

Questions That Have to Be Asked

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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First Baptist family, again it is a privilege and an honor to have you a part of our virtual worship service this morning but you may be joining us for the very first time, so whether you're a seasoned veteran or this is your first time with us, allow me to encourage you to grab a copy of the Bible and turn to the book of Psalms. In fact, today we're going to be in Psalms 22 through 24. For those of you that may be new with us or to us, you may not be aware that over the last two years we have been walking very strategically through a Bible reading plan, typically one, maybe two chapters a day, and as we gather in an environment such as this, we look back, we reflect, we study that which we read just for a greater what we might call commentary and such.

Well, today we're coming to one of the most intense sections in the entire Bible, in fact, chapters 22 through 24 are not only intense as far as what it's describing in King David's context but the prophetic element as it speaks very particular to the life, the ministry, the death, the resurrection and, yes, even the second coming of Jesus Christ. As you're turning to Psalm 22, I mentioned it's an intense passage and I'm gonna go ahead and forewarn you that today is gonna be somewhat of a, shall we say, intense message. We're living in tense times, we're living in an intense era today, in fact, one of the things that I want to address from the very beginning is there are questions that we are asking, there are questions around us, in fact, just as recently as the last 24-48 hours as we continue to see events unfold and actions take place and words be spoken or not spoken, it always causes us to ask question. You realize we've been walking through a global pandemic and subsequent events now for three months. We've been asking questions like how could this happen, how long is this going to happen, did that really happen again, how could they do that, why didn't they say something, why did they say something erroneously. You see how the questions just start to flow, in fact, as you begin to watch the news stories, as you hear what's taking place, it automatically elicits a series of questions because we recognize how tense our world is right now.

Well, this morning from Psalms 22 through 24, I want to address three very strategic questions that I believe that all the other questions that we're asking can somehow be under its umbrella thereof. These questions though difficult to even ask, I believe are gonna be clearly defined in Scripture today. The three questions are such: how bad is the problem? The second question is: who's really in charge? And the third one is: what does

the future hold? Now think about all those other questions about the how and the where and could this really occur, whatever it may be, it all goes back to how bad is the problem, it goes back to the fact of who's really in charge, and what does the future hold.

Let me invite you to turn to Psalm 22 this morning as we find ourselves in this brief section in the middle of the Psalms, as I addressed, it was historically taking place in King David's life but very prophetic to the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ. Let me invite you as we begin with the first question of how bad is the problem, to the very first verse of what we know as Psalm 22.

1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Let's pause there for a minute. Does that sound familiar? It should because in Matthew 27:46 that's one of the famous statements that Jesus Christ made from the cross and allow me to address this from the very beginning, it's probably the one statement that Jesus made from the cross that has elicited so much response. We struggle with it, how could he as a part of the Godhead, the Trinity, all those theological terms, how could he make a statement such as this? Let me address this statement in two ways, then we're gonna go further in to Psalm 22.

The first one is this, that death by the cross was basically death by asphyxiation. In other words, when someone was placed upon a cross, and we'll deal with the details in just a moment, every breath that they took was just a laborious strain of going up and down in that very difficult position. And what do we discover? That it's the only one of the seven statements that Jesus makes from the cross that is actually a quotation of Scripture and people have struggled with it, why would he say such a dramatic thing? One of the things I want you to see about Psalm 22 today is that it appears in the first statement to be a song of defeat but it's actually a song of victory. In fact, in just a moment we're gonna go through a list of all the prophetic statements that are made here in Psalm 22 in regards to the crucifixion event, but allow me to draw your attention to the end of Psalm 22. In verse 29 it says,

29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul... 31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

So when Jesus makes that famous statement after three hours of darkness, he is not declaring defeat, he's actually declaring victory because it's such a unique statement that those that would have been in his presence that were familiar with the Old Testament Scripture would have known exactly what he was quoting.

