

Sermon outline and notes prepared by:  
Pastor Stephen Felker  
Swift Creek Baptist Church, 18510 Branders Bridge Rd., Colonial Heights, VA 23834  
Sunday, November 28, 2016

Psalm 22      “A Prophecy of the Crucifixion”  
(read vv. 1-2, 6-8, 12-18)

Intro. This is beyond all others The Psalm of the Cross. It is so named because it describes more accurately and minutely the crucifixion of Christ than any other prophecy. That is especially amazing when you consider that crucifixion was unknown when this psalm was written. This Psalm has also been called the Passion Psalm. This Psalm probably reflects some of David’s own experiences of suffering. However, as the star is concealed by the light of the sun, even so what we see in this Psalm is not so much the suffering of David but the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. In fact, the psalmist words were quoted or referred to by the Gospel writers five times (vv.1, 7, 8, 16, 18) in connection with Jesus’ death. Jesus Himself quoted v.1. This Psalm is the photograph of our Lord’s saddest hours and the record of His dying words and even some of His thoughts. Jesus Himself noted that the Psalms predicted His suffering and death. In Lk. 24:44 He said, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” Some scholars believe that Jesus quoted much or all of this Psalm while hanging on the cross because this Psalm parallels in many respects the seven sayings of Christ from the cross. We shall view the crucifixion of Christ from a new position—from the cross itself. But this Psalm does not just predict the sufferings of the cross, but also the glory that would follow.

Now there are several different ways that Jesus Christ suffered for you and for me, as seen in this Psalm. Let’s reflect upon the suffering He endured for us. Now the first way in which He suffered was the fact that:

## I. HE WAS FORSAKEN OF GOD

The opening words of the Psalm bring this out. V.1 says, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” The psalmist experienced what felt like the absence of God in his trials. Jesus felt the same way. He quoted v.1 from the cross (Matt. 27:46). This was the startling cry of Golgotha.

Then beginning in the last of v.1 we see the reason why Jesus felt this way. It says, “Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?” In v.2 he indicates that His prayers for help seem to be unanswered. He had prayed in the Garden that this cup would pass from Him, but God did not will it. So in a real sense, when Jesus suffered on the cross, He was forsaken of God. God the Father did not intervene to rescue His Son, or lessen His suffering in the least. He especially felt this way during the three hours of darkness as He bore the wrath of God against sin. By the way, the word translated “groaning” is using translated “roaring,” as that of a lion. The word may reflect a loud groan or cry from pain.

Application: Have you ever been forsaken? Do you know what it feels like? [by a spouse, a parent]. One of my worst childhood memories was the time when I went to the YMCA after school on a bus. I was probably about 8-9 years old. We returned to the school around 5 PM, and I was the only child whose parent was not there to pick them up. Even the bus driver left me! There I sat at the school, waiting, waiting. Finally, after an hour or two my mother remembered

me and picked me up! So just take the pain I experienced of feeling forsaken, and multiply that many times over, and you will get a sense of what Jesus must have felt like.

Now let's consider:

A. The Reason He Was Forsaken – Why did God allow His own Son to be forsaken to suffer so much? Surely there was no cause in Him. Why then was He deserted? I can understand why traitorous Judas and timid Peter would forsake Jesus in His time of trouble, but why would God forsake Him?

Surely the answer is this: Jesus is forsaken because He was suffering in our place. He experienced what our sins deserve: separation from God. Hell itself has for its fiercest flame the separation of the soul from God.

Application: Are you thankful that Jesus suffered separation from God so that you and I may never have to be separated from God?

B. The Proper Response – Jesus teaches us how we should respond in times of trouble.

1. Keep Affirming God as Your God – The Psalmist, and our Lord Himself, keeps His hold upon His God with both hands and cries twice, “My God, my God!”

Application - When you go through a trial, and God seems so distant, do you nevertheless retain your hold on God? For our prayers to appear to be unheard is no new trial. Jesus felt it before us, and it is observable that He still held fast His believing hold on God, and still cried, “My God.” Our Lord continued to pray even though no comfortable answer came, and in this He set us an example of obedience to His own words, “men always ought to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1).

2. Keep Speaking Well of God in Spite of Your Trouble – In vv.3-5 we read, “But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.” After praising God, He reminds Himself of how His Jewish forefathers trusted in God, and how God answered prayer many times in the past. If prayer is unanswered, it is not because God is unfaithful, but for some other good and weighty reason.

The second way in which He suffered was the fact that:

## II. HE WAS HUMILIATED BY MEN

In v.6 the Psalmist expresses the humiliation that Jesus must have felt, “But I am a worm, and no man....” How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement, that He is compared to a worm? Yet there may be more to the meaning of the word than conveying humility. The particular worm spoken of here was the scarlet worm, which died on a tree giving life to her offspring, shedding scarlet fluid in the process! What a picture of the purpose for our Lord's suffering. Yet the main point in the comparison is to say that Jesus would be despised and crushed like a lowly worm, just as the scarlet worm was crushed to extract its scarlet die. How utterly did the Savior empty Himself of all glory, and become of no reputation for our sakes!

