

Hope in Troubled Times

An Easter Nobody Will Ever Forget!

Psalm 22:22-31

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Scripture

Psalm 22 is a fitting psalm for our meditations on Good Friday and Easter Sunday because the first part of the psalm (verses 1-21) focuses on the experience of suffering on a cross, while the second part of the psalm (verses 22-31) announces the resurrection and expresses praise to God for the expanding proclamation of the good news of victory over death.

We noted when we examined the first part of the psalm (verses 1-21) that we don't know when David wrote this psalm. There are things written in the psalm that don't seem to fit events in David's life. This leads one to believe that David was writing prophetically of Christ. We also noted that Jesus was meditating on this psalm as he was hanging on the cross.

Please follow along as I read Psalm 22:22-31:

**²² I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation**

I will praise you:

**²³ 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!**

**²⁴ 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.**

**²⁵ From you comes my praise
in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those
who fear him.**

- ²⁶ The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live forever!**
- ²⁷ All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.**
- ²⁸ For kingship belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.**
- ²⁹ 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.**
- ³⁰ Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord
to the coming generation;**
- ³¹ they shall come and proclaim his righteousness
to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it. (Psalm 22:22-31)**

Introduction

The title for this message is “An Easter Nobody Will Ever Forget!” I got the title from Pastor Raymond McHenry.

I like the title because I am sure that nobody will ever forget Easter Sunday in 2020.

I suppose that there have been times when a service on Easter Sunday was cancelled, perhaps because of a snowstorm, or flooding, or something like that. But that would have been restricted to a region. Perhaps during the world wars, Easter Sunday services were cancelled because of the war, but I am not sure about that. Even so, there would have been lots of places around the world where people could meet for worship.

What makes this year's Easter so different is that it is affecting people in every country of the world. There are some places in the world where the restrictions on staying home because of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic are even more severe than what we have in the United States.

But, while nobody will ever forget Easter this year, the Easter that nobody will ever forget is that very first Easter. It is because of that first Easter that we are trying to figure out how to celebrate this year's Easter when we cannot meet together in person. That first Easter is the reason the Church exists. That first Easter is the one we will be talking about for all eternity.

As Jesus was hanging on the cross, he was anticipating his resurrection on that first Easter Sunday morning.

Lesson

Psalm 22:22-31 expresses praise to God for the expanding proclamation of the good news of victory over death.

Let's use the following outline:

1. To the Congregation (22:22-26)
2. To the Ends of the Earth (22:27-29)
3. To the Coming Generation (22:30-31)

I. To the Congregation (22:22-26)

First, the good news of victory over death is proclaimed to the congregation.

Verse 22 says, **“I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”** Hebrews 2:12 quotes this verse. One commentator said, “The quotation tells us how to interpret the psalm. It tells us that

Jesus is the speaker, not just in this verse but throughout. And it tells us that the ‘brothers’ (and sisters) of the psalm’s second half are those for whom he died and rose again.”¹

On that first Easter Sunday, Jesus did indeed show himself to his **“brothers.”** I think especially of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth” (Luke 24:15–19a), and went on to say that Jesus had been crucified, and how they had hoped that Jesus would be the one to redeem Israel.

The wonderful irony is that Jesus was actually the only one in Jerusalem who really did know what had happened!

He was alive! He had been raised from death back to life again! Jesus told them how all the Scriptures pointed to him. When they drew near to Emmaus, they persuaded Jesus to stay and have dinner with them. He went in and took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it them. “And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight” (Luke 24:31). They now understood—Jesus was alive!

They rushed back to Jerusalem that same day and found the eleven disciples and told them that they had seen Jesus. As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 200–201.

among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” (Luke 24:36).

Over the next forty days Jesus showed himself alive to his disciples on various occasions, as well as to other believers. He praised the Father to his brothers and in the midst of the congregation for his victory over death and sin.

Because of the incredible comebacks in the 2001 World Series between the Arizona Diamondbacks and the New York Yankees, *Sports Illustrated* ran an interesting article on comebacks. That series had three huge comebacks—the Yankees with two in New York and the Diamondbacks with their big one in game seven. The piece in *Sports Illustrated* was of a different nature though. Of the ten greatest comebacks, according to *Sports Illustrated*, only two had anything to do with sports. Number seven on the list was Harry Truman’s defeat of John Dewey in 1948. The sixth greatest comeback was humanity in the 14th century after 25 million people died from the Black Death. Third place went to Michael Jordan for his comeback to basketball after a two-year hiatus in baseball.

Then right there on the pages of *Sports Illustrated* is their opinion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the number one comeback of all time. It simply reads, “1. Jesus Christ, 33 A.D. Defies critics and stuns the Romans with his resurrection.”

The other nine spots on their list of greatest comebacks in world history are certainly debatable, but they were right on target with their assessment of Jesus’ resurrection.²

Jesus’ resurrection turned his brothers from fear to joy, from despondency to delight, from cowardice to boldness. They proclaimed the good news of Jesus’ victory over death.

² <https://www.iows.net/member?id=2&cat=1&letter=&result=yes&article=860>.

II. To the Ends of the Earth (22:27-29)

Second, the good news of victory over death is proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

As Jesus was hanging on the cross on Good Friday, he was not only thinking of his disciples. He was also praising his Father that the news of his victory over death would go to the ends of the earth. The promise given to Abraham millennia before that all the families of the nations would be blessed would come to fulfillment. And so Jesus prayed to the Father on the cross, **“All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you”** (22:27).