The second aspect about this passage is this, that oftentimes we struggle, was there, is there, could there be somehow a separation of the Godhead? But it's the middle of the seven statements, it's the fourth of the seven and allow me to share with you the three that come afterwards. He says, "I thirst. It is finished," and, "Father, into your hands I

commend my spirit." Now think about that for just a moment. If somehow there had been a division, a fracturing in the Godhead, then why would the statement "I thirst," which we're gonna find just a moment in Psalm 22, the last of the prophetic statements that was fulfilled in his life? If somehow there was a division of cosmic eternal consequences, why would the last prophecy be fulfilled? When he makes the statement, "It is finished," he's actually kind of putting the last chapter on John 17 where in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus says, "I have come to finish the work that you gave me to do." Why would it be so declared that he was wrapping up that which the Father had begun if somehow there was a division? And last but not least, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." There is the recognition not only of that continued unity but that embracing that there hasn't been a fracturing, there hasn't been a division thereof. And so this very first verse that causes so much turmoil particularly among believers, why would Jesus make such a dramatic statement? It's because with a death by asphyxiation, he couldn't quote the entire Psalm but by quoting the first verse, the most thickly rich chapter in all the Old Testament regarding the crucifixion experience that ends with a victory declaration not an admission of defeat, I believe Jesus was not only referring us to this passage but he was also helping us address how bad the problem really is.

Let me call your attention back to verse 6 of Psalm 22.

6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

Fast forward to verse 13. It says,

13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. 16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

What you and I have just read probably outside of Psalm or Isaiah 52 and 53 is the most graphic description that we have in the Bible in regards to what Jesus Christ actually endured for our sake.

So let me ask the question again: how bad is the problem? You understand that what Jesus Christ endured as prophesied here in Psalm 22, as fulfilled in the four Gospels, was God's response and a necessary action to atone and to redeem humanity from their sinful state, and so when we ask the question how bad is the problem, we have to address it from God's perspective, that sin is such a critical problem, it is such a devastating endeavor, it is such an egregious act against our Creator that Jesus had to do what we just

read. Therefore we can't take sin and justify it and dismiss it and relegate it to whatever it may be, it is such a horrible endeavor that what we just read had to be done in order to atone and for forgiveness to be a reality.

Now again as we talk about the perspective of this passage, you and I today have been subject to so many images, to many videos and so much rhetoric in regards to one particular sin and I'm gonna go ahead and address it this morning. We as a culture are openly and evenly privately addressing how do we and how do we respond to what we know as the sin of racism, the idea that somebody just because of their skin color, just because of their background, just because of their difference, whatever it may be, that we would despise, that we would hate, that we would vilify, that we would treat differently, that we would manipulate, that we would twist, that we would somehow, somehow only because of what we see on the outside we would treat them erroneously. We've even decided to take the conversation to a new level and talk about the fact that it is systemic, it is systematized, it's not just a privatized issue. The debate has gained such volume that we're actually gathering in the streets of our communities by the tens and the hundreds of thousands, and so you and I would have to agree that what we know as the sin of racism has elicited a very vocal, adamant, public response by humanity and rightfully so. Here's what I want you to hear, that the sin of racism is so tragic and so egregious that the only way to solve it, the only way to forgive it, the only way to atone for it is that Jesus Christ had to endure what we just read. But here's the problem, to see it from God's perspective is difficult, seeing it from man's perspective is easy because we end up seeing the desires and goals we would like to see in regards to the problem. But let's see it from God's perspective. According to James 2:10 it says if we've broken one of the laws it's as if we've broken all of them. In other words, in man's economy one sin is greater than another, one sin is more egregious than another, but in God's economy all sins separate us from him, all sins lead to death, and every sin has as its result a wage that is known as death.

Why is this important for us to understand today? Because in God's economy, he sees it very differently than we do. Is the sin of racism egregious in God's economy? Absolutely, but so is lying and stealing and manipulating and adultery and covetousness and not respecting parents. You see, in other words, one of the things we need to understand today is that Jesus Christ endured what he did on the cross not just for the heinous sin of racism that we see publicly today but for every sin that humanity's ever committed. Every ill word, every lustful thought, every misdone deed is so awful and egregious in God's economy that even if the only sin that humanity committed was a "white lie," it would require what Jesus Christ did on our behalf.

So when we talk about how bad is the problem, humanity's sin problem is so bad for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God that the wages of our sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What we see happening here in Psalm 22 is not just necessary for the sins that turn our stomach but also for the sins that we justify, we flaunt and that we celebrate. Why? Because all sin in God's economy is the breaking of the entirety of the law. But I want you to look at the process. What did Jesus Christ actually go through for your sin? You see, it's easy to talk about other's sin and we

live in a world today where people have even gone public and said, "Well, I don't struggle with this and I don't struggle with that." Here's the problem, whatever your struggle is, whatever your temptation is is as egregious as that which you despise in God's economy and here's how I want to address the process from Psalm 22, I want to look at it from a physical perspective, I want to look at it from the senses. I mean, in other words, even though we recognize that Jesus was God in flesh, he experienced a very physical death on Mount Calvary and you think about the senses that we have every day whether we're hearing, we're seeing, we're tasting, we're smelling, touching, whatever it may be, this passage actually addresses the process that Jesus Christ endured so that he could shed his blood for your sin even if you think what you're guilty of isn't as egregious as what others are.

