1. Mt 27:46 "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

"Why? Why?"--Listen. That's not the cry of impatience or despair. That's not the cry of a sinful rebel raising a clenched fist to God. That'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! (Spurgeon) Illust:

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."

Key: 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 when our Lord rehearsed what His Father had done for every other child of His.

Notice something that made Jesus' isolation even worse...

READ vv 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. Our Blessed Lord hung there all alone.

Illust:

What did Jesus experience on the Cross?

The Grief of Spiritual Alienation. Secondly...

B. Our Savior Suffered the Grief of Emotional Abandonment (6-11).

Remember v 5, "THEY cried." And God "DELIVERED." Contrast...

V 6 "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?

"the people"--the Religious leaders; the mob of people; 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.

READ vv 7-11 "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 v 8. What did the people say about Jesus?

V 8 "He trusted in God! Let God deliver Him!!"

Q: Do you remember the taunts Jesus received from the chief priests?

Mt 27:42 "He saved others; himself he cannot save!"

Mt 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."

Illust:

Application: Some here today are hurting. Perhaps your pain is physical, or emotional. Listen. We serve a Savior who can identify with our hurt and pain!

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

What grief did our Savior endure on the cross? Spiritual Alien. Emotional...

C. Our Savior Suffered the Grief of Physical Anguish (12-18).

Vv 12-18 are graphic and vivid. They take us right to the foot of the cross.

READ vv 12-18 "Many bulls..."

What kind of abuse did our Lord 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

Quote: Spurgeon, "The Treasury of David", "He who gave His blood to cleanse us gave His garments to clothe us!" (330)

What horrendous abuse! Jesus' critics described as:

v 12 "bulls of Bashan" (located east of Sea of Galilee)

v 13 "ravening and roaring lion"

v 16 "dogs"

Illust: Like a pack of ravenous, mad dogs

You can't help but be moved by Ps 22. Ps 22 presents in all its horrid detail, the cruel form of capital punishment practiced by the Romans--Death by Crucifixion.

Illust: Journal of Amer Medical Assoc, 3/21/86

Sing: "Jesus Paid It All"

Tran: What happened on the Cross? Ps 22 enables us to see the cross from 2 vantage points. We've seen the first, the Grief of the Cross. Ps 22 is a photograph of our Lord's saddest hours. I am so thankful that Ps 22 doesn't stop there!

II. The Gain of the Cross (19-31)

V 19 "But"--strong contrast; fulcrum of Ps 22

From v 1 to v 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 before the Gain. But the gain did come!

Q: What gain came out of the Cross? What resulted from the Cross?

A: Two great results. . .

A. Deliverance--Deliverance resulted from the Cross (19-21).

V 19 "O my strength, haste to help me."

V 20 "...Deliver my soul" V 21 "Save me..."

Here's the first result of the Cross--Deliverance!

Ps 16:10 "For thou wilt not leave my soul..."

Even on the cross, our Lord knew deliverance was coming. His Father would rescue Him. (see Heb 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.")

Illust:

The Deliverance led to the second gain... Here's where we benefit.

B. Declaration--A Declaration resulted from the Cross (22-31).

Jesus Christ made a declaration beginning in v 22.

V 22 "I will declare..."

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.

In His declaration, our Lord revealed 2 great gains of the Cross.

*1. Gain #1--The Cross produced **Praise and Worship to God.***

V 22 "... in the midst of the congregation, I will praise Thee." (quoted in Heb 2:12)

V 23 "Ye who fear the Lord praise Him."

Why?

V 24 "For He has not ... hidden His face from Him..."

Q: Who benefitted from the Cross?

A: Jesus' followers did. Remember Jesus' first instruction after His resurrect?
Mt 28:10 (to the women) "Be not afraid; go tell my brethren..."

Jn 20:17 (to Mary) "Touch me not... But go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend"
The empty cross produced praise and worship for Jesus' followers.

Q: What about us? What does the cross do for us?

2. *Gain #2--The Cross produced Hope for Mankind.*

V 27 "All the ends of the world shall remember...and turn to the Lord... worship"

READ vv 28-31

Look carefully at v 31.

V 31 "They shall declare His righteousness to A PEOPLE THAT SHALL BE BORN"
That's us! The cross produces hope for all mankind.

Illust: Judge who sentenced his daughter (J. McDowell, 114-15)

Key: The greatest product of the Cross is this. The Cross enables unholy people like us to be able to worship a Holy God! At the cross, with arms outstretched, Jesus Christ reached out with one hand to sinful people like us, and one hand to our Righteous God, and brought us back together in perfect fellowship.

Notice carefully:

1. The first words of Ps 22--"My God, My God..."

2. The last words of Ps 22--"that He hath done this." =He has wrought it. Ps 22 began with a cry of alienation. Ps 22 ends with a cry of victory. Why? How can that be?

What were the final words of Jesus on the cross? "IT IS FINISHED!"

Salvation is complete! Our redemption was accomplished when our Lord died.

Conclusion:

Objection: People say, "If there's a God, how can He send people to suffer in hell."

Q: If there's not a hell, why did God send His Son to suffer 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 in vain!

If God thinks all people are "basically good," and everybody's going to heaven anyway, then Jesus Christ was a fool to endure what He endured! If that's so, the Cross was not only unnecessary, but ridiculous!

But no! The events we've seen this morning in Ps 22 DID OCCUR! Why?

Hymn: "It was for YOU, the Savior died..."

Hymn: "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!"

Sing: "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."