

**Psalm 22: 1-11 and 22-26; Christ's Sufferings and Victory For Us", A Communion
Sermon, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 6th, 2013,
In the Morning Worship Service.**

When we come to the Lord's table each month, it is to remember Christ's sufferings and death for us, and to publicly proclaim His triumph over all of our greatest enemies. God intends that through this means of grace, there will come to our hearts, personal reflections upon Christ's grace and glory. The Lord intends that many applications of truth concerning what He has done for us, will come to our minds at this time. The Holy Spirit will lead us to thoughts about our Savior which will strengthen and nourish our faith so that we will be able to face what lies ahead of us in terms of temptation and suffering for Christ's sake. In remembering Christ's sufferings and death, we will remember that He laid down His life for us, so that we would not perish in our sins. We will give Him thanks for His supreme sacrifice. But in coming to this table, here today, we also want to remember that our Lord Jesus has died so that we as believers might be able to die to sin daily, and live to righteousness in every situation in our lives; whether it is good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant. The theme that I want you to consider with me this morning is this: We are only strong as Christians, able to endure trials and temptations, and able to do the Lord's will, because of what Christ did for us. He went before us in all the situations which relate to our obedience. His obedience was perfect and His sufferings purchased the many blessings of our salvation. So during this time of preparation for taking the Supper, we want to think more deeply about Christ's sufferings and His victory over sin and death. We want to see more clearly the benefits of grace which He died to purchase for us. These benefits of grace not only save us from our sins, but sustain us in all of our trials. We want to look 1st, at what it meant for Christ to be forsaken by God for our sins. And then 2nd – We will consider His victorious resurrection and how it should dramatically affect the way that we live.

1st of all – We want to look at what it meant for Christ to be forsaken by God for our sins. (Verses 1-10)

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” “Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?” “O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent.” “But You are holy...” This Psalm is a Psalm of David, but it refers primarily to Christ. It is true that David may have had certain situations in his life which these verses describe. But these verses go far beyond David's experience, and they are quoted by the gospel writers as directly referring to Christ and His sufferings on our behalf. In these first 2 verses we find our Lord forsaken by His Father who He calls “My God” in both verses 3 times. God is the God of Christ as He was made a man and given a human nature. Our Lord Jesus recognized Himself as being in covenant with His God. As John Gill says, “He prayed to Him, believed in Him, loved Him, and was obedient to Him as such, and here expresses His faith of interest in Him, on account of which He reasons with God this way.” The Lord Jesus, while He walked upon this earth, in the whole time of His life and ministry, always knew His Father's favor. He always had His Father's presence and nearness and blessing. The fullness of the Spirit was given to Him without measure, and He never knew the loss of it during the whole time of His ministry. But now, as He hung upon the cross, He realized that His sufferings on behalf of sinners involved the loss of His Father's presence and help, as He was reckoned by the Father, seen by the Father, as a transgressor and punished justly on account of it. Indeed His sense of being forsaken began even before this; at the time leading up to the cross in the garden of Gethsemane. Even at that time He began to feel the tremendous and awful weight of the Father's displeasure; His anger and wrath because the Lord Jesus had willingly chosen to suffer in our place. It is something which was very hard to bear for the One who had daily been the Father's delight before this time.

As we contemplate these things, we must remember that the Father and Lord Jesus did all of these things because of their love to sinners. The Father loved the World so much that He gave, but in giving it was His loving intention to forsake His dear and only-begotten Son during His time upon the cross, so that the punishment due our sins might be fully borne by Him. The Father forsook His own Son by depriving Him of all the blessings and comforts in His human nature that really should have belonged to Him as a righteous and holy man. He was deprived of the gracious presence of God on the cross.

Jesus knew that it was the Father's will that He pray always; and yet when he prays here, He does not receive an answer. If we were there, we would have heard the words of His groaning, and yet there was no aid given to Him by the Holy Spirit to help take those groans and make plain sense of them to the Father. There were cries, strong cryings with tears, that He might be delivered there in the Garden of Gethsemane. There was an agonizing wrestling with God in prayer that there might be some other way. And although it says in Hebrews 5: 7 that God had the power to deliver Him from death He, for our sakes, had to learn obedience by the things that He suffered. His prayers and cries were heard, and noted for their piety by God, but there was no witness with the Father to Jesus' own spirit that He was even heard or would be answered. All this was for our sakes. We do not deserve for God to hear us when we cry to Him for salvation. We are not automatically heard by God or merit favor in His sight to have him answer any of our prayers. This privilege was something that Christ purchased for us by His sufferings at the cross. Christ prayed believingly; He prayed trustingly, and He prayed continually; and yet was He was not heard, so as to be rescued and delivered from any of His sufferings. This was so that you and I would be able to pray believingly; so that we can pray trustingly, and be heard. This is certainly a reason that you ought to avail yourself of this blessed privilege of prayer. "Men ought always to pray and not to lose heart." But the reason that we are heard is because of Jesus' sufferings.