I want to begin with hearing. Look in verse 7, "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." The passage we have in the Gospels where they stood up and said, "He saved others, let him save himself." What did Jesus have to listen to on the cross? He had to listen to false accusations by an angry mob the night before. He had to hear an angry crowd declare they would rather have Barabbas, a serial killer running free than him who walked across water and healed people every time he turned around. He had to hear them mock at him, make fun of him, harass him, doubt him, question him, and cuss him out.

That's what he heard during that experience of what we know as the crucifixion and as horrible as that may be, it may be what he saw that is worse. Notice what it says in verse 13, it says, "They gaped upon me with their mouths." You fast forward to verse 16, "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me." Not only do you have those that said, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" gathered around the cross, but you had basically professional mercenaries whose job was to inflict as much pain and death as possible.

But you know, it's not necessarily what he saw that I find so devastating, it's what he did not see. You know, according to John 19, the only people who were at the foot of the cross that day were four women and a man by the name of the Apostle John. You know what he didn't see? He didn't see Peter because he denied him three times. He didn't see Judas because he betrayed him and was hung on a tree. He didn't see Bartholomew. He didn't see all those guys who spent 3 ½ years. How about these men who said, "Oh, we'll never leave your side, Jesus. We'll always be there no matter what." Where were they? Nowhere to be seen.

Think about what Jesus endured for your sin. He heard the mocking and the ridicule, he saw people who promised that they would be there no matter what happened and they were not. What about taste, or shall we say the lack thereof? Verse 15, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws." You know, there is a distinct taste of thirst and as I mentioned, one of those famous seven statements on the cross when he says "I thirst," if you've ever been in a position of extreme dehydration, if you've ever been where you could literally taste the taste buds in your mouth, it is a

distinct taste. We'll address this in just a moment but he actually tasted what we know as the taste of death.

What about touch? Well, we're very familiar with verse 16, "they pierced his hands and they pierced his feet." You know, it's interesting Psalm 22 gives us very explicit instructions about how he would die but it doesn't talk about the crown of thorns upon his head or the garments that were ripped from his back or the lashes and the beatings that he would undertake in the hours preceding. Isaiah 52 and 53 go into graphic detail there, but think about the fact that his hands who healed the blind, his feet who walked toward those who were hurting, being pinned and pierced upon a cross. When we start talking about what was the touch, that's usually the area that is most graphic to us, that's the area that we're most familiar with.

It's portrayed in the Easter season, we see it displayed in a multitude of videos and such, it's the touch that we focus on but we can't forget the taste, we can't forget the sight, and we can't forget the hearing, but it's this last one that I think may be the most intense of all of the senses, the sense of smell. Now I don't know if you're like I am but I can walk into a situation where I can see or hear things that I'm not necessarily pleased by, it doesn't do a response or elicit a response to me like something that smells bad. I want you to notice the very end of verse 15, it says, "and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Now typically we would speak of the animal kingdom but there are times of humanity, have you ever been in the presence of death? Have you ever walked into either your house or your backyard and you know by the smell that something has died? Jesus Christ physically had been dying for hours, he was pierced, he was asphyxiated, he was dehydrated and death has a way of coming upon. If you've never been in the presence of a living entity that is on the edge of death, then you may not know what I'm speaking of but you can smell it coming and it is wretched. He heard a lot of things he didn't want to hear, he saw a lot of things he didn't want to see, and I cannot imagine how painful that those railroad spikes, at least in our vernacular, were in his hands and his feet, but if you've ever been in a place where the smell is of death, it overtakes all the other senses.