In fact, during the forty days after Jesus’ resurrection and before his ascension into heaven where he is presently seated at the Father’s right hand, Jesus explicitly told his disciples to take the good news of his resurrection to the ends of the earth. Just before his ascension, Jesus told his disciples to stay in Jerusalem to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The disciples asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” After these wonderful forty days with Jesus, they still thought that somehow Jesus was going to physically establish his kingdom on earth. But Jesus said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.” In other words, Jesus told his disciples that the timing of the establishment of his kingdom on earth was not for them to know. Until that happened, they were to spread the good news of his resurrection, as he went on to say, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:6-8).

For two thousand years, Jesus' disciples have been proclaiming the good news of his victory over death. There are believers now in every country of the world. But not every language group has God's word so that they can read it for themselves in their own language. There are still some language groups that need to hear about Jesus' victory over death. So, we still have work to do to complete the Great Commission.

While attending Harvard in 2004, Mark Zuckerberg hunkered down in his dorm room for a week and created the forerunner of *Facebook*. In 2010, a movie, *The Social Network*, gave an unauthorized version of Zuckerberg and further broadened the spotlight he is in. In 2010, there were 700 billion users of *Facebook*, which represented roughly one-tenth of the world's population. Today, there are 1.69 billion users of *Facebook*, and there's no downturn in sight. Some contend that it's just a craze for the young, but David Kirkpatrick, author of *The Facebook Effect*, has noted that virtually every educated person in Italy and Turkey uses the social network. Kirkpatrick knows the young billionaire well and has said Zuckerberg "wants everyone on the planet to use it." A lot goes into a phenomenal success story like this, but it sure helps that *Facebook's* founder has a vision for 100% global participation.³

Listen again to Jesus' prayer on the cross, "**All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you**" (22:27). It is our job to take the good news of Jesus' victory over death and proclaim it to the very ends of the earth. And the interesting thing is that we are now able to use tools like *Facebook* to take the gospel to all the ends of the earth so that all the families of the nations shall worship the Lord.

³ <https://www.iows.net/member?id=2&cat=1&letter=&result=yes&article=366>.

III. To the Coming Generation (22:30-31)

And third, the good news of victory over death is proclaimed to the coming generation.

While hanging on the cross, Jesus prayed, **“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”** (22:30-31). Jesus was thinking of people throughout all generations who would hear the good news of his victory over death. Untold numbers of people not yet born will come to a saving knowledge of the Lord.

The last phrase of the psalm is **“he has done it.”** As Jesus finished his meditation on Psalm 22 on the cross, he took that last phrase and spoke it in his mother-tongue of Aramaic, and said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), which is what **“he has done it”** means. One commentator writes, “Therefore, what was finished was the atonement by which the righteous demands of God for sin’s punishment had been fully satisfied and the righteousness of God was now able to be freely offered to all who would believe on Jesus.”⁴

A young man approached his pastor after a worship service and asked, “What can I do to find peace in my life?”

The minister replied, “I’m sorry, but you’re too late.”

The distraught man was perplexed. He said, “You mean I’m too late to find peace? You mean I’m too late to be saved?”

The pastor answered, “No, you’re just too late to do anything about it. Jesus did everything that needed to be done

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary*, 203.

2,000 years ago.”⁵

That is what **“he has done it”** means. It means that Jesus did everything necessary to accomplish our salvation. There is nothing we can do to earn or merit salvation. We simply receive it as a free gift of God’s amazing grace.

We are not meeting in a building today because of a worldwide coronavirus pandemic. As of today, almost 2 million people around the world are confirmed to have the coronavirus. That is terrible, and we pray for their speedy recovery.

But I want to tell you about a pandemic that is even worse than coronavirus. It is a pandemic that every person in the entire world is confirmed to have. And it is sin. The coronavirus pandemic is terrible. But the sin pandemic is far worse. People are still working on a cure for coronavirus. But, Jesus provided the only cure for sin. He died on the cross and paid the full penalty for sin. **“He has done it.”** All you have to do to receive the cure for your sin is to believe it for yourself.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed the concept of victory over death in Psalm 22:22-31, let us believe that Jesus died and rose again for sinners like us, and tell it to others.

Dr. Francis Collins is a medical doctor and geneticist who was appointed by President Clinton to head the Human Genome Project. His team successfully decoded the three billion genes of human DNA. Collins spent much of his early life looking at Jesus as a fairy tale suitable only for bedtime stories. But as his career evolved, he was deeply impacted by the

⁵ <https://www.iows.net/member?id=2&cat=1&letter=a&article=78>.

faith he saw in some of his desperately ill patients. He researched history and was amazed at the evidence concerning Christ. Collins wondered how a rational scientist could believe in such “difficult stuff” like the resurrection. He concluded. “If Christ really was the Son of God, as he explicitly claimed, then surely of all those who had ever walked the earth, he could suspend the laws of nature if he needed to do so to achieve a more important purpose.”

Ultimately, it wasn’t the evidence that held him back, but his pride. Collins wrote, “My desire to draw close to God was blocked by my own pride and sinfulness, which in turn was an inevitable consequence of my own selfish desire to be in control.” Understanding the incomparable value of exchanging his pride and control for God’s grace eventually led Collins to embrace Christ as Lord.

Dr. Collins’ story mirrors so many in that we realize it’s not the evidence that prevents us from believing in the resurrected Christ. It’s often our pride.⁶

I became a Christian on Easter Sunday in 1976. I heard the good news that Jesus Christ died and was raised back to life again for a sinner like me. I swallowed my pride, as well as my fear of death, and believed in Jesus. I repented of my sin. That night I walked out of the church building a new man.

You are not in a building today. But you are listening to this message. Will you trust in Jesus? Right now. Will you repent of your sin? Right now. I pray that you will do so, and receive new life in Jesus Christ.

And, for you who are believers in Jesus Christ, let me encourage you to tell the good news of Christ’s victory over death to your family and friends. Amen.

⁶ Francis Collins, *The Language of God* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006), 221.

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is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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be found at:

1. www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons.
2. www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp.
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