

Christ's Own Description of His Death

A sermon delivered by

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May we turn to Psalm Twenty-two.

Let me say before we begin how deeply grateful I am to the Lord for this opportunity to be with you. And I can't express the deep feeling that's in my heart of gratitude for this institution. I have had the fellowship with Dr. Bob in these last years – our paths have crossed. And I just can't thank God enough for Bob Jones University. I'm with you. I'm for you. I carry a degree from you. And I just pray that God will keep you and that nothing will happen in the days that are ahead of us because we're facing some very very stormy days. And, boy, it's an inspiration – a challenge – to me just to be here. You young people just bring things right out. And it's a joy to be with you.

Now I am going to present you with what I consider to be the greatest single picture of the death of Christ in all the Bible. Now, that's a pretty strong statement because from the very beginning of the Scripture where the Seed of the woman is to bruise the head of the serpent on until the great hymns of the blood in Heaven the cross is everywhere. It is the preaching of the cross which is the foolishness to the world; and it is in that preaching that we glory. And yet there is not anywhere in the entire Bible just exactly what you have hear. Isaiah has it. All the epistles have it. The New Testament has it everywhere. But nowhere do you have exactly this. And in the Psalm which we have here one thousand years before Christ was ever born the details of the crucifixion are presented to us from the viewpoint of the one who hung on the cross. Jesus describes his own dying. No where else do we have it. The disciples stand at the foot of the cross and look up and describe it. The prophets stand in the centuries before and they look forward and describe. The Apostles look back. This is the only place in which the death of Christ is presented in the Scriptures from the cross itself. It is utterly magnificent. And when he died for us and we die in him this representation has a depth to it; it has in it that which only Christ lips could give us.

Sometimes the best place to begin an exposition is at the end of the chapter or at the end of the passage. And will you look at the end of Psalm Twenty-two – the very end – verse thirty, thirty-one?

A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.^a

What has he done? He died. He was raised from the dead. A generation shall arise they shall go forth and proclaim his message to a people who are to be born into this Kingdom and this is the Gospel –

^a Psalm 22:30,31

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and was raised again from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures. And this is Psalm Twenty-two.

Now let's look at it. Let's see. Let's follow it.

Where does it open?

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?^b

Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?^c

These are the words from the cross and this Psalm opens with Christ already nailed to the tree. Now let's watch him. First he's going to talk to the Father. Then he's going to look out and see what's going on at the foot of the cross. Then he's going to look at himself and he's going to tell us of his own agony. And we'll follow him all the way through. He sees a crap game going on at the foot of the cross. And it finally comes down to the very end where he gives up the ghost.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?^d

Why? What's the reason for this death? Why is he hanging there? And he tells us. He tells us. In fact, he tells us first. The first thing he wants us to understand is that he himself knows why he has been nailed there. If anybody ought to know why he died he ought to know. If anybody ought to be able to tell us what it all means he ought to be able to tell us. And he does.

You know, we're told in the New Testament accounts in Matthew and in Luke that they heard the mutterings and that he's calling for Elijah. He said things that they couldn't get. Every thing which he said that they didn't get is right here. We have it. Now look.

Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, [This is the Son of God talking to the Father] I cry in the daytime,^e

Yes, he was set for Jerusalem. He knew he was going up to Jerusalem. He knew what was going to happen in Jerusalem. He knew the climax of it all would be his rejection and his crucifixion.

I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.^f

There he was. He'd been sent by the Father. Here he was in Gethsemane:

Not my will, but thine, be done.^g

Let this cup pass from me:^h

^b Psalm 22:1

^c Matthew 27:46

^d Psalm 22:1

^e Psalm 22:1,2

^f Psalm 22:2

^g Luke 22:42

He knew he was going to that cross and he knew what that cross meant. And he knew that he was being called upon to perform a mission that the Father had anointed him for. He's talking on the cross.

O my Godⁱ

Verse three:

Thou art holy,^j

Thou art holy. Our holy God is getting ready to deal with sin.

O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.^k

And, young people, I can tell you today on the authority of this Book: God has never yet forsaken anybody that trusted in him. The only exception; the only place was on the cross where he turned his face away from his Son. Our fathers trust him?

He's not going to forsake me, beloved. He's not going to forsake you.

I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.^l

And here he is; he's hanging there and he says, "Oh, God, you've never forsaken anybody in all the centuries. Thy providence has been kept. Thy people have been sustained. But now I – thy Son, thy only Son – I am forsaken."