So when we ask ourselves how bad is the problem, I've got news for you, it's a bad problem. Our sin necessitated what Jesus Christ did as described in Psalm 22 and so even though he declares, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and not as defeat but as victory, it leads us to ask a second question and it is this: so who's really in charge? Now I want to invite you to turn to Psalm 23, probably one of the most familiar passages in all of the Bible. I'm sure that we've been to a funeral or a memorial service where we have heard this read in some capacity. It's a beautiful declaration that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, the Lord will be there with us, that he will even take care of us even in the midst of our enemies, but I want you to focus on the very first verse. It says,

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Now let's talk about a little perspective here. Do you notice the personal pronoun? The Lord is my shepherd and so we have to ask ourselves, number 1, how bad is our sin

problem, number 2, we have to ask ourselves who's really in charge, and I'm not talking about the "world systems" and such, I'm talking about you and your personal life right now. Who's really in charge because at the end of the day there are only two options, it's either the good shepherd or it's the hireling.

Notice what it says here, "The LORD is my shepherd." It's almost as if there's this personification that, "I don't want to get caught up in the other one." You know, in John 10, there are actually seven "I am" statements in the Gospel of John, much like seven statements from the cross recorded in Scripture. Jesus makes this statement in John 10, he says, "I am the good shepherd." Do you find it interesting that Jesus has to qualify what kind of shepherd that he is as opposed to the bad shepherd? In fact, there in John 10 listen to what Jesus says, he says, "The hireling sneaks over the wall. The hireling goes in the flock. The hireling convinces the sheep that he's the answer but when the wolf comes, the hireling flees." So Jesus even gave us the unique perspective that at the end of the day we are either a part of the flock of the good shepherd or a part of the flock of the hireling.

Now two chapters earlier in John 8, Jesus had a very public discourse with those that would later say, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" when he made this abundantly clear and he shared with them his perspective, God's perspective that though they thought that they were on the "right side" of the issue, they were on the wrong one, and he begins to disclose them in John 8 that their father, the one who they're a part of, is actually the devil himself, the father of lies, and the majority of chapter 8 of John is this grand discussion that there's really only two camps you can be in, you can be in the devil's camp or you can be in God's camp. Here's the problem, that even those that spoke blasphemy, even those who were tempting Jesus claimed to be in God's camp.

Do you find the irony there? That when we champion an issue, when we champion something that we find passionate, we love to throw the God card in because if it's something we care about, obviously it must be of God. Here's the problem, back to John 10, Jesus said he's the good shepherd and that the devil is the hireling. He is the false shepherd, according to Zechariah 11, he is the idle shepherd, the one who is false and leads us astray. Jesus makes an interesting statement in John 10:10 he says, "The thief," the devil, "comes to steal, kill and destroy but I have come to give them life that they might have it more abundantly." If you pause there for just a moment, you go to the book of Galatians, it talks about the famous fruit of the Spirit there in chapter 5. Do you know what it says the fruit of the Spirit is? Love, joy, peace, temperance, self-control, meekness. And so when we talk about who's really in charge of our lives, what we need to address is this, we've got a sin problem and we've only got two options to solve it, we either accept what Jesus Christ did on our behalf or a multitude of other options but that leads us to chapter 23, then who's in charge of your life? Well, according to the Psalmist the Lord is my shepherd.

Now we need to ask ourselves this difficult question: who's in charge of our life and I understand that these may be difficult words to hear, they got frustrated with Jesus but I'm just gonna quote what Jesus said, "The thief came to steal, kill and destroy." Even if you are on the right side of the issue, even if you recognize and call out that which is

wrong and egregious, if your life is about stealing from others, killing others, or destroying stuff, you are technically according to the Bible in Satan's flock. That's what it says. What's the fruit of the Spirit? Love. Do you know what love is according to the Bible? Putting somebody else above yourself even if it's uncomfortable. Joy, finding God's moving in the situation even if it is unpleasant to our flesh. You recognize that the letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians is known as the letter of joy and he wrote it while being in the middle of a prison. So joy isn't about a good environment, it's about trusting in the Lord and relishing in him, his goodness, and despite of a messed up world around us. Peace. What is peace? Peace is bringing people who may disagree adamantly about issues to a common table for a common purpose. Self-control. Temperance. Meekness.

Do you see the difference here? When he makes the statement, "The LORD is my shepherd," what David is saying historically what we need to understand today is this, that when we see the flock of the hireling even if we're right, even if we know that on this particular issue and in light of this particular sin, it is not our role to "entertain" God's role. Allow me to address that. In the book of Deuteronomy as well as in the book of Roman it says, "Revenge is mine, saith the Lord." If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, even if you witness, you hear, or you are subject to somebody else's sin, it does not give you the right for retribution. That's God's job to do that. You know what your job is? To love them when they're unlovable. That's your job. To have peace when you want to have a war. And to have self-control when you just want to uncork on everybody around you. You see, the problem is we think that if we're right on the issue, then we get to take God's role and enact revenge on whoever has done us or somebody else wrong.