In verse 3 Jesus confesses that God is holy even though the answer that He had been looking for and hoping for, to be rescued and delivered, was not coming. "But You are Holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel." He reminds His Father that the fathers in Israel had always found Him faithful that when they had trusted; when they had cried to God. He had heard them, and delivered them, and they were not ashamed. And yet here was the Lord of Glory, on the cross, being put to shame; the One who had not sinned in any way. He endured the cross and despised the shame. He knew that He was righteous and that He did not deserve either the hurtful treatment at the hands of sinful men or the wrath of His father. But it was for the joy and the prospect of what these sufferings and this obedience would purchase and secure for all of God's Elect people that He is willing and does endure them. In undergoing these sufferings He is all the while confessing that God is Holy in giving them to Him and arranging and ordering that it be so in His case. He justifies God in punishing Him, knowing that this is what we deserved and what we would have received in the form of eternal punishment if He did not step in between us and God when He did.

He comes to see Himself in the midst of this desertion and in the midst of these sufferings as a worm and not a man, Verse 6. Evil men charged Him with what was not true about Himself. They reproached Him and despised Him and ridiculed Him, and they mocked His strong faith in His Father God. "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him, let Him deliver Him since He delights in Him!" But see, how wonderfully, His faith does not fail. He persevered in His trust in verses 9- 11. He remembered all that the Father had done for Him in taking and bringing Him out of His mother's womb and making Him trust while upon His mother's breasts. Samuel Eyles Pierce, taking us into the thoughts of our Lord Jesus, when He was in prayer during His sufferings, says this: "Thy love, wisdom, goodness, and care, have been every moment from that time to this, exercised towards Me, and upon Me." "Thou art My God from my mother's belly."

“I acknowledged then, this the secrets of my mind that Thou stood in this relation to Me.” “I profess this to the very present moment.” “In the full belief of this, my faith is kept up, under all my sufferings, in the free and fullest exercises thereof.” “On this I stay myself, Thou art my God.” “I have been Thy Holy One from my birth.” “I am holiness itself in Thy sight, and before Thee.” “In the confidence, Thou art my God, I cast myself on Thee, to be carried through all my sorrows and suffering.” You see, He was cast upon God, He says, when He was too young to be able to anything for Himself and He eventually knew that God had been there for Him all the while. He is saying here that He will continue to trust even when His Father withdraws for this time and hides His face from Him until He dies. He says, “Be not far from Me. For trouble is near, and there is none to help.” All this, He suffered for our sakes, so that He could say to us in Hebrews 13: 5, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.” “For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.” “Then we can boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.’” “What can man do to me?” When you come to the Table in a few minutes will you not remember that the Lord became a worm and not a man in His suffering experience for you? Although sinless in Himself, still He bore all the feelings and the shame of the guilt of all of your sins. He became sin on your behalf that you might become the righteousness of God in Him. This feeling like a worm, when He was on the cross, led Him to think and to feel that He was the lowliest and most despised creature in the world. He bore this on your behalf so that you would not have to bear it for all of eternity. He bore this on your behalf, dear Christian, so that when you mourn over your sins in repentance, that you might be comforted by the thoughts of forgiveness as you confess your sins. He bore this so that you might know God to be your God forever. He was reproached and despised, He was ridiculed and mocked, so that you might know and understand in your soul, the reality of God’s acceptance. Christ’s sufferings purchased the forgiveness of all of your sins. Christ’s stripes and wounds have healed your sin sick soul, so that day by day the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses your heart and your mind from all sin.

2nd – Let us consider His victorious resurrection and how it should dramatically affect the way that we live. (verses 21a-26)

Whole sermons could be written on these verses, but I will be brief here. Verse 21b says, “You have answered me”. God answered the prayers of Christ in His resurrection from the dead. He could not answer Him to deliver Him from His sufferings, or else we could never have been saved. But because He was righteous in all that did, and He did humble Himself unto the point of death, even the death of the cross, God knowing that He did this on behalf of all of God’s Elect, answered Him by raising Him from the dead. He could now appear to His brethren, the 12 Apostles and all of His disciples in that day, and declare God’s name to them in the midst of the assembly. Our God is holy and righteous and faithful to His New Covenant which He made with Christ, and through Him with us. This is what we remember today; Christ’s sufferings and His victory over sin and death on our behalf has given us all the blessings of salvation. Through Him we have been called and justified and adopted into His family. Through His grace we shall be sanctified and eventually even be glorified at the day of the resurrection. What He has done demands a response from us. It is found in verse 23. “You who fear the Lord, praise Him!” “All you seed of Jacob, glorify Him.” That is; live your life for Him. Live your life to do His will as it is found in the Bible. Walk in the Spirit. Walk uprightly before Him. And serve Him with gladness. This does not have reference to Jews only, but also to us Gentiles, for it says in verse 27 – “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You.” As you partake of the Supper today, remember what a great salvation you have been given through our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise Him in your heart, and with your lips. Fear Him and love Him and serve Him, giving him the strength of your youth,

and middle age, and old age. The Lord Jesus has invited us to His banqueting table and His banner over us is love. Let us thank Him now for His sufferings, and His victory.