See how he intensifies it? See how he draws the contrast? Now look at the next verse and you get:

But I am a worm, and no man;^m

Christ saying, "I am a worm." He had to go to the cross to become a worm. He had to go to the cross where:

His visage was so marred more than any man,ⁿ

He had to go there. He was the perfect man; the sinless man; the only man; the second Adam. And yet he cries out, "I am a worm."

^h Matthew 26:39

ⁱ Psalm 22:2

^j Psalm 22:3

^k Psalm 22:3-5

^l Hebrews 13:5

^m Psalm 22:6

ⁿ Isaiah 52:14

Would you kindly tell me what made him a worm? What made him say, “I am a worm,” when he hung on that cross?

The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.^o

And in that moment everything that humanity had ever done to outrage and defy and disobey the law of God was laid on him and he says, “I am a worm. I’m no man.” He alone could say that. He’s the only one who could talk like that. He was without sin. He didn’t need to die. There was no reason for him to die. He didn’t have to die for his sins. He said:

If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.^p

He had no sins to die for. It was your sin that made him a worm. And if you want the doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement you get it from the lips of Christ when he’s on the cross. If you want the concept of Vicarious Sacrifice you get it from the cross. “I’m a worm. I’m no man.” My sin did that to him. It’s vicarious. It’s a propitiation. The infinite justice of Almighty God had to be satisfied before we could be free. It had to be met before we could be redeemed. Infinite justice had to be satisfied by the infinite grace and the infinite love of God. And in this moment the Son of God sees it all and feels it all just for you and me.

If you understand this you’ll never be a modernist. If you understand this you’ll never say, “Jesus was an example.” If you understand this you’ll never say, “Jesus was a martyr.” No, he was a worm. He was crushed under all the iniquity of mankind and in that moment – that appointed moment – he went there to die for man’s iniquity. No one else ever died a death like that. No one else ever could die a death like that. There will only be one death for sin – Christ’s death.

Now, what happens? Look at him.

All they that see me^q

He’s hanging on the cross and he looks out and here’s the multitude. They’re all around him.

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.^r

My, he looks down. Here they are; the leaders of the Sanhedrin; the great multitude that had followed out. And they were about to say, “He trusted in God. Come on down from there. Come on down from there. If thou be the Son of God come on down from there.”

Beloved it was only because he was the Son of God that he stayed up there. Only the Son of God could take the sins of this race. And they shot out the lip and made faces at him.

^o Isaiah 53:6

^p John 8:24

^q Psalm 22:7

^r Psalm 22:7,8

I remember one time we had a teacher in school back there. We didn't like her. I'll never forget her. It wasn't like here. It wasn't like Bob Jones University where everybody likes everybody. But, I remember when you didn't like anybody and you put your to your nose and, you know, your cheek.... You know how you used to do it. And I'll never forget one day our teacher was at the blackboard and some of us got to making faces and she turned around just in time. And something happened.

But they shoot out the lip. They shake the head. They make faces at him. The hatred of the race against the Son of God was manifest in the mob that was at the foot of that cross. And Jesus felt that hatred.

Marvel not...if the world hate you.^s

It hated me before it hated you.^t

And the servant is not above his master. And then verse nine says:

But thou art he that took me out of the womb^u

Did you ever hear them say that at your dying moment everything in your life comes into your mind? He goes right back to the womb.

Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: [There's his virgin birth.] thou art my God from my mother's belly.^v

He was sent to do a job. He would much be about his Father's business and Jesus was sent into this world for this one purpose. And as he hangs upon the cross he says, "Here I am. From the womb, from the birth, for the purposes.... Lord, here I am. And now I am in that great moment. And why are thou forsaking me?" The answer is that I am here as the sacrifice – the Lamb slain – I'm here to perform that one task.

Beloved, Christ was born to do one thing – one thing – redeem us. He wasn't a social reformer. He's not a companion of Karl Marx. He didn't read a social revolution against Rome. He led the great Crusade against Hell. He came to deal with all the principalities and the powers that had been arraigned against the Almighty since the day that Lucifer was cast out of Heaven. My, what to think. What a Saviour. And he died. And he says, "Oh, my God, from my youth. Here it is I've come and the hour is come when it is to be done. The great transaction is to be completed."

Look at him now. In verse eleven:

Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.^w

^s 1 John 3:13

^t John 15:18

^u Psalm 22:9

^v Psalm 22:9,10

^w Psalm 22:11

He knew it. Nobody could help him die. Nobody could share in that sacrifice. Nobody could have anything to do with what he was doing. Only he could do it.