Now notice the particular ways in which He was humiliated for us:

A. Reproached and Despised – In the last of v.6 He explains what He means when He says, “I am a worm, and no man” (Hebrew parallelism). He says He was “a reproach of men, and despised by the people.” His suffering was intensified by that brutal mob that stood beneath Him.

Jesus was indeed reproached by His enemies. He was despised by them as well. In fact, the prophet Isaiah also predicted that He would be “despised and rejected by men” (53:3). Sin is worthy of all reproach and contempt, and for this reason Jesus, the Sinbearer, was given up to be thus unworthily and shamefully entreated.

B. Ridiculed – He says in v.7, “All those who see Me ridicule Me...” Read the evangelistic narrative of the ridicule endured by the Crucified One. Priest and people, Jews and Gentiles, soldiers and civilians, all united in scoffing Jesus.

There were 2 primary ways in which they ridiculed the Son of God:

1. In Gestures – In the last of v.7 he says, “They shoot out the lip, they shake the head.” These were gestures of contempt. Grinning, shaking of the head, thrusting out of the tongue, and other modes of derision were endured by our patient Lord; men made faces at him before whom angels veil their faces and adore.

2. In Word – Notice what they mockingly said in v.8, “He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!” Matthew reports that the enemies of Christ said such words at the cross. He says in 27:43 of his gospel: “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Here the taunt is cruelly aimed at the sufferer’s faith in God, which is the tenderest point in a good man’s soul. It must have stung the Man of Sorrows severely. The religious leaders of Israel should have been the last to make fun of anyone’s trust in God. Yet Jesus accused them of being children of the devil, and they must have learned the diabolical art from Satan himself. Were they so blind that they did not realize that they were fulfilling prophecy?

Oh, which shall we wonder at the most, the cruelty of man or the love of the bleeding Savior? I have to tell you that the love of Jesus is even greater than the cruelty of His enemies.

Application: When we are tormented in the same manner, let us remember Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, and we shall be comforted.

C. Forsaken by His Disciples – In v.11 the Psalmist predicts the situation of Jesus, “Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; For there is none to help.” All the disciples except John had forsaken Him. The absence of all other helpers is another telling plea. In our Lord’s case none would help Him, and John was powerless to help Him. How painful it must have been that in His moment of crisis, so few stood by Him, or offered to help Him. Oh the suffering of Jesus!

D. Encircled by Enemies – In a nightmare description He told about the threat of His enemies that surrounded Him like strong and deadly animals. For example, in v.12 we read, “Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan<sup>1</sup> have encircled Me.” In the last of v.13 the Psalmist mentioned that his enemies were like a “raging and roaring lion.” Then in v.16 he says, “dogs have surrounded Me.” Years ago I witnessed through my window 3 dogs that surrounded my cat and engaged in a deadly attack before could intervene.

Even so, Jesus was surrounded by fierce enemies, closing in for the kill. They surrounded Him at His trials, demanding the sentence of death. The priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, and rulers surrounded the cross like wild bulls full of strength and fury. They stamped around the innocent One, and longed to gore Him to death with their cruelties. They were brutal as bulls,

---

<sup>1</sup> Bashan was a fertile pastureland across the Jordan River, noted for its fat cattle and fierce bulls (Amos 4:1).

and the Rejected One was all alone. Jesus allowed Himself to be like my cat, surrounded by attacking dogs, and He let them have their way with Him, and He suffered terribly.

E. Naked, Losing Even His Clothing – In v.18 we see another amazing prophecy that was fulfilled, “They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” All 4 gospel writers record that this happened to Jesus. The garments of the executed were acquired by the executioners in most cases, but it was not often that they cast lots at the division of the spoil. The soldiers cast lots for the fine, woven tunic of Jesus. Evidently it was kept off His body from the time they removed it for the scourging. Matthew and John quoted this verse, recognizing it as a fulfillment of this prophecy (Mt. 27:35; Jn. 19:24).

Application: This incident shows how clearly David saw the day of Christ, and how surely the Man of Nazareth is He of whom the prophets spoke. Also, He was crucified naked that you might be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. How grateful we should be for His sacrifice.

F. Stared Upon – In the last of v.17 we read, “They look and stare at Me.” In fact, the Romans purposely crucified people along busy highways as a warning of what happens to people who break Roman law. So many unholy eyes gazed and stared insultingly upon the Savior’s nakedness and His intense suffering. The sight of the agonizing body ought to have ensured sympathy from the throng. Instead, they gloated their cruel eyes upon His miseries. This just added to His humiliation.

The third way in which He suffered was the fact that:

### III. HE SUFFERED PHYSICALLY

Turning from His enemies, our Lord describes His own personal condition in language which should bring the tears into every loving eye.