Let's talk about the process here. How can this happen in our lives? Because this is difficult, this is not easy, this is not natural to our flesh. Notice what it says in verse 3,

3 He restoreth my soul

He restores it. Now we've become a culture that is obsessed with restoration. You cannot turn on the tv without seeing the restoration of cars, the restoration of houses, whatever it may be. My wife chooses the house shows, I choose the car shows, but they still have the same goal, it's to take something that is dilapidated, something that has been destroyed, something that has been in ill repair or left out in a field or whatever it may be, here's the purpose of a restoration: to return it to its original status. You know at the end of the day that's what everybody right now is screaming for, that's what everybody is debating, what everybody is discussing because what we're so frustrated with is the fact that we live on this side of the garden of Eden. Allow me to illustrate. Think about the garden of Eden for just a moment. Was anybody killing anybody in the garden? No. Was anybody destroying anybody? No. Was anybody doing anybody wrong? No. Was anybody manipulated? No. Was anybody selfish in the garden of Eden? No. You see, everything that everybody in humanity desires is what we had in the garden of Eden, the problem is we think that somehow if we scream loud enough and we get vocal enough, we'll get on the other side of that proverbial wall. Here's the thing, who restores our soul? He does, the shepherd. The only one who can put you on the other side of the wall of the garden of

Eden so that you don't hate, you don't use bad language, you don't fall into temptation, you don't manipulate, you're not selfish, is Jesus Christ because he's the only one who can change you, change me, and change anybody from the inside out.

So when you ask the question who's really in charge, you know when you heard that at first you might have thought, "Well, I think So-and-so or this person or that group or this group." No, really there's only two entities that are in control of your life and everybody's life, it's either the good shepherd, Jesus Christ, because he has restored your soul, or it is the hireling who crawls over the wall and he steals, he kills and destroys.

Well, there's one last question that we have to address this morning and so where is all this headed? What does the future hold? Psalm 22 is very prophetic about the crucifixion experience. Psalm 23 gives us an illustration of what does it look like to have God himself shepherding us as a sheep and as a flock. But I want you to notice what Psalm 24 says,

1 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Now you read that verse, you turn on the news and you think, "Nope, there's no way that can be true." Here's where I have to bring in last Sunday night. Those of you that were a part of our Sunday evening Bible study, one of the things that we addressed is there's this word all throughout the Psalms called Selah and musically it just means a break or a pause, but there's an interesting correlation in the Psalms that every time it's used, there is a second coming motif therein. Guess what? At the end of Psalm 24, you guessed it, that word is used two times in this Psalm. So what we know as Psalm 24 is really a second coming passage.

So let me give you some perspective here. Right now the earth as you and I know it is not the Lord's and the world is not the fullness thereof. You know what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4? It says that Satan is the god of this world. Ephesians 2 calls him the prince of the power of the air. Do you really think that the senseless loss of life of anybody, much less what we've seen in recent days, would take place if Jesus Christ was on the throne? Absolutely not. You see, the world we're living in, the earth we're living on right now has a prince and has a king, the problem is it's the hireling. That's who it is and so right now we don't have God reigning and ruling over the earth but it's coming.

You see, that's the perspective that we need to have, that right now I don't care where you go, where you live, or what the issue is, until the thief, until the hireling, until the one who we know as the devil, Satan, whatever word you want to use, until he is put in the bottomless pit according to Revelation 20, we're still gonna get, you guessed it, stealing, lying, killing, destroying, etc.

You and I have got to get that perspective so we say what does the future hold? Have you ever heard the old phrase if we keep doing what we're doing, we're gonna keep getting what we're getting? Guess what? He's still the god of this world. He still transforms

himself into an angel of light and that's what's problematic because he always comes and it sounds good, which leads to the process. You know, one day according to the Scripture in a multitude of places, Jesus Christ is personally going to descend, he's gonna lock up the devil for a thousand years and he is going to reign on the earth, but what you need to hear is before he does so, the hireling will rise. That's right. Whom we know as Satan exalts himself in a very famous character that we know in the Bible as the Antichrist. The Bible says he comes with signs and with wonders. He comes and he signs, according to Daniel 9, he signs a peace accord with people who cannot and have never gotten along. In fact, he is so egregious that according to 2 Thessalonians 2, one day he'll go into the temple of God and he will declare that he is god. He is so good, he is so manipulative he will bring all of humanity under one proverbial umbrella at what we know as the Battle of Armageddon and there humanity will be gathered, they will thumb their nose at God and say, "We would rather die here than be subject to your leadership in our life." The Bible says that Jesus does return, he parts the skies. He's pictured on a white horse. On his leg it says King of kings, Lord of lords, and those who oppose him, it says that the blood goes to the bridle of the horse.