*There was none other good enough to pay the price of sin.
He only could unlock the gates of Heaven and let us in.
Oh, truly, truly hath he loved and we must love him, too.
And trust in his redeeming blood and try his works to do.*

There's none to help. He was alone and he knew it. Now look at verse twelve:

Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.^x

What does he say? Here they are at the foot of the cross. They're pawing. The dust is in the air. He calls them the Bulls of Bashan. He goes back to the prophet Amos and says they robbed the poor; they are in places of mighty power. Do you know who they were? They were the leaders of the establishment. They were the leaders of the Sanhedrin. They were the Scribes and the Pharisees. And what does he call them? Bulls. If I called the National Catholic Churches a bull; the Federal Communications Commission would have a fit. What kind of language did the Son of God use? He's dying. He's on the cross and here he hangs and he's fully aware of what's going on. He says, "The bulls of Bashan have gathered around me and here they are. They've perverted the law and they've rejected me. They're the ones who cry, 'Crucify him. Crucify Him.'"

He knew all about them. And now he says they're just a bunch of bulls. But wait a minute. He's going to get stronger than that before he dies. He's going to get stronger than that before he dies. Verse fourteen:

I am poured out like water,^y

Now he looks down at his body. Here he is hanging there naked.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax;^z

Look at that: "My heart, my bones." Oh, his sufferings.

It is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;^{aa}

Can you hear him say:

I thirst^{bb}

^x Psalm 22:12,13

^y Psalm 22:14

^z Ibid.

^{aa} Psalm 22:14,15

^{bb} John 19:28

Oh, beloved, when I read this and I know that this is the one who died for me and he says:

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted...My strength is dried up^{cc}

The Son of God who had all power in Heaven and Earth; King of Kings; the one who came down here to deliver us says, “Oh, look what’s happened to me.” And he’s hanging on that tree. Must Jesus bear the cross alone? No one else can do it. Beloved, when you get this place you’ve come so close. Paul said:

[He] loved me, and gave himself for me.^{dd}

[And] the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,^{ee}

Oh, you can’t enter into this. You can’t die with him. You can’t die with him without entering into something of his sorrow. And then we come down to that verse fifteen and I want you to get these words. Look at it:

Thou^{ff}

He’s talking to the Father. He says, Lord:

Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.^{gg}

Say, who killed Christ? Who killed him? Did the Jews? Yes, the Bible says the Jews did it. The Romans? The Bible say that the Romans did it. The Devil? Yeah, the Bible says the Devil was active. Your sins? Yes, the Bible says your sins did it. Our sins put him there. But the Bible says something else. And at this point Jesus Christ looks beyond what is happening here. Here they were; his crimes; the miscarriage of all justice. He here is. Pilate saying, “I wash my hands of this innocent man.”

He looks beyond the Jews. He looks beyond Pilate. He looks beyond everything on this earth. He looks beyond your sin. And he looks back into the eternal counsel of Almighty God when from before the foundations of the world it was ordained that the Lamb would come and die – be sent by the Father.

“Thou, O God – I’m here in the fulfillment of thy divine purpose. I’m here as a manifestation of thy mysterious grace. I’m here as an evidence of the love of God. God so loved the world that he gave and here I am.”

It’s the greatest picture of the death of Christ in all the Bible. Let Jesus tell me how he died. Let Jesus tell me how he bled and suffered. Let Jesus reach back into the foundations of the Heavens themselves

^{cc} Psalm 22:14,15

^{dd} Galatians 2:20

^{ee} Ibid.

^{ff} Psalm 22:15

^{gg} Ibid.

and say that before they were ordained God designed that the Son would be sent and that I would come and do it.

All right, look at the next one: verse sixteen. He looks down again at the earth.

For dogs have compassed me:^{hh}

Dogs. Dogs.

The assembly of the wicked [This is the General Assembly.] have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.ⁱⁱ

This is it. He's nailed to the cross. Oh what ecclesiastical leaders in their unbelief have done to crucify the Lamb of God? And what that old harlot is going to do to us. You'll describe her in the Revelation. She's purples and she's been living on the blood of the martyrs. There she is at the cross with the dogs. It's not singular it's plural. There are many dogs, dogs, dogs, dogs. It's nice to look it up and see what kind of dogs they are. We've got a lot of dogs. One thing I like about this place is I haven't seen anybody carrying little dogs. Maybe they do and I don't see them. But you got hound dogs and bull dogs and all kinds of dogs. Do you know what kind of dog this is? Oh, beloved, it's the kind of dog I used to see when I was a boy. They used to run around the alley. You'd throw a rock at them and hit them and they'd put the tail between their legs and away they'd go with a howl. Hound dogs. These were the spokesmen of the devil. Just old hound dogs. That's all they are. And they'd been after him; and they'd been after him; they'd been after him; they've been trailing him. But his time hadn't come and he slipped out of their hands. And at last the dogs had him. They had him on a tree. And they were barking and carrying on out there. And he looks at them and he says:

The assembly of the wicked [these dogs.]^{jj}

You preacher boys, if you get a concept of these apostates of dogs you'll throw some stones at them and they'll run. But when you get to the heart of the Gospel; when you get to the center of that cross; and when you realize that Christ is speaking from it; my beloved young men, you'll go out and you'll do anything for this Christ. You'll die for him. You can take any abuse. They can say what they want to about you. Nothing can be done to separate you from the love of this Christ. You are his and he is mine.