A. In General – Notice what He says in v.14, “I am poured out like water... My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me.” This describes someone whose strength is all gone.<sup>2</sup> In fact, he goes on to say in v.15, “My strength is dried up like a potsherd....” He was utterly spent, like water poured upon the earth. No wonder when you consider how much blood He lost, and how much sweat He lost carrying His own cross. Consider the tears He must have shed. His whole being was made a sacrifice, like a libation poured out before the Lord.

The fire of Almighty wrath would have consumed our souls forever in hell; it was no light work on Him who was our substitute. If the heart of Christ melted at it, what heart can endure when God deals with them in His wrath?

B. Pierced in Hands and Feet – He says in the last of v.16, “They pierced My hands and My feet.” This can by no means refer to David, or to anyone but Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. This is an amazing prophecy of crucifixion hundreds of years before it was invented as a means of execution!

---

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. 21:7 says, "Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water."

C. Thirst – He said in the last of v.15, “...My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.” Extreme thirst was a common effect of crucifixion. That was so of Jesus as well. John 19:28 says, “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’” Surely He realized that He was fulfilling Psalm 22! No doubt a high degree of feverish burning afflicted the body of our Lord. All His strength was dried up in the tremendous flames of avenging justice, even as the paschal lamb was roasted in the fire.

D. His Bones – Notice how the crucifixion affected the bones of Jesus. V.14 says, “...And all My bones are out of joint....” Is it not most probable that the fastening of the hands and feet, and the jar occasioned by fixing the cross in the earth, may have dislocated the bones of the Crucified One? Yet another reason bones tended to be dislocated is this: crucified victims were weakened by the ordeal, and after time they could no longer hold their weight up with the legs, and so their arms became dislocated. Then, so emaciated was Jesus by His sufferings that He says in v.17, “I can count all My bones....” The scourging probably tore off some flesh down to the bone. Also, hanging from the cross probably caused His ribcage to be more pronounced.

It’s hard to imagine Jesus suffering so much. It was even harder to imagine that Jesus was so *willing* to suffer so much. Surely, it was the great love of Jesus that compelled Him to suffer so much. Do you see how much Jesus loves you? Do you love Jesus in return?

But His obedience in suffering was not in vain. Notice last of all:

#### IV. HIS OBEDIENCE WAS REWARDED

Two ways in particular are mentioned in our text:

A. God Heard His Prayer and Delivered Him out of Death – In vv.20-21 we read, “Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion’s mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen!<sup>3</sup>...” The sword is simply a synonym for death by execution. “My precious life” is literally “my only [life].” How true that is! Would that all men recognized that they only have one life, one soul. Jesus said in Mark 8:36, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”

There is a marvelous change in the Psalm beginning with the last of v.21, “You have answered Me.” The transition is very marked; from a horrible tempest all is changed into calm. The mood of the psalm suddenly changed from painful lament to exalted praise. His prayer was heard, and the doom of the cross departed. When sin had been fully atoned for, Jesus prayed, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Luke 23:46). Then, on the third day He rose victoriously from the grave! Thus faith, though sorely beaten, and even cast beneath the feet of her enemy, ultimately wins the victory. In vv.22-23 He vowed to praise God for his deliverance and to call on the congregation to join Him in his adoration of the Lord.

B. Multitudes Were to Be Saved as a Result – In vv.27-28 we read, “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the LORD’S, And He rules over the nations.” In reading this verse one is struck with the Messiah’s missionary spirit. With prophetic insight the psalmist

---

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew word translated “wild oxen” is translated “unicorn” in the AV. Whatever it was it was large, strong (Num. 23:22), untamable (Job 39:9), and may have had just one horn.

looked down the years and glimpsed the coming kingdom of God. He saw distant nations being converted to faith in God (v.27). Even generations yet unborn would enjoy his salvation (vv. 30-32). This reminds me of another prophecy of the crucifixion. Isaiah 53:11 says, "He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities." Yes, He "shall justify many...."

This has come to pass. It is evidently His grand consolation that the Lord God will be known throughout all places of His dominion.

Conclusion – Who but Jesus has so well fulfilled this prophecy? Jesus must be the One this prophecy was about! If you haven't done so, trust in Him as your Savior. If you reject Christ, God must treat you as He treated His Son when He cried, ". . . My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

Sources: Alton H. McEachern, *Layman's Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 2 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1982); G. Campbell Morgan, *Notes on the Psalms* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1947); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 4:23] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2012); Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979 reprint), 324-331 only; Fred M. Wood, *Psalms: Songs from Life* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1984). Nothing available from Brisco & Maclaren.

#### ABOUT THESE SERMON NOTES

© Dr. Stephen Felker. These notes may be used and even shared for personal study or ministry, but not for commercial purposes. The author credits the sources listed above and footnotes for much of the content. The "live" recording of this sermon will be more completely in the author's own words. To obtain an audio recording of this message, you may listen free at [www.sermonaudio.com/pastorFelker](http://www.sermonaudio.com/pastorFelker). Dr. Felker's email address is [S+Felker&2@aol.com](mailto:S+Felker&2@aol.com) (remove signs).