Now I realize today has been somewhat intense when we look at how bad our sin problem really is, who's really in charge of our life, and what does the future hold, but let me fast forward to that famous Armageddon event. I want you to imagine today that you are there. On one side of the valley you have the hireling, you have the false prophet, you have the Antichrist who has wooed you with all kinds of false promises. Remember what Jesus said in John 10? When the wolf comes, he scatters. Then there's Jesus Christ with his armies. Here's the question to ask: if that event somehow supernaturally chronologically could take place right now, what side of the valley would you be on? Because hear what I want you to hear: when it comes to the issues of our world, the social issues, the societal issues, the concerns that we're discussing each and every day, you do understand that there will be people on both side that day who were right on the specific issues but did not have the right shepherd.

So the ultimate question is, is are you in the flock of the good shepherd who did what Psalm 22 said on your behalf, or have you just been listening to the voice of the hireling because it's what you want to hear and it sounds good but one day when it gets real bad, he is gonna flee and take off and death and destruction will follow? You see, I want you to hear me clearly today, it's not whether you're right on the issues, it's whose flock are you in? Who is your shepherd? And we read in Psalm 22 what Jesus Christ did on your behalf. He was mocked for your sin. He had people betray him for your sin. He was incredibly dehydrated and pierced for your sins. And he smelled the smell of death for your sin. You understand that Jesus Christ loves you so much that even if you think there's no way I could be forgiven of what I've done, he did that on your behalf. On the other side of the equation, maybe you're out there thinking, "Well, I haven't done that much bad." Remember what James 2:10 said, that no matter what you've done, if you've broken one of the laws, it's as if you've broken all of them, and so whatever you find today so egregious, imagine whatever you've done is equal to that in God's eyes.

Maybe today you say, "You know what? I'm on the wrong side of the valley. I'm on the wrong side of the equation. I'm a part of the wrong flock." I've got great news for you. You see, what Jesus Christ did on your behalf as displayed in Psalm 22, we get this little simple verse in Romans 10 that says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. All you've gotta do is admit that you've got that sin problem we talked about and that you believe that Jesus Christ and what he did on the cross in raising from the dead is the only solution for your sin problem. Now you may be thinking to yourself, "Is it really that simple?" How many times did Jesus Christ utilize a little child and say that we must have the faith of a child?

So maybe you're that person today, maybe you realize the egregiousness of your sin and you're ready to call out for forgiveness. It doesn't matter if you're in your living room, your back porch, driving down the road, you can do it out loud, you can do it quiet, it doesn't matter, you're in your world, I'm just in an empty room. But maybe your conversation, maybe your prayer would go a little something like this. "God, today I finally realized that I'm the problem and, God, whatever it is that I've done compared to what somebody else has done doesn't really matter, I have transgressed you. I have trespassed your law. I have sinned. And God, I realize that the wages of my sin is death but I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much that he was willing to be born on my behalf. God, I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he lived a sinless life on my behalf. And God, I believe that even as wretched as my sin has been, I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he was pierced for my transgressions, he paid the price on his cross and three days later he rose from the grave. And God, I believe that Jesus Christ is able to forgive me and to save me and so today the best way I know how, I'm asking you to do so. I don't have all the answers to the problems in life, I don't even have the answers to the problems in my neighborhood or even in my own life, but I do know that Jesus Christ is the only answer to my sin problem. So the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me, I just want to turn my life over to you."

Well, maybe today wherever you find yourself, you had that conversation with the Lord or maybe you've got questions, maybe you're got concerns, maybe you just need to be prayed with or prayed for, we don't have the opportunity in an environment such as this to stand and sing and to have folks have a conversation with you, but we do have a phone line, we do have somebody who's waiting to hear from you, to pray with you, to pray for you, to hear your story whatever it is. It's 334-364-2761. Please if you're that person today who's got questions or concerns, whatever it may be, just need to be prayed with or prayed for, please reach out to us. The room is empty here, we would love the privilege of having a personal conversation with you.