Verse seventeen. Now he looks down and says:

I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.^{kk}

And he bore our shame. There he was – naked, naked. And when we lose our sense of sin we take off our clothes – we get naked. And that's what's happening to us today. That's what happened to us.

^{hh} Psalm 22:16

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{jj} Ibid.

^{kk} Psalm 22:17

Why, it's almost a shame for a decent man to travel today. Terrible what you see. But it's sin. We've lost our shame. Jesus looks down. My bones. I see my nakedness.

And then he just glances down here. Say, here's a group of boys. Look down here. Right here. They've got his vesture. They've got his vesture and they're playing with it and he sees them begin to roll the dice and he watches the crap game right there at the foot of the cross. He sees it. And when he saw it he knew that the prophecies made before were being literally fulfilled. In fact, you can go through the Old Testament – word after word, phrase after phrase that you find here – were to be fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ.

Young people, think of the fulfilled prophecies and all these other things that fit together. Think of that line of the blood through it all. Think of it all uniting and focusing its final climax upon this cross where Jesus is dying:

The just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.^{ll}

There he is.

Now we come:

But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.^{mmm}

He's going to die. He knows he's come to that moment when he will yield up the spirit. "Oh, deliver my soul from the sword."

My strength – He's crying out to God for help.

You know, the first time I ever preached on this was in a Church... I've had two Churches in my life – just two. One at Atlantic City where I was about two and a half years and now I've been in Collingswood now for thirty-five years. The first time I ever preached on this was at this time of the year. I'd just started preaching. And I came on to this verse:

Deliver...my darling from the power of the dog.ⁿⁿ

And I was troubled as to just exactly what that did mean. And you know, preacher boys, if you're going to expound the Bible and you get to some place in the Bible you're not sure of please don't make up your own idea. Just let it go. Just let it rest until you get some more light. And this "my darling; deliver my darling" well that kind of puzzled me and I wasn't sure what it was. And so I got along pretty well with this Psalm until I got here. And so I just skipped it and went on. What did that "darling" mean?

^{ll} 1 Peter 3:18

^{mmm} Psalm 22:19,20

ⁿⁿ Psalm 22:20

Then after it was over at the vestibule we had an old maid in the Church. Her name is Miss Inch. She's long since gone to glory, but I'll never forget as long as I live. She was an old maid and a real one. And she met me at the door. She said, "Pastor, I noticed you skipped the verse with 'my darling' in it."

I said, "Yes, I did." I said, "I just wasn't quite sure what it meant."

She says, "I thought maybe there might be something like that bothering you." And she said, "I can tell you what it means." She says, "What does the bride-groom say to his bride when he gets her in his secret chamber?" And she looked at me. I had just gotten married and just brought my bride to the Church.

What does the bride-groom say to the bride when he gets her in his secret chamber? And imagine an old maid having to tell me that.

Well, that's the word. Sweetheart. Darling. The trouble today is that we don't reserve it for the secret chamber. We get it in the backseats of the cars and a lot of other places where they ought not to be.

Deliver my soul from the sword; [and my sweetheart] my darling [my bride, my Church].^{oo}

Christ is dying for his people and he knows it. And isn't it beautiful? In the midst of the bulls; in the midst of the dogs; in the midst of all the furor and the cry and the clatter; in the midst of everything that was going on he had his heart fixed upon his beloved.

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:^{pp}

And this is the love of Christ manifesting itself in the dying moments of the death of Christ. And Christ is hanging there and saying, "Oh, God, now take care of my bride. I came to die for her. Now I'm doing it. Now I'm going into the grave. Now I'm going to taste death for everyman. Now you're going to raise me from the dead. Oh, take care of my bride."

Do you remember the seventeenth chapter of John, the great intercessory prayer? Do you remember that? When the Lord Jesus Christ is praying for his own and those that would believe on him he says, "Deliver them. Protect them." That's his prayer for the Church. And, beloved, that prayer is going to be answered. And a part of the answer of that prayer is this company today and every one listening to me who believes in this blood; every one who is a part of this Bob Jones University – we're a part of that beloved this afternoon. We're in it.

Oh, the Church. How I love it. I'm for the Church. God has called it and given it a commission. Christ said, "Go! Go! Take my message – all that I've delivered to you – take it to the ends of the earth!" If he loved just like this how should we love him? There it is.

From the power of the dog.^{qq}

^{oo} Psalm 22:20

^{pp} Song of Solomon 6:3

^{qq} Psalm 22:20

Now the dog this time is just singular – just singular. Before it was “dogs” – a lot of little dogs; now we just have one big dog. And who is that and what is the big dog who is after the Church? I don’t think we have any trouble identifying that dog, do we? He’s the devil – Satan. Satan’s been after the Church; he’s been after it all these centuries; he’s after it now; he’s after any leader in the Church and in the struggle. He’s after Bob Jones, Jr. He’s after this University. He’s after Carl McIntire. He’s after anyone who’s up here dealing with this great issue and got the Sword of the Spirit and exposing his mischief and his deeds and his darkness; calling people out of his kingdom.

And only the Gospel can take a sinner out of the Kingdom of Satan and:

[Translate] us into the kingdom of his dear Son:^{rr}

And Satan’s task is to hold sinners in his kingdom and keep them from being taken out of his kingdom by the power of the Gospel into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. And so Satan’s here. He’s here. That’s his task.

[And] we are not ignorant of his devices.^{ss}

Now I come to verse twenty-one:

Save me from the lion’s mouth:^{tt}

Here he goes. He’s going into the jaws of death.

For thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.^{uu}

Well, I’d like to get a little more light on that one. But there it is. And then what happens? He dies. It’s finished. Verse twenty-two. Same eyes, same person but this time he’s been raised:

I will declare thy name unto my brethren:^{vv}

Here’s the resurrection. Here he comes up.

In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.^{ww}

And the one person in the center of all the redeemed of all heaven – of all glory was with Jesus Christ. And just to get a glimpse of his face – that will be glory for me.

There it is.

^{rr} Colossians 1:13

^{ss} 2 Corinthians 2:11

^{tt} Psalm 22:21

^{uu} Ibid.

^{vv} Psalm 22:22

^{ww} Ibid.

Oh, I'm going to close. We go down to the tomb. We've gotten out of there. He's come up. I'd like to go on and develop the rest of it for you, but I can't. But it's the resurrection.

And now he reigns. Now he rules. You come down to the very end.

A seed shall serve him;^{xx}

Who is that seed? I am the seed. The Church is the seed. The bride is the seed. The believers are the seed. And we believed in this sacrifice and now we're his and we've been saved to serve. We've been saved to evangelize. We've been saved to build the Church. We've been saved to be the body and the bride of our Savior. We've been saved to be the darling of all darlings – the darling of Jesus Christ.

And what did he say?

“Oh,” he says. “Ye are to go forth.”

They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.^{yy}

What are we declaring? He died. He died for sin.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for [the ungodly].^{zz}

That's the only message we have to preach:

Christ, and him crucified.^{aaa}

Look at that cross. “Lord, why have you forsaken me? Why? Why?”

Here he was talking back and forth to the Father and they cheered him and they mocked him and they said, “Come down from there if you're the Son of God.”

He looked out and he saw the bulls of Bashan. He saw them yelling at him and carrying on.

He looked at himself.

He looked back out again.

He looked at the Father and said, “Father, you brought me here. I understand the purpose of it. I understand why I'm dying. I understand all of that. Now, Lord, here are the dogs. They're all around me. But Lord, Why? Here's my darling – the one that thou has appointed to be called out of darkness; called out of death; called into the glorious liberty of the children of God. This company that will spend eternity singing the praises of the Lamb and saying, ‘Thou art worthy to take the book.’”

^{xx} Psalm 22:30

^{yy} Psalm 22:31

^{zz} Romans 5:8

^{aaa} 1 Corinthians 2:2

The one who hung on the cross will take the book. He's the only one that can lay hold upon the book and can open the seals.

For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;^{bbb}

My friend, were you there? Was that death for your deliverance? Do you believe that he did that that you might live forever?

Faith cometh by hearing,^{ccc}

Oh, believe it and thou shalt live. Believe it and thou shalt be his child.

Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.^{ddd}

Will you go and tell everybody that he's done this? Will you go to the ends of the earth and tell everybody, "He's done this?" He has done it for me.

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

This is our message and may God bless it to our souls. Amen.

^{bbb} Revelation 5:9

^{ccc} Romans 10:17

^{ddd} Ibid.
